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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

NUNAVUT

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I congratulate the newly elected and re-elected MLAs in Nunavut. My deepest respect goes to all those who put their name on the ballot. *Qujannamiik*.

I encourage the MLAs to remember the people they represent. The dream of Nunavut is for Inuit self-determination. MLAs must keep their communities at the forefront of their work. Their communities have great solutions to offer. MLAs must be their voices in changing policies and laws.

There is much work ahead of the MLAs. Food security, housing, health care, the local economy and supporting hunter and trapper organizations all need their attention. They will be pulled in many directions, so they must serve with purpose. Together we can make the dream of Nunavut a reality.

POLITICAL UNITY

Jake Sawatzky (New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in politics it is easy to attack each other, but Canadians are tired of the divisions. We have seen where that road leads in other countries. Let us take a moment to focus on the topics we can agree on. There are many values that the Liberal Party shares with other parties. For the Conservatives, that is public safety, affordability and innovation. For the NDP, that is protecting workers, indigenous communities and people in need.

[*Translation*]

For the Bloc Québécois, that is the French language and the voice of Quebec.

[*English*]

For the Green Party, it is protecting our environment and building a sustainable future.

This is a critical moment. Canadians want unity, and they want us to act like leaders. When we work together, we serve Canadians best.

THE ECONOMY

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of groceries has become a daily burden on Canadians, and the Liberal government's policies are the main culprit. Years of heavy Liberal spending have fuelled inflation, making it more expensive for families just trying to get by. Farmers and shippers face higher costs, which then get passed to the consumer. The result is that food insecurity is rising, grocery bills are soaring and too many households in this country are simply one price shock away from overdraft. Over two million Canadians a month are visiting a food bank.

Canadians want to be able to support their family and not have to rely on charity. It is time for the Liberals to hear the alarm bells and stop telling Canadians they have never had it so good. Canadians have sacrificed enough.

MINEOPPORTUNITY CHALLENGE

Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Sudbury, mining is in our DNA, and teaching students to explore the many careers in mining has never been more important.

This month, over 350 students from across Sudbury participated in the MineOpportunity Challenge, a day filled with learning about our mining industry. From geology and engineering to governance and social responsibility, students from grades 9 to 12 worked together to build mines, find answers to industry questions and complete hands-on activities, all while learning about what mining and mining innovation has to offer.

Statements by Members

I want to acknowledge and congratulate Modern Mining & Technology Sudbury and also the Goodman School of Mines for their incredible work in making this event happen every year. It teaches the next generation about what is possible, and these young minds will ensure that Canada's mining industry will continue to thrive.

* * *

TOURISM IN YELLOWHEAD

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the vital role of the visitor economy in my riding of Yellowhead and across all of rural Alberta. Tourism is more than just sightseeing. For my riding it is an economic engine that supports nearly 9,000 jobs and more than 2,000 small businesses, most of which are locally owned and operated by proud Albertans.

Yellowhead is at the heart of Alberta's visitor economy, from the crown jewels of Banff, Jasper and Kananaskis to the hidden gems like Grande Cache, Nordegg and the Cowboy Trail. Like Travel Alberta says, we are "Canada's wild side", a world-class destination that showcases our western heritage and attracts billions in investments and visitor spending, creating a stronger and more prosperous Alberta.

Tourism is the key to strengthening and diversifying Canada's economy. I urge all members of the House to recognize that for communities to prosper, we need a strong visitor economy. I invite all members to come experience the wonders of Yellowhead.

* * *

• (1410)

*[Translation]***ADÈLE BLAIS**

Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of Women's History Month, I would like to pay tribute to an ally of women past and present: artist Adèle Blais.

From activist Thérèse Casgrain to civil rights figure Claudette Colvin and writer Gabrielle Roy, Ms. Blais chooses to use her art to celebrate iconic figures and give a voice to women who have been forgotten for too long.

She tells the stories of all these great women, but her own story is just as inspiring. Despite having a difficult time at school, she persevered, earned her diploma and taught herself to read after being functionally illiterate until the age of 25.

Today, the Sherbrooke native is charming the world with exhibitions in London, Hong Kong, and Stockholm. Her unique approach inspires the artists of tomorrow to use art to convey powerful messages.

If my colleagues find themselves in Sherbrooke, I invite them to stop by Whiting Alley to see for themselves the nuance of her striking works.

October is coming to an end, but the impact of women endures.

*[English]***SNOWBIRDS**

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is known as the land of the living skies. This is especially true for the riding of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, home of the Canadian Forces Snowbirds. For over 50 years, the Snowbirds have thrilled air show audiences around the world, showing the professionalism of the Canadian military.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer pointed out today the government's shameful \$18-billion shortfall in spending on our Canadian Forces. What I am hearing about the future of the Snowbirds I do not like: Their future seems to be in question. The Snowbirds are a Canadian icon. It is time to get our team new jets.

On behalf of my colleagues, I salute the dedicated personnel of 431 Air Demonstration Squadron, after a successful 2025 season. Their commitment to showcasing Canadian excellence continues to make our nation proud. We should return the favour by giving them proper equipment to do their job.

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SMALL BUSINESS IN FREDERICTON

David Myles (Fredericton—Oromocto, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a beloved institution in downtown Fredericton, Tony's Music Box.

The family-owned musical instrument store has served the community with passion and dedication for 50 years. Founded in 1975 by the late Tony George, Tony's Music Box quickly became more than just a store.

[Translation]

It was a hub of creativity, a gathering place for musicians and a pillar of Fredericton's cultural landscape.

[English]

From beginners to seasoned professionals, generations of musicians were welcomed with warmth, encouragement and always an enthusiastic handshake. The store's legacy will live on through the countless people it inspired. The staff were not just salespeople; they were mentors, musicians themselves, teachers and champions of local talent.

[Translation]

With the store closing its doors later this year, we remember the memories, the music and the valuable contributions made by Tony's Music Box.

[English]

I thank the George family, Michael and Terri, and all the staff who made it such a special store.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, Calgary police reported that a man was stabbed in broad daylight in Fish Creek Provincial Park, a park in my riding that should be an oasis of peace and nature for community and families. Last August, a seven-year-old girl was sexually assaulted in that same park. This is unacceptable.

Just a decade ago, it would have been unthinkable that brazen daylight stabbings or sexual assaults would happen in Calgary Midnapore. However, as a result of the Liberals' soft-on-crime laws, like Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, they are becoming normal occurrences in south Calgary. Violent crime in my city has increased by 59% since the Liberals took office, and it is not getting any better.

Conservatives have responded with our jail not bail act. Liberals must work to pass this legislation as soon as possible to restore not just my great riding of Calgary Midnapore but all of Canada to a place of tranquility and safety.

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF QUEBEC REFERENDUM

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on October 30, 1995, Quebec's support for sovereignty grew from the 40% seen in 1980 to just under 50%. Quebec was just a hair's breadth away from becoming its own country.

History tells the tale. The so-called Canadian *raison d'état* served as a cover for cheating, lies and secrets, for voters who appeared out of thin air, for a love-in that smacked of hypocrisy, and much more.

Now, Quebeckers, all Quebeckers, must look to the future and simply ask themselves what country they want and how to make that happen.

Let us put aside the bitterness we feel at what was taken from an entire nation and focus our complete attention on the future, on the next opportunity, one we cannot afford to miss.

At the end of his life, Jacques Parizeau left us with a critical message about our destiny that resonates in light of the current context: Do not be afraid, do not be afraid, do not be afraid.

* * *

[English]

TORONTO NETRALYA LIONS CLUB

Maggie Chi (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I had the pleasure of joining the Toronto Netralya Lions Club for their wonderful Diwali and Thanksgiving celebration.

I want to take this occasion to acknowledge the Netralya Lions Club for their dedication to humanitarian causes and charitable organizations. I commend them for fundraising an incredible \$143,500 to help equip North York General Hospital in my riding of Don Valley North with more cancer care and emergency beds. I advise the House of this great community-minded group of

Statements by Members

neighbours, professionals and retirees, who volunteer their time and effort to keep making Don Valley North a better place for everyone.

Colleagues can see that when the community calls, the lions roar.

* * *

PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a democracy, we elect leaders based on the promises they make and hold them accountable based on the promises they keep. The Prime Minister was elected on the promise to get the cost of living under control. Instead, prices at the grocery store keep going up. He was elected on a promise to “build, baby, build”, to double the pace of new home construction. Instead, CMHC says homebuilding will drop 13% over the next several years.

He was elected to get spending under control, to embark on a series of nation-building projects and to strike a trade deal with the United States. Six months later, there is not a single permit approved, not a single shovel in the ground, and Canada's spending and debt are higher than ever before. Not only is there no deal with the Americans, but the Prime Minister has removed Canadian countertariffs while getting nothing in return. It has been six months of broken promises.

Canadians want to know how much longer they have to wait before they start seeing results from the Prime Minister.

* * *

PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to spotlight two exceptional educators in my riding who are receiving the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. These awards celebrate the finest in Canadian teaching, and both recipients represent the very best of Whitby. They are laying the foundation for a stronger Canada one student, one classroom and one lesson at a time.

I congratulate Melissa Runhart, recipient of the national certificate of excellence, and Penny Senior, recipient of the regional certificate of achievement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. I am thankful to Melissa and Penny for all they do. We are proud to honour them today. Their influence extends far beyond the classroom.

I ask colleagues to join me in recognizing these two exceptional teachers.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, revelations at the ethics committee have exposed the Prime Minister's company, Brookfield, as one of Canada's largest tax dodgers. Leading tax transparency experts show that Brookfield avoided an incredible \$6.5 billion in Canadian taxes over just five years through the use of offshore tax havens. While chair of Brookfield, the Prime Minister set up three multi-billion dollar investment funds in Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, shielding profits from Canadian taxes. Those are funds that could line the Prime Minister's pockets through future bonus payments.

Canadians deserve to know that the Prime Minister is making decisions in the public interest, not in his own financial interest. That is why it was shocking that Liberals voted to try to shut down this investigation to improve transparency for Canadians.

While Liberals vote to protect powerful politicians, Conservatives will stand up for hard-working Canadian taxpayers. We will not back down. We will defend hard-working Canadian taxpayers. We are going to hold the Liberal Prime Minister accountable.

* * *

• (1420)

PURE ART FOUNDATION

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible work of the Pure Art Foundation and the group of 39 Canadian volunteers who recently returned from their annual humanitarian trip to Pucallpa, Peru.

Led by Robert and Brigitte McKinnon of Hudson, this team built a new home for a family of 10 in the Manantay district. Through the foundation's CAST program, they worked alongside local tradespeople to lay bricks, install windows and build a home that will keep a family safe and dry during the rainy season. They even furnished it with new mattresses, pillows and sheets, a true gift of both comfort and dignity.

Since building its first home in 2007, the Pure Art Foundation has supported the creation of more than 40 homes, a medical clinic, a day care, a community centre and a sustainable sewing initiative that empowers women to support their families.

I thank every volunteer who participated in this year's trip to Peru for showing what true compassion looks like. The volunteers remind us that when we come together as a community, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

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FOOD SECURITY

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been 2.2 million visits to Canada's food banks in a single month, and one in three of those walking through the doors is a child. That is over 700,000 little ones in a single month. Too many Canadian families cannot afford to feed themselves, and what do the Liberals say? They ask why parents should feed their children when the government can do it for them, as if dependence on the government were compassion.

Conservatives believe in a Canada where every parent can afford a safe home and good food for their family, but the Prime Minister stubbornly doubles down on the same inflationary policies that drove food prices through the roof. Every dollar the Liberal government overspends comes from Canadians and drives the price of everything up, including food.

When will the Prime Minister stop punishing Canadians, reverse inflationary deficits and remove hidden taxes on groceries, fertilizer and farm equipment so that food prices can finally come down?

* * *

102ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, as the first Canadian of Turkish heritage elected to Parliament, I am deeply honoured to join students from the Turkish Canadian community, who are right here in the gallery above, as we celebrate the 102nd anniversary of the Republic of Turkey.

[Translation]

This is a very special day for Turkish Canadians.

[English]

October 29 reaffirms our NATO ally's commitment to democracy and national sovereignty. Turkish Canadians honour the legacy of Atatürk, whose vision and determination gave birth to a secular, democratic and contemporary state. His enduring principle of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" reminds us of the importance of stability and co-operation among both nations and the people. Atatürk's belief that sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the nation deeply resonates here in Canada, where democracy, freedom and diversity define who we are.

Long live Turkey, long live Canada and long live our enduring friendship and alliance.

Cumhuriyet bayramınız kutlu olsun.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 costly Liberal deficit budgets that caused the debt to balloon and pushed up the cost of food and housing, Canadians deserve an affordable budget for an affordable life.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister promised that Canadians would be able to judge him by the prices they pay at the grocery store. Prices have ballooned and the number of people using food banks has doubled.

Will the government work with us, with our proposals, for an affordable budget and an affordable life?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are indeed going to work for an affordable life and an affordable budget. However, the Leader of the Opposition is making proposals that he does not even dare put in his own election platform.

Six months ago, Canadians gave us a mandate to present a plan to spend less and invest more. That is what we are going to present on November 5. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will vote in favour of our budget and not force a Christmas election.

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Liberal House leader wants to trigger a costly election on a costly budget. However, Canadians should not have to choose between a costly budget and a costly election. They should be able to choose an affordable budget for an affordable life, and that is what we are proposing.

Here is one of our proposals: Get rid of the industrial tax on our farmers so that Canadians can buy affordable food. Will the Prime Minister consider this proposal? It would be good for affordability.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have announced a series of measures aimed precisely at affordability, including a school food program and automatic enrolment for benefits, which will reduce poverty among Canadians.

Every time we propose an affordability measure, the Leader of the Opposition orders his troops to vote against it, even though they are reluctant to do so. Which way is he leaning? Either he wants to help Canadians, or he wants an election over Christmas. What is the answer?

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford a 10th costly budget that drives up the price of groceries and housing. What they need, in fact, is an affordable budget for an affordable life. The Prime Minister, though, has driven up the cost of the bureaucracy, the consultants and therefore inflation, so Canadians are paying more for everything. We have put forward common-sense proposals to make life more affordable, such as eliminating all the hidden taxes on food.

Will the Prime Minister put partisanship aside and work with us on an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are happy days: There will be an affordable budget, for an affordable life, presented in this House on November 4. We certainly hope the opposition leader will order his troops to vote for it instead of ordering the very nervous ones to vote against it and cause a very expensive Christmas election here in Canada.

Will the opposition leader tell his very nervous troops to vote for our affordable budget on November 4?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there he goes, trying to use a costly budget to trigger a costly election. We know he wants to distract from the fact that the Prime Minister has broken every promise he has made, by triggering a costly election on a costly budget, but Canadians should not have to choose between a costly budget and a costly election. They can choose an affordable budget with an affordable life, and we are putting forward the proposals on how to do that, such as eliminating the industrial carbon tax on our farmers, who feed us.

Will the Liberals take our positive, collaborative ideas for an affordable budget and affordable life, yes or no?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there he goes again with the imaginary taxes. More and more, and increasingly, in his own caucus, he has imaginary friends. The Leader of the Opposition understands, as all Canadians do, that Canadians gave us a mandate six months ago for stability and calm; not slogans, but solutions; affordability; a trade deal with the United States; and, yes, a plan and a budget to build a Canadian economy that is very strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member and the Prime Minister are trying to provoke a costly election on their costly budget. They are again playing costly games.

This is not about games; this is about the people lining up at food banks, the 2.2 million of them. That number has doubled since the government took office 10 years ago. It's about Jaelyn Stone, who says, "It's heartbreaking. It's hard.... It was just [tough] making ends meet." She says that she feels embarrassed and disheartened to turn back items when she is at the checkout and her bank account goes empty.

Will the government reverse course and bring in an affordable budget so that people like Jaelyn can have an affordable life?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us hear from another person in Canada who is doing really important work as well. That is Kirstin Beardsley, the CEO of Food Banks Canada. She said that with proper long-term investment and improved access, these kinds of initiatives are "showing early promise for greater adoption and expansion". She also said that we should make the school food program permanent, we should help the lowest-income worker and we should increase access to affordable housing.

Oral Questions

That's all in our budget. We have been talking about what is coming. We hope these guys will get on board and stop standing in the way of Canadians.

• (1430)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these Liberal programs do not feed children; they feed bureaucracy, consultants, lobbyists and insiders. We know that because since they have brought in all of these promises, we have seen food bank use more than double.

By the government's own admission, 25% of kids go to school hungry after 10 years of these Liberal policies. Why? It is because the more the government spends, the more things cost.

Every dollar the Liberals spend comes out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians. Have they not learned their lesson after 10 years that we need an affordable budget so that Canadians can have affordable lives?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Leader of the Opposition is driving for a Christmas election. He would rather do that than stand up for the moms and dads across this country who are looking for affordable child care, who want us to make the school food program permanent and who want us to invest in women's safety, shelters, homes and wraparound housing.

That is what Canadians want. They want things that are going to help their families and their communities, and these guys are threatening to take it all away.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a minority government. If the government wants its budget to pass, it will have to negotiate with someone. At this morning's scum, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons confirmed that he is talking with the opposition parties, just not negotiating. He said it himself. He does not even call that negotiating.

He says that the opposition's requests regarding principles are a non-starter. In short, he is willing to talk but not negotiate. He will talk, he will chat, but that is it.

Does he really want his budget to pass, or does he just want to trigger a Christmas election?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy discussing things with my counterparts and colleagues on all sides of the House. Obviously, the member should speak to her colleagues from Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj and Lac-Saint-Jean. I had some very interesting discussions with them on important projects in their riding.

Perhaps she has some projects to talk about too. I would also be pleased to talk, discuss or negotiate with the leader.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what I am hearing is “let us keep talking”. The Liberals do not want to

negotiate for support for their budget. They admit it openly. They do not want to invest in health care. They do not want to correct the injustice that exists regarding seniors' old age pensions. They do not want to transfer funding for housing and infrastructure with no strings attached. They do not want to pay back the \$814 million stolen from Quebeckers to buy Canadian votes. They do not want to help young people become homeowners. They just do not want to do any of that.

What they do seem to want is a Christmas election. Why will they not just admit that?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only question is which party is more eager to trigger a Christmas election, the Bloc Québécois or the Conservative Party.

The Bloc Québécois presented us with a series of non-negotiable demands. Speaking of not negotiating, it was the Bloc Québécois that had a bunch of non-negotiable demands that would cost Canadians \$36 billion. The Leader of the Opposition wants us to reduce deficits.

The Liberal Party of Canada is right in the middle, exactly where we should be.

* * *

HOUSING

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): As the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, we are rubber and he is glue.

The housing crisis is at an all-time high, and the Liberals are to blame. The Parliamentary Budget Officer calculated that rents have increased by 26% solely because of the federal government's excessively lax immigration policies. People across the country, including immigrants themselves, are paying 26% more in rent because of the Liberals.

To fix this debacle, the rapid housing initiative needs to be extended and made permanent, and Quebec's share must be transferred unconditionally. That is the bare minimum.

Why are the Liberals so unwilling to include this in the budget that they are threatening to call an election?

[English]

The Honourable Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is all-in on supporting affordable housing, and we are focused on homelessness, first and foremost. We are dedicating \$1 billion, the first billion in the budget, to solving homelessness. We are working with cities and towns across the country to get supportive modular housing built, which is transitional housing to help people get out of shelters, off the street and into a safe place to call home.

We are committed to affordable housing, and we will follow through.

Oral Questions

● (1435)

FINANCE

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Liberals spend comes right out of the pockets of Canadians. Under Trudeau, the Liberals' consumer carbon tax made everything more expensive while their record spending led to higher prices and lower paycheques, with the debt burden falling on younger Canadians most of all. Now the Prime Minister is doubling down in his budget with an industrial carbon tax, more costs and billions more in deficits.

Justin Trudeau already mortgaged Canadians' futures, so why is the banker Prime Minister foreclosing on it?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the party opposite is focused on its leader and what he said last week, we are laser-focused on Canadians.

On November 4, we are going to table a generational budget. We are going to invest in Canadians. We are going to invest in Canada, and we are going to build. We are going to invest in infrastructure, defence and housing.

We believe in Canada. I ask the party opposite to support our budget on November 4.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask the party opposite this: Have Canadians not sacrificed enough?

For 10 years, they have paid the price for a Liberal carbon tax that the government falsely claimed would put more money back in their pockets than it took out. Now the Prime Minister is pulling the same stunt with his industrial carbon tax. He claims there is no impact, even if it increases costs on farm equipment, fertilizer and, ultimately, groceries.

The Conservatives want an affordable plan. Will the Prime Minister scrap his industrial carbon tax in his budget so families can eat again?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the party opposite is focused on imaginary taxes, we are focused on real tax cuts, cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians and cutting the GST for first-time homebuyers. Interest rates are going down. We are moving forward with initiatives like the school food program and the personal support workers tax credit.

We are focused on affordability for Canadians. I wish the party opposite would stop the rhetoric, get on board and support our budget on November 4.

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are not satisfied with 2.2 million Canadians visiting a food bank a month. The new fuel tax will chew up any savings at the gas pump. Grocery prices have not come down since COVID. Now we will never get a break at the cash register.

Will the Liberals kill the new fuel standards tax so people can afford to eat?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite remain fixated on imaginary taxes. On this side of the House, we remain focused on supports for Canadian families to help them fight food insecurity. We do this with, for example, the national school food program, which we are making permanent, the disability benefit, dental care, child care and the national housing strategy. Time and time again, we are there for Canadian families, and members opposite vote against these investments in our communities.

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new fuel tax will put more ethanol in our gas tanks, so we will have to visit the pumps more often. It will also cut supply, so fuel will cost more. When fuel goes up in price, the cost of everything goes up.

The Liberals have a chance to kill the new fuel standards tax with the budget. Will the Liberals use the budget to kill the new fuel tax?

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, we empathize with struggling families, but unlike Conservatives, our government is stepping up to help them with affordability. We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians, reduced GST on new home purchases, significantly reduced child care fees, cut the costs of basic dental coverage and funded healthy food in schools.

Common sense says that when families save money on their taxes, child care and the like, they have more to spend on groceries. Common sense does not seem to be so common in the Conservative Party today, because Conservatives have opposed all of these cost-saving measures.

Canadians want to know this: Where are the common-sense Conservatives?

* * *

● (1440)

THE ECONOMY

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if their policies worked, why are over 700,000 children lining up at food banks?

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister promised that he would be judged by the costs at the grocery store. Well, the verdict is in. Food inflation is up 4%. We now have 2.2 million people visiting food banks in a single month, and by the federal government's own analysis, a \$1.3-billion food packaging tax is baked right into the cost of every meal.

While Canadians are skipping meals, the Liberals are feasting on new taxes. Will the Prime Minister stop cooking up new hidden costs and scrap his food packaging tax so that Canadians can afford to live?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative members seem to enjoy talking Canada down. They talk about imaginary taxes. It is almost as if they were cheering for the LA Dodgers instead of Canada's team last night.

While the Conservatives vote against measures that support Canadians, we are investing in them. We are building major projects and building homes right across the country with Canadian steel, Canadian lumber and Canadian unionized workers. We are putting people to work, strengthening communities and building a future that Canada can be proud of.

Here is my question: Will the Conservatives vote for the budget or will they trigger an Xmas election?

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was elected on the promise that he would be judged on food prices. Six months on, here are the results: Grocery prices keep going up and up, twice as fast as inflation. That is the legacy of 10 years of Liberal governance.

Will the Prime Minister use his budget to eliminate the taxes that impact food prices so Canadians can have an affordable life?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Quebecers and Canadians passed judgment on the opposition party, on the Leader of the Opposition and on his flip-flop attitude. He was incapable of coming up with a credible plan.

On this side of the House, not only do we have a plan to grow and unify the Canadian economy, we also have an affordability plan that comes with a \$22-million tax cut for Canadians. It also includes making Canada's national school food program permanent, a move that the Quebec Breakfast Club applauds.

If the member doubts the effectiveness of this program, which one of his colleagues called garbage, he should come to my riding. I will take him to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the United Way and the Breakfast Club.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' governance is so effective that 2.2 million Canadians now have to go to food banks every month to eat. Yes, 2.2 million people. That is the Liberal record for a G7 country after 10 years. Shame on those who mismanaged the government so horribly. That is why people are realizing that the more the Liberal government spends, the more it costs Canadians.

I will repeat my question. Will the Prime Minister use his budget to axe the taxes that have a direct impact on food so that Canadians can have an affordable life?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague wants to talk about things that have a direct impact on the lives of Canadians. We can talk about the national nutrition program. That is \$800 per family. We can talk about the tax cut we put in place for 22 million Canadians. It is also \$800 per family. We can talk about the Canada child benefit, which has reduced child poverty in this country by 38%. These are all programs that the Conservatives would have sacrificed.

We can talk about the Canadian dental care plan. About 20,000 people in his riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk now have access to dental care. That is what the members on that side of the House would be willing to sacrifice.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the forestry industry, forestry workers and municipalities were on Parliament Hill this morning. Representatives from Chantiers Chibougamau, Domtar, Arbec, the Association québécoise des entrepreneurs forestiers, Unifor, the reeve of the Antoine-Labelle RCM, and the mayor of Ferme-Neuve are all here to demand that Ottawa advance them 50% of the countervailing duties that will have to be paid, pending reimbursement at the end of the dispute. They expect the federal government to finally show its support for the industry.

When will this government respond?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome those representatives to Parliament Hill. I look forward to meeting with them. I already know many of them well. We work with Unifor on other issues.

We know that the current situation in the softwood lumber industry is linked to the White House's completely unjustified and unjustifiable tariffs. We will be there for the lumber industry. We will work with them. We have already implemented \$700 million in loan guarantees through their banks, backed by BDC.

I look forward to working with my colleague to find solutions for businesses in his riding.

• (1445)

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if Donald Trump follows through with his threat to increase tariffs by 10%, Quebec's forestry industry will be hit harder than any other industry in Canada, and yet Ottawa is doing nothing. The financial assistance it promised back in August has yet to be released. Our workers are still not protected through any wage subsidies, and our businesses are still paying billions of dollars in illegal countervailing duties, without any support from the federal government. The lumber industry in Quebec represents 130,000 jobs in 900 municipalities.

When will the Liberals understand that urgent action is needed?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: Our government will fight for jobs in the softwood lumber industry, period.

That is why we are working with people in the sector every day. I had several meetings last week. Just yesterday, I spoke with Christine Fréchette, Quebec's minister of the economy. I have also spoken with Premier Eby. The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and I, as well as the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy, have been working non-stop on this issue.

Furthermore, it is false to say that the funds are not available. They are. They have been released. Some businesses have already been saved. I look forward to working with my colleague on this issue.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government brags every day about all the money it spends, but that is not the government's money. That is the paycheques of hard-working Canadians. That is the money that families could be spending to put food on the table. Instead, the Prime Minister uses it to feed his endless bureaucracy, which snuck in a hidden industrial carbon tax on fertilizer and farm equipment that hits families at the checkout line.

Canada should be the breadbasket of the world, but under the Liberal government, Canada cannot even feed itself. Will the Prime Minister put partisanship aside and scrap the industrial carbon tax in this budget so Canadian farmers can feed this country?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Halloween has come early for the Conservatives this year with their imaginary taxes and their ghoulish views on Canadians. They are calling Canadian school food programs disgusting, calling the RCMP despicable and demanding a \$56-billion cut that would gut the OAS and the GIS that seniors rely on.

Today, seniors will see in their bank accounts an increase on the OAS and GIS deposited right into their accounts. This is Canada's largest anti-poverty initiative. Canadians know they can trust us to ensure that we have their backs.

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I see that the secretary of state is wearing a button. Unless it says, "Have a nice day", I would say it would not be permitted. That is just to let the member know.

The hon. member for Cambridge.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals keep saying that everything is great, but the only thing growing faster than their debt is the food bank line while they play hide-and-seek on taxes. Taxing farmers with a hidden industrial carbon tax, while 2.2 million people visit the food bank every single month, is insanity. This is while 20% of them work full time, and 33% are children. Anyone but the Liberals can see that Canadians are going to bed with empty stomachs on empty promises.

Conservatives have a plan to help farmers thrive and families eat, so I ask again, will the Prime Minister support the Conservatives' plan to scrap the industrial carbon tax in the budget so Canadian farmers can affordably feed this country?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know there are no taxes on their food, so while the Conservatives talk about imaginary taxes, the government is taking real action to support seniors in this country. We are cutting red tape. We are building homes faster. We have introduced dental care, which more than two million seniors now have access to. We are building an economy that works for everyone.

The Conservatives, however, have a record of pushing the retirement age higher, cutting benefits and leaving seniors behind. While they are voting against every support for seniors and threatening to do that with the upcoming budget, we are empowering older Canadians. We are protecting them, and we have their backs.

• (1450)

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every dollar the Liberal government spends comes out of the pockets of Kitchener Centre residents. Hidden, not imaginary, taxes, such as the food packaging tax, are baked into the sticker price, which is driving up the cost of food.

Will the Liberals' own numbers show Canadians the \$1.3 billion in costs over the next decade for this tax? The more they spend, the more Canadians pay. Will the Prime Minister put partisanship aside and scrap the food packaging tax so Canadians can afford to live?

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, all across Ontario, families are benefiting from spending \$16 a day for child care, which is down from \$70 a day. This is phenomenal, and it is adding thousands of dollars into the pockets of Canadians every single month. That is the power of investing in families. That is the power of investing in children. That is why Canadians trust us to have their backs, and they know that these guys would cut everything they rely on in a heartbeat.

[Translation]

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to be judged by the price of groceries. Ironically, hidden Liberal taxes on food are driving up grocery prices.

I am talking about the industrial carbon tax, the food packaging tax and the clean fuel regulations that increase the cost of transporting, producing, and marketing food. Everyone understands that.

The more the Liberals spend, the more Canadians pay.

Will the Prime Minister eliminate these taxes on food in his budget and make life more affordable for Canadians?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, members across the way are talking about imaginary taxes.

Today, I spoke with people from the Breakfast Club, an organization that helps nearly 900,000 children access the school nutrition program. They told me that making the national school food program permanent is an important turning point for children's health, learning, and well being, as well as for Canada's social and economic resilience.

I hope my colleagues across the way will support this budget and making this program permanent.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, numbers do not lie. I do not know whether the member is aware, but food inflation is skyrocketing. It is up 4%.

This week, Food Banks Canada reported a record 2.2 million visits in a single month. Twenty per cent of food bank users are full-time workers, and 33% are children.

The Conservatives have a plan to make life much more affordable for Canadians again.

I repeat: Will the Prime Minister eliminate these taxes on food in his budget and make life more affordable for Canadians?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always fascinating to hear the Conservatives talk about completely imaginary taxes. There are no taxes on groceries. I want to reiterate that for the benefit of the Conservatives across the way.

If people want to talk about real things and not about imaginary taxes, let us talk about the Canadian dental care plan, which helps approximately 20,000 people in the member's riding. Let us talk about the Canada child benefit, which has reduced child poverty in Canada by 38% and which helps thousands of families in the mem-

ber's riding. Let us talk about the national school food program, which we just made permanent and which will help about 100,000 young people in Quebec. The Breakfast Club has nothing but praise for this program because it has a direct impact on the lives of families. These are the things we should be talking about.

The Conservatives have no plan. Their only plan involves sacrificing—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond East—Steveston.

* * *

[English]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's forestry industry, anchored in my home province of British Columbia, is not just a regional asset; it is a national economic engine. I recently met with the BC Council of Forest Industries and forest sector leaders to discuss how we can support this valuable sector, which provides over 200,000 jobs and contributes over \$25 billion to our GDP.

The United States' tariffs on softwood lumber are hurting both Canadian producers and American consumers, as well as related industries. While the Conservatives want us to sign any sort of deal, our government is working toward getting the best deal for Canadians and the impacted sectors. In the meantime, can the Minister of Industry—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Industry.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, my colleague is fighting for the Canadian softwood lumber workers, as we are, as a government. We will stand strong against these unjustified tariffs. We will make sure that we get a good deal, but meanwhile, we are there to give support for them to have access to funding to support their workers, to adapt and pivot, and to eventually make sure that the world knows that Canadian lumber is the best in the world. We will continue to build Canada strong.

* * *

• (1455)

FINANCE

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has blown billions on consultants, on foreign aid vanity projects and on a \$1-billion legal gun grab that the Liberals themselves have admitted will not work. The result has been higher taxes, higher prices, a higher cost of living and an entire generation of young people who do not believe they will ever do better than their parents.

Oral Questions

Canadians are cutting back, they are skipping meals and they are lining up at food banks in record numbers, while the Prime Minister maxes out the nation's credit card like it is someone else's problem. Will the Liberals finally stop the waste, stop the taxes, stop the inflationary spending and put forward an affordable budget for an affordable life here in Canada?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have great news for Conservatives. We have a way to help 5.5 million Canadians with the cost of food: automatic federal benefits. Through budget 2025, we are going to prefile taxes for up to 5.5 million Canadians. This will ensure that Canadians get the benefits they are entitled to.

On November 4, the party opposite has a choice to make: Will it let the most vulnerable Canadians get these federal benefits or block the cheques and force a Christmas election?

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is in complete denial. He sent \$8 million to Vietnam to create gender-just rice. What even is that?

The endless cycle of deficits, of taxes and of inflation has crushed families, crushed young people and crushed workers, and the Liberals' arrogance blinds them to the damage that they themselves have done.

If the Liberals want to pass a budget, it is simple: stop the reckless spending, stop the inflation and stop the hidden food taxes. It is up to them to listen to Canadians and put forward an affordable budget for an affordable life.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives are focused on a revolting caucus, we are laser-focused on Canadians.

On November 4, we are going to table a generational budget. We are going to invest in Canada. We are going to invest in Canadians. We are going to build. We are going to invest in infrastructure, defence, housing, aerospace and national projects.

On this side of the House, we believe in Canada. I ask the party opposite to cut the rhetoric and support our budget on November 4.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Members have to try to not be too provocative, because provocation creates disorder, and that is a problem.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only thing that is revolting is those answers.

The Prime Minister promised Canadians that he would stop outrageous spending on high-priced consultants. Only six months in, and this promise is broken. He has already increased spending on consultants by 37%. That is \$6 billion. Whether it is arrive scam, McKinsey & Company or now the CRA call centre, the Liberals will always find a way to pay their consultant friends the big bucks.

When the Liberals table their budget next week, how many more billions can Canadians expect to pay Liberal insiders?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave us a very clear mandate to reduce the use of consultants and make government more efficient.

Spending less to invest more is exactly what we are going to do on November 4 in a historic budget that will lay the foundation for a strong Canadian economy.

I hope the Conservatives will support it.

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I doubt it.

[*English*]

While Canadians line up at food banks, Liberal consultants line their pockets.

Yesterday, the president of Shared Services Canada admitted he learned a very hard lesson on the contract for CRA call centres, which quadrupled to \$190 million under the Liberals' watch. It is the same hard lesson the Liberals learned when GC Strategies blew the roof off the ArriveCAN contract.

I will ask this again: How much will Canadians have to pay to Liberal friends and insiders in next week's budget?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, Canadians gave us a very clear mandate to make government more efficient. We will always ensure that we get the best value for Canadians' money.

As we prepare to present a budget on November 4 that will spend less to invest more, we want to make sure we get the best value and build the strongest economy in the G7.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

[English]

FIREARMS

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals blew nearly \$1 billion on a gun grab that even their own minister admits does not work. He was caught on tape telling the truth: It is a waste of money. The OPP wants no part of it, and the chief of the only police force they found to enforce their vanity project is related to a Liberal MP. This is not safety; it is political theatre with a \$750-million price tag.

When will the Prime Minister scrap this farce and go after criminals instead of law-abiding Canadians?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I announced several weeks ago, there is a pilot project taking place in Cape Breton, which will be expanded to across Canada over the coming weeks. We look forward to law-abiding Canadians' abiding by the law.

We have brought in many measures to ensure that criminals are off our streets, including Bill C-14, which I hope the party opposite supports. It is part of a comprehensive plan to attack crime in this country.

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is pushing ahead with a costly and misguided gun grab that ignores the real problem: illegal guns smuggled from the U.S. Instead, it is targeting the most responsible, law-abiding Canadians. In Cape Breton, the mayor says that he was not consulted. The local police union was blindsided, and the project is run by the brother-in-law of the local Liberal MP. Canadians need an affordable budget for an affordable life. Three-quarters of a billion dollars is being wasted on the program.

When the budget pressures are so high, why are Liberals wasting three-quarters of a billion dollars on political optics and nepotism instead of cracking down on real criminals and keeping Canadians safe?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is doing everything we can to ensure that guns are off our streets. This includes Bill C-12, and this includes a \$1.3-billion investment at our border, 1,000 new RCMP and 1,000 new CBSA officers. We have Bill C-14, which will address the issues around bail. We also have a compensation program that will ensure that law-abiding Canadians can get compensation for prohibited weapons, which we hope will be expanded across Canada.

This is our approach to a range of issues involving crime. I invite the party opposite to support these initiatives.

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FINANCE

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year the Liberal government will spend \$1 billion on interest every week, and while the Prime Minister is planning a record-breaking deficit, his accounting gimmick may put Canada's credit at risk.

Last week the Prime Minister told students they will have to sacrifice even more. Canadians should not be made to sacrifice. After a decade of Liberal failure, they have sacrificed enough. They do not want more Liberal debt, Liberal waste and Liberal corruption.

Why is the Prime Minister spending like Justin Trudeau on steroids?

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, inflation in Canada has been within the Bank of Canada's target range for over 21 months in a row. The Bank of Canada also cut rates again today, by 25 basis points. That is more savings, lower mortgages and real relief for Canadians.

While Conservatives seem to root for a recession in Canada, we are making the investments needed for our economy to grow and prosper. Conservatives can shout slogans all they want, but we will continue to implement solutions. They divide; we will deliver. That is progress. That is what Canadians deserve.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member does not understand how bad it is out there. More than a quarter of Canadians cannot afford to eat, and now the Prime Minister is telling a roomful of students they will have to sacrifice even more. Young people have sacrificed enough; they have already sacrificed home ownership, and yesterday CTV reported that young Canadians cannot even land a minimum-wage job.

Will the Liberal budget get spending under control so young Canadians can start affording everyday life?

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, the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, a AAA credit rating, an inflation rate within the Bank of Canada's target range and job numbers that exceeded expectations by 83% last month are Canada's economic fundamentals. The Citibank CEO, just last week, said, "Canada, relative to other G7 countries, has debt dynamics and fiscal space that, if used wisely, could unlock a lot of opportunities" in this country. That is exactly what we are focused on in budget 2025: unlocking opportunities for all Canadians.

*Oral Questions***FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

● (1505)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that India has placed a 30% tariff on Canadian peas. This is on top of the 100% tariffs already in place from China. As a result, 80% of Canada's pea markets now face tariffs worldwide. This is putting Canadian farmers at risk, as prices have dropped more than 40%. The Prime Minister and his team were just in India, and now they are in China. Every time they go somewhere, it gets worse.

What is the government going to do to ensure that our farmers get the tariff relief they need to ensure that they can stay in business?

Taleb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government and our Prime Minister have been working hard to ensure that Canadian farmers have access to markets around the world. Part of the work they have been doing is exactly that: cutting deals with more and more countries to ensure that Canadian farmers can sell their products to more and more markets around the world. That is exactly what we have been doing, from Singapore to Malaysia.

These are the things our government is working hard on. Instead of talking Canada down, our government is working with other governments to ensure that markets are available to Canadian producers.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to strengthen our Canadian identity, we need to help more people discover the places, stories and landscapes that define us. From national museums to parks and historic sites, these shared spaces remind us of who we are. For many families, every outing counts in the budget.

Can the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages elaborate on how we are helping Canadians explore and celebrate their heritage while ensuring that these experiences remain fairly accessible to everyone?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last summer, the Canada Strong Pass allowed families to discover our incredible country while making it affordable to do so. It was a huge success. Over 200,000 children received free admission to the national museums, which saw a 15% increase in visitors. Provincial museums saw a 26% increase in young visitors. Some Parks Canada sites saw a 20% increase in use. In addition, Canadian families saved \$6 million on VIA Rail.

Given this enthusiasm for the program, we are very pleased that the Canada Strong Pass is returning this winter and in summer 2026 so that families can continue to discover the most beautiful country in the world.

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to negotiate a softwood lumber agreement with the Americans. Today the forestry sector is threatened with tariffs of up to 55%. In my riding of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, 55% tariffs mean 8,000 jobs are at risk and families who will not be able to pay their bills at the end of the month. Our workers deserve better. Since this Prime Minister took office, tariffs have tripled.

Why do the Liberals always sell out forestry workers and their families instead of helping them?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague's anger and I share it, because 55% tariffs on our lumber industry is completely unacceptable. That is why our government is there to stand up for our workers. We are there for the industry. We know that people in the industry are in crisis right now. We will take them by the hand, we will help them through this difficult time, and we will be there to support them. My colleague and I are able to have good conversations. We work well together. I will be pleased to help him.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the forestry sector is being hit with 45% U.S. tariffs. In Chaudière-Appalaches, the forestry sector represents \$781 million in employment earnings. The big banker was supposed to figure it all out. It now costs Europeans less to ship wood from Germany across the Atlantic than it does for us to ship it from Saint-Théophile, in Beauce, across the border. What a great negotiator. Well done.

Will the Prime Minister defend forestry workers, yes or no?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is simple: Absolutely. Yes, yes, yes, we will be there for the forestry sector because we believe in it. However, that is not all. We know there are things we cannot control. We cannot control the U.S. administration, but there are things that we can control, and we are going to focus on helping our workers and our businesses. We are going to make sure we are there to help them through this crisis. We are going to offer them support, and we are also going to build a lot of demand for our lumber sector through our major national projects.

Oral Questions

● (1510)

[English]

FINANCE

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every single dollar the Liberal Prime Minister spends comes straight out of the pockets of Canadians, through higher taxes, higher deficits and higher inflation. While food bank use surges to 2.2 million visits per month, the Prime Minister thinks it is a brilliant idea to blow \$8.2 million on gender-just, low-carbon rice in Vietnam. While the Liberals feed their bloated DEI bureaucracy, Canadians are making sacrifices, with skyrocketing food prices, record housing costs and rising unemployment.

When will the out-of-touch Liberal Prime Minister stop funding his radical DEI programs, stop lecturing working Canadians and finally deliver an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. Adam van Koevorden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every time the Food Banks report comes out, I read it. I read what the recommendations are and what the organizations that are focused on reducing poverty and food insecurity in Canada recommend that our government do.

The report recommends that we undertake measures like the national school food program, a program that one Conservative member from Newfoundland said last week was “garbage”. We are investing in our social safety net. We are investing in programs that support families. We are investing in Canadians, while the other side, the Conservatives, talk them down every chance they get.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Philip Earle (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Arctic has been home to indigenous peoples for countless generations. Inuit Nunangat stands at the heart of Canada's identity, its security and its future. Last week, the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs was in Iceland at the Arctic Circle Assembly, advancing partnerships and Canada's Arctic leadership.

Can the minister tell the House how the new government is acting decisively—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Philip Earle: Mr. Speaker, they are arguing over there because they think they are still in caucus.

How is the new government's acting decisively, while collaborating with indigenous leadership to build Canada's north, upholding our sovereignty and security as threats increase?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world views Canada as an Arctic nation and is watching how we lead.

As climate and geopolitical risks emerge, our government is taking action. We are building partnerships with nordic countries, like the ICE Pact, for which Polar Max icebreakers will be built right here in Canada and in Finland. We have new Arctic radar stations to boost our defence and enhance early warning systems. We just

appointed an Arctic ambassador and will have consulates in Alaska and Greenland.

These are some examples of our Arctic leadership, where we will build, protect and empower Canada's north.

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ETHICS

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister stands to make tens of millions of dollars in future bonus pay from pre-registered investment funds in Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.

Canadians deserve to know the extent to which the Prime Minister is abusing offshore tax havens, so I have a simple question: How many other investments does the Prime Minister have in offshore tax havens? I would just like an answer.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the strongest and most stringent ethics regimes in the world. It applies to every single member of the House. After a very successful career—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I do not like to do this, because it eats up time, but I cannot hear, so I have to ask the minister to repeat the answer from the top.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, as all members know, we live under one of the strongest and most stringent ethics regimes in the world, which applies to every single member of the House, including the Prime Minister. He has complied stringently and in fact very proactively with all of these requirements and the with Ethics Commissioner.

In terms of what his filings are and the ethics screens that he has put in place, the Prime Minister has gone above and beyond in complying with all matters of the law.

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● (1515)

THE ECONOMY

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are suffering one of the worst affordability crises in generations. Sixty per cent of them are having trouble meeting their monthly expenses; half are using credit cards or borrowing money for daily needs, paying interest rates of 19% or more; and food bank usage has doubled since 2019. People should not have to struggle like this in a country as wealthy as Canada.

What steps is the government taking to make sure Canadians do not have to go into debt just to feed their family?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really grateful for the question, because the government is taking a number of steps, and has been taking steps for a number of years, to make sure that Canadians can actually feed their family. For example, the Canada child benefit has lifted 400,000 children out of poverty. There are the indexed-to-inflation benefits for seniors. We have done work on employment insurance to make sure that employees who lose their job can actually keep that money while they are on claim.

The government will stand with workers, we will stand with families, and I sure hope the member opposite will vote for a budget that is—

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe the Secretary of State for Sport was using unparliamentary language in describing a member of the House. I would ask him to withdraw it and apologize.

The Speaker: I will review the matter and get back to the House if necessary.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to five petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled "State of Airline Competition in Canada".

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

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Finance, in relation to Bill C-4, an act re-

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specting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

* * *

● (1520)

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR A GUARANTEED LIVABLE BASIC INCOME ACT

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-253, An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income.

She said: *Uqaqtittiji*, I am pleased to introduce a bill to address severe poverty and food security in Canada. I thank my seconder, the member for Winnipeg Centre, for her fierce advocacy in originating this work.

Nunavummiut are experiencing the worst food security crisis in Canada. In Iqaluit, food insecurity is at 79% for young children. This means that four out of every five Inuit children are going hungry every day. Visits to the Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre are at an all-time high. When the Liberals abruptly cancelled the ICFI's hamlet food voucher program, visits went from 100 per day to an astonishing 500 per day.

My bill, if passed, would require the federal government to develop a plan toward a guaranteed livable basic income. If passed, it would give back human dignity to those suffering in poverty.

Canada is a wealthy country. Let us create policies for that wealth to be shared among the poorest in our communities.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC) moved that Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assault against persons who provide health services and first responders), be read the first time.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce Bill S-233, an act to amend the Criminal Code for assault against persons who provide health services and first responders. I would be remiss if I did not thank my hon. colleague from Oshawa for seconding this bill and also my great friend and colleague from Barrie South—Innisfil, who was a firefighter for over 30 years.

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Our brave men and women put on their uniforms every day to serve our communities. They run toward danger. They run into burning buildings. They run toward bullets. They hold our hand as we take our last breath. Whether they are a nurse, a firefighter, a paramedic or correctional officer, they are facing unprecedented levels of violence against them. How far we have fallen where it is okay to attack a nurse as she takes our temperature. How far we have fallen where it is okay to attack a paramedic as he administers first aid.

Bill S-233 has the exact language as my bill, Bill C-321, which passed unanimously in the House and unanimously in the Senate but fell off the Order Paper due to the dissolution of Parliament. I am honoured to stand here today. I am hoping that all parties, all colleagues, can come together and give unanimous consent at some point to get Bill S-233 passed at all stages. It could be law today. The safety and security of our firefighters, paramedics, first responders and health care workers depend on it.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

PETITIONS**PARKS CANADA**

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

I rise to present a petition regarding Parks Canada's decision to ban motorized watercraft on Clear Lake in Riding Mountain National Park. The petition is signed by over 1,000 Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Canadians are calling on the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture to reverse Parks Canada's decision to ban boats on Clear Lake and reinstate the previously announced "one boat, one lake" policy. The petitioners note that Parks Canada had promised motorized boat access would be restored under the "one boat, one lake" policy, but this decision was abruptly reversed just hours before the May long weekend without justification. They are frustrated that the decision was never explained to the public despite repeated requests from community members.

Now that the local superintendent has been replaced, Canadians believe that now is the right time to acknowledge this failure, move forward and reopen Clear Lake so that next summer, all Canadians can once again enjoy one of Canada's most beautiful lakes.

● (1525)

VETERANS BENEFITS

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition today that recognizes that when a Canadian serves Canada, their families serve with them. Constant moves around the country disrupt a family's ability to establish deep roots and community connections, and it hurts career growth prospects for spouses.

The undersigned call on the government to recognize the critical role that families play for our service members and our RCMP, and call on the government to extend mental health benefits to these

family members, who sacrifice so much to support our men and women in uniform.

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petition e-6489 on the democratic process, signed by 11,706 petitioners.

The petition calls on the House to adopt and direct appropriate national security and intelligence agencies to conduct a comprehensive review of potential security risks associated with political leadership in Canada, ensuring that all candidates for party leadership and high office undergo security vetting; develop and implement mechanisms to enhance transparency in the vetting process of political candidates, increasing public confidence while maintaining legal and privacy protections; strengthen national safeguards against foreign interference in Canadian democratic institutions; and commit to ensuring that all elected officials meet the highest standards of integrity, accountability and national loyalty.

I am proud to present this petition on behalf of the undersigned.

IMMIGRATION

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by 238 Canadians, including many members of the Bangladeshi community in Toronto and Montreal. They wish to draw our attention to the fact that some members of the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, a recognized political party in Bangladesh, have been found inadmissible to Canada under IRPA.

The petitioners say that this party and its supporters are law-abiding citizens who participated in the democratic process and are committed to democratic values. They ask the government to review its policy regarding the members of this party and to ensure individual applicants receive fair and just treatment under Canadian law.

FIREARMS

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an incredible honour to present a petition for the first time on behalf of the residents of Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Before I get into the petition, I would like to thank all my Conservative colleagues for, over the last year or two, presenting similar petitions on behalf of Skeena—Bulkley Valley. I am here to say that I will take it from here, but I thank them for presenting those petitions.

This petition is calling on the government to stop the firearms confiscation program that is currently being implemented in a pilot program in Cape Breton. The essence of this petition is basically for the government to stop targeting law-abiding citizens with the gun confiscation program and actually go after criminals.

On behalf of Skeena—Bulkley Valley, I am thankful for this honour.

SMALL CRAFT HARBOURS

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today on behalf of the residents of Long Range Mountains regarding small craft harbours. These harbours are the heartbeat of coastal communities. Not only do people earn a living from these areas, but they are also a community gathering place, a part of our history and a part of our culture. The petitioners are concerned that without investment in these harbours, they will not be fully safe or operational.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to double the funding for small craft harbours, to improve communication with harbour authorities and local communities, and to ensure long-term investments that support jobs and modern infrastructure in our coastal region. I am proud to table this petition on their behalf.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition organized by Shelterlink Youth Services in Stratford and signed by constituents of Perth—Wellington.

The petitioners would like to draw attention to youth homelessness. They are requesting that the government declare November 17 of each year to be national youth homelessness awareness day.

• (1530)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition signed by over 10,000 Canadians across the country. The petitioners note that the Prime Minister made the “elbows up” promise to defend Canadian sovereignty and democracy and to distinguish Canada from the dangerous politics of the United States.

Bill C-2 is a gross concession to the U.S., ushering in Trump-style legislation at the expense of our well-being. It is a dramatic bait and switch on Canadian voters, and the owners of Canada do not approve. It threatens to destroy the lives of nearly one-quarter of Canadians; almost 10 million friends and family members would lose their right to due process under the legislation, allowing their immigration status to be revoked or altered without an individualized review.

Canada's asylum policy is a source of national pride and identity, and Bill C-2 proposes arbitrary limits that abandon the most vulnerable while doing nothing to improve safety and disgracing our identity at home and abroad.

The petitioners also note that Bill C-2 appears to be a Trojan horse for sweeping surveillance policies, expanding police access to personal data without a warrant, lowering privacy thresholds to “reasonable grounds”, weakening protection on international data sharing and allowing Canada Post to open private mail.

They note that the legislation is as offensive as it is undemocratic.

Finally, they note that Bill C-2 tramples on our charter rights and freedoms and puts Canada on a dangerous path of xenophobia and racism.

They are therefore calling on the government to immediately withdraw Bill C-2 in full, uphold the elbows-up promise to reject

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Trump-style policies, ensure immigration security and privacy legislation, reflect our nation's commitment to democracy and human rights, honour the responsibility of elected office, and affirm our charter and not trample it.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present petition e-6563, which more than 1,160 Canadians have signed. It speaks to the issue of private sponsorship refugee applications, which were paused until December 31 of this year, but many approved privately sponsored refugee applicants are experiencing significant delays, some waiting for over a year for interviews at the Canadian embassy in Ankara, Turkey.

The petitioners go on to state that these delays are leaving individuals very vulnerable in precarious situations, particularly those who are faced with threats as part of an LGBT community, as well as others dealing with local political instability. The private sponsors across Canada are prepared and committed to support these refugees on their arrival.

Therefore, to summarize, the petitioners ask the Government of Canada to resume the intake of private sponsorship refugee applications as soon as possible, before the current pause ends on December 31, and to expedite the processing of already approved privately sponsored refugees, prioritizing timely interviews at the embassy in Ankara.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit a petition to the House on behalf of the people of Powell River, who wish to express their strong opposition to Brookfield Renewable Partners LP, a well-known and politically well-connected foreign-based corporation, from being granted a 30-year export permit to send electricity from the local hydroelectric dam out of the country to the United States, with almost no benefit to the people who actually live in Powell River or the people of British Columbia.

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The petitioners maintain that the approval of this permit would prevent Canadians from making future use of this finite natural resource to meet domestic electricity demand or to support local industry, as the dam has supported the recently closed pulp mill and thousands of jobs for more than 100 years. That is why they are calling on Canada's energy regulator to reject this permit request. It is not in Canada's national interest. It is not supported by the local community, and it undermines the economic development of Powell River, the region, the province of British Columbia and our incredible country.

I support them 100%.

• (1535)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

In the first petition, petitioners from across Canada have noted that nickel is an important raw material in the manufacturing of arms and that Canada is a strong producer of nickel. Knowing that Israel is committing a genocide in Palestine, these citizens have asked the Canadian government to ensure that there is a ban on any Canadian nickel being used in the manufacturing of arms used by Israel in the genocide against Palestinians and that, in fact, there should be something to certify that all users of that nickel will not use that product for arms to be used by Israel.

GAZA

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition as well. This petition was signed by 850 Canadians.

Knowing that the population of Gaza is enduring an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, including forced starvation, displacement and systematic attacks on civilians, in blatant violation of international law, and knowing that the Gaza temporary resident visa program, launched by Canada, has been an incredibly dismal and disappointing failure, these citizens of Canada call on our government to implement a comprehensive and urgent evacuation plan under the name of a Canada-Gaza authorization for emergency travel.

They have indicated six parts that they would like to see the Government of Canada implement, including the evacuation of at-risk relatives of Canadian citizens, the establishment of a safe humanitarian corridor, the deployment of Canadian military aircraft or chartered planes to evacuate those most at risk, the waiving of visa requirements and granting humanitarian permits, the appointment of a special envoy or establishment of a dedicated task force and the upholding of Canada's international obligations to protect Palestinian families seeking safe refuge.

SHIP RECYCLING

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to table a petition from Canadians deeply concerned about the lack of international recycling and shipbreaking regulations in Canada, despite the fact that our country has the longest coastline in the world.

Petitioners highlight the harmful effects of unsafe ship-dismantling practices, which release dangerous substances into coastal areas, including copper and zinc, asbestos, PCBs and waste oils. They draw particular attention to Baynes Sound in British Columbia, an ecologically significant area that has been compromised by a ship-recycling operation. Residents, including children, are being put at risk simply by living next to these activities.

The petitioners therefore call upon the Government of Canada to adopt international standards, specifically the Hong Kong convention and the EU ship-recycling regulation, to ensure that ship recycling in this country is conducted safely, sustainably and in a way that protects our waters, our communities and our coastal heritage for generations to come.

FIREARMS

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by Canadians from across the country who are concerned about past legislation, new orders in council and the targeting of law-abiding firearms owners.

The petitioners say that Bill C-21 would do nothing to tackle firearm violence but would add red tape for law-abiding Canadians. They also say that the Liberals' gun confiscation program is nothing more than a waste of money.

The petitioners are calling for the government to repeal Bill C-21, revoke the orders in council and target non-law-abiding Canadians. It should go after the criminals and not law-abiding firearms owners.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1540)

[English]

BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORM ACT

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.) moved that Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act (bail and sentencing), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, today we have the opportunity to commence debate on an important bill that would help reinforce and strengthen Canada's criminal laws and promote public safety in communities in every part of the country.

This bill is about stronger laws and safer communities. It is about keeping people safe in the places they love and the places they live.

Importantly, although this particular piece of legislation focuses on bail and sentencing, it is part of a broader strategy to promote public safety across the country. This strategy rests on three key pillars: first, stronger laws to help protect people; second, investments in the front line to ensure that law enforcement has the ability to do its job and our border officials have the ability to keep the country safe; and third, upstream investments to ensure that we do not just seek to punish crime after it takes place but do what we can to prevent crime, both in the short and long term.

Before we get too deep into this conversation, it is important that we acknowledge where we are as a country. We understand that crime is a very real problem in different parts of the country. We know that we have to do more to protect Canadians against criminal activity that exists in different regions.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

We understand that Canadians have the desire to see the criminal law keep up with the experience in their communities. We do not think it is acceptable that repeat violent offenders would be routinely released after having their bail hearings.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, it is difficult. There are members of the opposition who are seeking to heckle and interrupt. I would very much prefer to have your assistance in keeping this debate civil on matters of such importance.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It is extremely disruptive to be heckling a person while right in front of them. I thank the hon. member for exiting the chamber.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, it is important that we actually make space for all parties to be heard and to have a conversation.

It is essential that we take action to ensure that people who are violent, who commit serious crimes, who are dangerous and who pose a risk to public safety do not continue to find themselves re-

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leased into our communities if they pose a public safety threat to Canadians. This is going to take changes to our criminal law in both bail and sentencing.

I remember, as a kid, the last time we saw the Blue Jays in the World Series. My pals and I would ride bikes and play ball hockey in our community until we lost daylight. We never feared for our safety, and neither did our parents. Sadly, today, a lot of people do not enjoy that same level of comfort, the peace and security we enjoyed. We see, too often, people installing cameras on their doorbells. Instead of simply seeing deliveries arrive at their home, they are actually seeing people break into their neighbour's homes and cars being stolen from their driveways. We do not have to accept this as a reality, not in Canada, certainly.

[Translation]

Crime is a real concern throughout the country. Canadians are frustrated to see repeat violent offenders being released from prison. They are concerned about their safety. We see it every day: Car thefts and break-ins in the middle of the night are being caught on camera.

People simply want to know that the system puts their safety first.

[English]

What I have some faith in is that the lessons we have learned that have been embedded in the bill were not developed behind closed doors on Parliament Hill. They have benefited from extraordinary collaboration with provincial governments in different parts of the country and of different partisan persuasions. They have benefited from the advice of law enforcement, the people who actually work within the system. They have benefited from the advice of municipalities, which see the impacts of crime first-hand; of community organizations that promote the rights of victims; and of business associations that wanted to share their frustration with the level of crime and its impact on local economies.

[Translation]

We must not develop these measures behind closed doors. They must come from working together with the provinces and territories, cities, community organizations, business associations and, of course, the police.

• (1545)

[English]

The bill really focuses on two key areas. The first is bail. The second is sentencing.

Let us spend a moment looking at some of the changes we are proposing to bail. The bill includes more than 80 specific measures, sweeping reforms that are designed to help keep communities safe. In the limited time I have, I am going to focus on a few key portions.

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The first, when it comes to the system of bail, is on the issue of the principle of restraint. This is not a principle that was created by any particular government; it is a principle that was advanced and confirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada. After the principle was embedded into Canadian law through a previous piece of legislation in a previous Parliament, I have been hearing stories, from when I engage with law enforcement, about its misapplication in certain circumstances.

For that reason, we are going to move forward with significant changes to the Criminal Code that would clarify precisely that the principle of restraint is not a “get out of jail free” card. In fact we are going to be, more specifically, clarifying that the court must be satisfied that it has the ability to protect public safety, before deciding to release someone into the community. If it does not have the ability to manage the public safety imperative, it will have grounds to detain that person. If a person is to be released, the court must be satisfied that it can place conditions on their release that will protect public safety.

[*Translation*]

Release on bail is not a free pass. The principle of restraint must be applied with judgment. Our new bill makes it clear that public safety must always come first.

If public safety is at risk, then the courts will have the tools to order detention.

[*English*]

In addition to the significant change to the principle of restraint, we are advancing new factors for the courts to consider, to ensure that when hearing a bail application, they consider the seriousness of the charges that a person will face, in order to determine whether it would undermine public confidence in the justice system should that person be released.

We are also taking another step, which is a direct response to the feedback we have heard from provinces, municipalities and the business community. There are certain individuals, though they represent a small minority of the population in a given community, who represent a significant majority of the criminal activity that may take place in a given community.

In order to respond to this pressing need, in addition to considering the seriousness of the charges a person may be facing, we will be looking to have the court consider the number of outstanding charges, and where the number of charges a person is facing would cause public confidence in the administration of justice to be jeopardized, we would use that to give the court grounds to detain a person in order to prevent that outcome.

We also want to respond to the feedback we have heard specifically about acts of random violence that take place in our communities that cause people not to feel safe when they experience life in different parts of this country.

In addition to the changes to the principle of restraint, the new factors we wish to have the court consider, we also going forward with changes to reverse onus within the Criminal Code. Before I describe the specific offences, I will say that the reverse onus regime would change the way bail applications would be heard for

certain offences where we believe there is a risk to the Canadian public.

Normally at a bail hearing, the Crown bears the obligation to demonstrate why a person ought to be detained, often on the basis of their risk to public safety. A reverse onus changes that analysis and requires the person who has been accused of a crime to demonstrate why they should be released on bail. We would shift this analysis for several key offences, including violent home invasion, auto theft, human trafficking and human smuggling, violent extortion, assault and sexual assault where there is choking or strangulation involved.

We would also be responding to very real circumstances that have led to tragedies in this country involving people who have been released after they have been convicted of a crime but before they have been sentenced. With these changes, we not only expect to promote public safety in our communities. One of the common threads that binds these unique offences together is that they often are conducted by criminal organizations. By making it harder for people to be released on bail when they have been charged with these crimes, we can both promote public safety and potentially cut revenue streams from criminal organizations, which would further enhance the safety of the Canadian public.

The second theme in the bill, beyond the changes to the bail regime that would make it harder for violent repeat offenders to be released into our communities, is that we would be making serious changes to the sentencing regime that exists within the Criminal Code.

There are a number of different changes that I am happy to walk everyone through now. The first would be adding aggravating factors to the Criminal Code, which would lead to harsher penalties when certain kinds of crimes are committed and a person has been convicted. These aggravating factors would certainly apply to violent repeat crimes, no matter where they take place in Canada, but we have also decided to add aggravating factors for certain offences where the harm is felt not simply by the individual victim but also reverberates more broadly throughout the community.

In particular I want to draw attention to some of the changes that we are making, including adding an aggravating factor when a crime is committed against a first responder in the line of duty who is seeking to keep our communities safe. When people put their life on the line to help protect our communities, the very least we can offer is protection for the people who protect us. We need to ensure that the people who are putting out fires, stopping heart attacks and defending our communities against criminal activity are not themselves subjected to assaults in the street.

It is not reasonable to ask people in the line of duty to defend themselves when they are trying to defend us, and it makes it difficult for them to recruit more members into the profession when people face these inherent dangers of the job. The stiffer penalties would serve not only as protection in the moment but also as a deterrent for would-be criminals who may be thinking of committing crimes against first responders.

In addition, we would be adding aggravating factors for crimes that impact our essential infrastructure, the systems that deliver power to our communities, or our telecommunications networks. Oftentimes, people who steal copper wire are charged with a fairly small offence, theft under \$5,000, but the damages that result from those crimes can cost millions and in fact create very serious challenges in our communities, whether it is power outages or communications systems' going down.

We would also be adding aggravating factors when it comes to organized retail crime, people who are stealing in a systematic way from businesses, often small businesses, in our communities, in order to promote profiteering for themselves and potentially for criminal organizations. People who commit crimes against the people who protect us, the systems that power us or the businesses that serve us should expect harsher sentences as a result of these proposed changes to Canada's criminal laws.

● (1550)

In addition, we would be adding certain changes to the consecutive sentencing regime in this country. For people who may not be familiar with the way things normally operate, I will say that sometimes someone can be sentenced to different crimes that carry different sentences. Oftentimes, depending on the circumstances, courts may decide to allow a person to serve multiple sentences concurrently, not necessarily capturing the severity of the penalties associated with particular offences in the Criminal Code.

The change we are proposing would empower the courts to impose consecutive sentencing for repeat violent offenders and for people who commit home invasions and auto theft. We believe that if someone is convicted of two crimes, one that carries a sentence of four years and another that carries a sentence of two years, they should serve both sentences, for a total of six years. The changes we would be making have the opportunity to bring that vision into a reality.

In addition to these changes to aggravating factors and consecutive sentencing, we would also direct the court, when it comes to violent home invasion and auto theft in particular, to make denunciation and deterrence primary considerations. It is important that we not only ensure that there are consequences for the actions of individuals but that we also send a signal, to others in the future who may be thinking about committing crimes, that this behaviour will not be tolerated.

When it comes to the changes to our sentencing laws, we would also be imposing restrictions on the ability of the court in certain circumstances to impose what are known as conditional sentencing orders. These changes would restrict access to house arrest for people who commit serious sexual assault or sexual crimes against children. When I speak to survivors of sexual assault, the prospect that the perpetrator of such horrific violence could serve their sentence at home in the same community where their victim lives does not feel like justice to the people who have been through such a horrific experience.

The restriction on house arrest for sexual assault and sexual crimes against kids would ensure that people who commit such violent and heinous crimes would actually spend time being incarcerated,

to demonstrate there are in fact very serious consequences for their activities.

We would also be making changes to the remedies available for certain kinds of crimes. I want to draw the attention of members to one in particular. For people who are convicted of criminal negligence causing death involving a motor vehicle, we would restore the ability of courts to implement a prohibition on driving. If someone makes the decision to become intoxicated, to drive drunk, and they kill someone, we want to empower the courts to revoke their ability to get behind the wheel again. Driving in this country is a privilege.

The fact that people may cause such grievous harm to others and nevertheless be entitled to get behind the wheel is not something I am comfortable with. It is not something the government is comfortable with. Through this change, we would be able to save countless lives going forward and to ensure once again that there are serious consequences for serious crimes.

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

Sentences must reflect the seriousness of the crime. We are adding aggravating factors for those who assault first responders, participate in organized theft or threaten critical infrastructure. We are ending house arrest for serious crimes like sexual assault and crimes against children.

Finally, courts will once again be able to prohibit driving in cases of negligence causing death or serious bodily harm.

[*English*]

It is important we understand that the changes we would be making are part of the broader strategy I alluded to at the outset of my remarks. Certainly the first pillar of the strategy is to adopt stronger laws to promote safer communities.

This includes not only these important and sweeping reforms to the bail and sentencing regimes that exist inside the Criminal Code but also the act to combat hate that we tabled in Parliament earlier in the fall, as well as legislation I will be tabling before the House rises for the Christmas holidays. These would better protect Canadians against intimate partner violence and against sexual offences, to offer additional protections for children who are being exploited online, to ensure that victims have a significant role to play in the criminal trial process, and, importantly, to deal with delays in the justice system that are leading to sometimes serious charges' being thrown out of court.

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In addition to these laws, though, we know we have to take a whole-of-society approach to addressing public safety. The second pillar of the strategy involves investing in the front line to ensure that the people who keep communities safe have the tools and resources they need to do their job. In the short term, this includes investments in the RCMP to add 1,000 new personnel. It includes resources to the Canada Border Services Agency to add 1,000 new officers at the border to help prevent illegal guns and drugs from coming into our country. It also includes additional resources for the Public Prosecution Service to ensure that we have the ability not only to investigate crime but also to prosecute crime on the back end.

It is important that we put these tools in place so law enforcement can do its job to prevent crime, but we know we need to do more if we are going to have long-term prevention and long-term reductions in crime, violent crime in particular. That is why the third pillar of our strategy involves upstream investments aimed at prevention. Specifically, they would include generational investments in affordable housing and supportive housing through the new Build Canada Homes entity to ensure that people have a roof over their head, can escape poverty and have access to supportive housing when they would otherwise potentially be at risk of recidivism or at risk of becoming a criminal in the first place.

This pillar also involves our continued support for mental health and addictions, which will certainly engage conversations with provincial governments. We know that we need to do more to help address mental health challenges in this country if we want to reduce crime overall.

We also intend to make the investments necessary to target at-risk youth to potentially turn them away from a life of crime before it begins. The best way to stop crime is not simply to punish it after it happens, but to stop it in the first place.

I am confident that if we back these three pillars with the resources necessary to deliver on the plan, we will see a reduction in crime and violent crime in this country.

[*Translation*]

This bill is part of a broader strategy to keep our communities safe. Yes, we need tougher laws, but we also need more support for first responders and more investments in prevention, mental health and housing, so that more can be done sooner.

[*English*]

In conclusion, we have a chance to promote a safer country. It is no coincidence that this bill has gained significant support from law enforcement, including the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Association of Ontario, the Toronto Police Association and the New Glasgow Regional Police in my own community and others. It has attracted the support of provinces from different partisan affiliations, including the Conservatives in Ontario and Nova Scotia and the NDP in Manitoba and British Columbia. It has attracted the support of municipalities, including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; local governments in places like Brampton, London and Winnipeg; and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. The list goes on. Of course, there are organizations like the Canadian Chamber of Com-

merce, the Retail Council of Canada and the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime.

We can take violent repeat offenders more seriously. We can strengthen our laws, but I would much prefer to do it in a non-partisan way that attracts the support of all members of this House. Let us do the jobs we have been entrusted to do to help keep Canadians safe, and let us cast our vote in support of this important legislation.

● (1600)

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, the bill is some 35 pages long. It would make 80 significant changes to the Criminal Code. In fact, the title of the bill is the bail and sentencing reform act.

The question I will put to the minister is regarding sentencing. He spoke very generally about the consecutive sentence aspect of the bill. He spoke about the aggravated features of the bill for sentencing purposes, but he did not mention the one particular clause in this 35-page bill that would increase the sentence for one particular offence.

Despite all the serious violent crime that is happening in this country, with extortion alone up 330% in 10 years, I would like to know why this particular Liberal justice minister and his government sought to change the penalty for contempt of court from 90 days to two years less one day. That is the only sentence in this bill that would be changed.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, before I address the member's question directly, I want to thank him for the conversations we have had and for his advocacy in advancing some of the specific reforms that are included in this bill.

This bill was not necessarily intended to revisit the penalties associated with every offence that exists in the Criminal Code. Of course, serious offences deserve serious penalties, but it was important for me to address the issue of contempt of court, because frankly, one of the themes carried throughout the text of this bill is the underlying culture of a lack of respect for the law.

Members can see the measures we put in place to address that, which deal with violent repeat offenders and address the number of crimes that are outstanding, but I was not satisfied that we had appropriate penalties in place for those who would openly defy orders of the court. It is important to me that we not only have penalties associated with the criminal activity that takes place in communities, but that we have a regime that will protect the integrity of the court's processes if all other offences are going to be treated with respect by Canadians writ large.

Government Orders

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, many police associations have called for the rapid passage of this bill. In fact, the London Police Association said, “The Bail and Sentencing Reform Act represents a vital and long-overdue advancement. This is an essential step in creating a safer London that our members serve. Equipping them with much needed legislative supports, holding violent repeat offenders more accountable.”

Maybe the minister can share with the House why it is really important that we work together, all parties across the House, to make sure this bill passes as soon as possible.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, to the extent that we can adopt this bill quickly, we expect to see the positive implications it will have on communities more quickly.

What is important, to the member's question, is that I would prefer to do that in a way that is collaborative, not just with members in the House but with different levels of the government and policing associations. The fact that this bill has attracted such extraordinary support from the people who enforce our laws and manage the justice systems in the provinces speaks to the buy-in from people across the spectrum of political ideologies, across geographies and across partisanship.

I hope the spirit we implemented in the bill's development will also carry through when it comes time to cast our votes in the House.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that we agree with Bill C-14. Obviously, like everything else, we will study it more thoroughly in committee. My colleague, the Bloc Québécois justice critic, will be taking care of this file.

However, certain questions come to mind. Contrary to popular belief, we know that the number of inmates awaiting trial has never been higher. The percentage of incarcerated individuals awaiting trial rose from 64% in 2019-20 to 72% in 2022-23. That is huge.

I have two questions for the minister. First, how is that possible? Second, how does the bill address that?

• (1605)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, I first want to thank my colleague and the Bloc Québécois for their position on this bill. It is very important that we work together to implement the changes it proposes. I will continue in English in order to be more clear.

[*English*]

My colleague has raised a very real concern about the number of people in Canada facing pretrial detention. The right answer, in my view, insists that we implement a framework designed to protect the public's safety. This will engage conversations, particularly at provincial levels, about the resources necessary to deal with bail hearings expeditiously and to make sure there are enough police on the ground, enough prosecutors, enough judges to make bail decisions and enough administrative support for the courts to do their jobs.

If we extend the logic of the fear I have heard, which is very real, from people who have raised similar points, we would end up concluding that the right solution to process challenges is to weaken Canada's criminal laws. I disagree with that approach, but I invite a healthy conversation during committee proceedings about what resources should be in place and which levels of government have such responsibilities. That will ensure we do not just have strong laws on paper; we have a system that has the capacity to implement them.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have worked collaboratively across all sides of the House for the last three years in the work on Bill C-321, an act to amend the Criminal Code as it pertains to first responders and health care workers. I worked collaboratively across all sides to get it passed unanimously in the last Parliament at all stages. It did, but the dissolution of Parliament made it fall off the Order Paper.

We have a bill before us today, Bill S-233, that the Senate side passed unanimously because it is so important. The minister said this part of Bill C-14 is critically important, and I could not agree with him more.

Would he support carving this section out and, with us as a House standing together to send a message to first responders, paramedics and health care workers that we value them, passing Bill S-233 at all stages at some point during this conversation?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Madam Speaker, before I address the question directly, I want to thank the hon. member, because I had the opportunity to work with him a number of years ago when he put forward Bill C-211 in our first Parliament, which addressed the need to better support first responders and their mental health in particular. I know he has been a champion for first responders, as I have been, from the day we were first elected.

This is an important component of the bill, but quite frankly, I do not care who gets the credit. I want to see protection afforded to our first responders. We can have a conversation, perhaps after the debate concludes today, on the best way to make that happen the most quickly. To the extent that we can support those working to keep our communities safe, it is an idea, whether Liberal, Conservative or otherwise, that I support not only philosophically but in practice as well.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I note that at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the director of the criminal justice program has pointed out that three successive ministers of justice have noted that we do not have any standardized approach to collecting data about how many people who apply for bail get it. The vast majority do not, and without standardized data, we are making reforms without necessarily having the evidence base we need.

Government Orders

I wonder if the hon. Minister of Justice has any comments on the question of whether we have a data and evidence base that is not driven as much by the very painful anecdotes but by evidence.

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my friend and colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands is right that there is a paucity of data when it comes to the administration of bail in Canada. Part of the reason is that we have different provincial systems with different challenges. We have challenges not only as to when a person may be released on bail and how often they may receive bail, but also as to the reasons behind those decisions.

This issue will require collaboration among the provinces to develop common standards and collect the data we need going forward, but at the same time, in the absence of a perfect dataset, we have the opportunity to work directly with the governments that administer the system and the law enforcement officials who work within the system day to day.

When there are nearly unanimous perspectives on certain changes posing very real problems in communities, it is incumbent upon me to listen to those who have the responsibility to deliver on the words included in the Criminal Code. To the extent that we can launch an initiative to better collect and share data in a disaggregated way about offenders who may pose risks, I would be more than willing to entertain a conversation as to what role the federal government may play in collaboration with provinces, which have the primary responsibility in this space.

● (1610)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There has been some consultation, and I hope you will find unanimous consent for us to go back to questions on the Order Paper for less than a minute.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 284 to 297 could be made orders for returns, these returns will be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 284—**Martin Champoux:**

With regard to case number 41231, English Montreal School Board, et al. v. Attorney General of Quebec, et al., as of June 17, 2025: (a) how many hours have public servants dedicated to this legal challenge; (b) how much money has the gov-

ernment spent on the challenge; (c) what resources has the government employed with respect to the challenge and how much money has been allocated to each of these resources; and (d) what is the total amount the government has incurred in legal costs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 285—**Martin Champoux:**

With regard to the challenge to Quebec's Act respecting the laicity of the State, broken down by case in which the government was involved: (a) how many hours have public servants devoted to each legal challenge; (b) how much money has the government spent on each challenge; (c) what resources has the government employed with respect to each challenge and how much money has been allocated to each of these resources; and (d) what was the total amount of legal expenses incurred by the government (i) broken down by challenge, (ii) for all challenges?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 286—**Lori Idlout:**

With regard to the Black Class Action Lawsuit (Nicholas Marcus Thompson et al. v. His Majesty the King (T-1458-20)), broken down by department: (a) what is the total amount spent to date by the government on this lawsuit; and (b) what is the total amount paid to Fasken, the law firm representing the Crown in this case?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 287—**Lori Idlout:**

With regard to the continuing designation of the United States of America as a safe third country under section 102 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act: (a) how many reports have been produced to date pursuant to the directives for ensuring a continuing review of factors set out in subsection 102(2) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act with respect to countries designated under paragraph 102(1)(a) of that Act; (b) for each such report, what is the (i) date of production, (ii) authoring department or agency, (iii) title or identifying reference number, (iv) date the report was provided to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship or any other Minister; (c) has the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship or any other Minister ever made a determination that the United States of America may no longer meet one or more of the conditions required under subsection 102(2) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and, if so, when and what action, if any, was taken; (d) have any Charter compliance assessments, legal risk analyses, or litigation-driven reviews concluded that the United States of America may not meet the requirements of paragraph 102(2)(a), (b), or (c) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act since 2015, and, if so, what were the conclusions and who received them; (e) when is the next review of the United States of America's safe third country designation scheduled to take place, and what are the timelines and procedures for its completion; (f) were any of these reports shared with the United States of America government or its agencies, and, if so, which ones and on what dates; and (g) will the government table in the House unredacted copies or summaries of all reports produced to date under these directives?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 288—Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to the planned budgetary reductions for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency: (a) is Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada moving forward with a Deficit Reduction Action Plan in 2024 and, if so, what is the targeted budget reduction for the Department in percentage and actual dollars broken down by (i) Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada region, (ii) province or territory; (b) what specific programs or services within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada are projected to experience reductions in funding as part of the Deficit Reduction Action Plan in 2024–25, 2025–26, and 2026–27, broken down by (i) Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada region, (ii) province or territory, (iii) full-time employee reduction; (c) how will the anticipated Deficit Reduction Action Plan affect processing times for applicants, broken down by each immigration stream, including the processing of study permits, work visas and travel visas; (d) what measures will Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada implement to ensure the Deficit Reduction Action Plan does not adversely impact service delivery standards for applicants and stakeholders, including settlement organizations; (e) what workforce adjustments or layoffs, if any, are planned within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to accommodate the Deficit Reduction Action Plan, and what impacts are anticipated on staffing levels or full-time employees and employee workloads, broken down by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada region; (f) how does Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada plan to engage with and communicate these changes to key stakeholders, including provinces, territories, settlement agencies and impacted applicants; (g) how much funding has been refocused away from the Canada Border Services Agency and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in the federal government's refocused spending initiative, broken down by year in these program areas, (i) border security and enforcement, (ii) customs and trade facilitation, (iii) traveller screening, (iv) citizenship and passport services, (v) refugee resettlement; and (h) what is funding that has been refocused away from Canada Border Services Agency and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in the federal government's refocused spending initiative being redirected toward, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 289—Lori Idlout:

With regard to measures taken by the government to prevent the import of alcohol and drugs into Nunavut, broken down by community and by fiscal year since 2020-21: (a) what specific measures are in place to ensure that mail and other packages entering Nunavut via Canada Post do not contain alcohol or drugs; (b) if screening facilities are used for this purpose, where are the screening facilities located; and (c) what percentage of mail and packages was checked for alcohol and drugs, in total and broken down by processing location and by method used to check the packages (scanning, manual search, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 290—Lori Idlout:

With regard to the Hamlet Food Voucher Program funded through the Inuit Child First Initiative and delivered by Indigenous Services Canada: (a) broken down by hamlet and fiscal year since 2019, what is (i) the number of Inuit children or families served by the program, (ii) total amount of funding allocated to the program; and (b) what indicators does Indigenous Services Canada use to demonstrate that the health care needs of Inuit children will either decrease or increase in the next three fiscal years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 291—Leah Gazan:

With regard to the consultation process in the government's preparation of Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act: (a) which Indigenous rights holders were consulted about Bill C-5 prior to it being introduced in the House of Commons; (b) how much time were these rights holders provided to share their concerns about Bill C-5 with the government; (c) did the ministers and staff responsible for the preparation of this bill address any concerns raised by Indigenous rights holders in correspondence or meetings held with them prior to Bill C-5 being introduced in the House of Commons; and (d) what steps did the government take to ensure Bill C-5 obtained the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous rights holders to ensure it was compliant with (i) An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, (ii) Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, including subsection 35(3)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 292—Leah Gazan:

With regard to the government's Sexual and Reproductive Health Fund, broken down by fiscal year since the program was initiated: (a) how much of the total funding allocated to this fund has been committed to date; (b) which organizations have applied for this funding and were refused; (c) which funding recipients received a reduction in funding year-over-year; and (d) what were the evaluation criteria used by the government to determine which (i) organizations received funding, (ii) previous funding recipients lost funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 293—Leah Gazan:

With regard to the consultative process for Bill C-2, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures: (a) what meetings or correspondence did the ministers and staff responsible for the preparation of Bill C-2 undertake with (i) women and gender equality organizations, (ii) migrant and refugee rights organizations; (b) did the government seek a legal opinion from the Privacy Commissioner concerning the legal validity of Bill C-2, prior to introducing it in the House of Commons; and (c) what steps did the government take to ensure that Bill C-2 was compliant with the 1951 Refugee Convention, prior to introducing it in the House of Commons?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 294—Leah Gazan:

With regard to requests made by First Nations in Manitoba to the government over the past five calendar years: (a) which First Nations have made requests to Indigenous Services Canada for fire prevention and fire fighting resources, including, funding for (i) personnel, (ii) training, (iii) direct training, (iv) protective gear, (v) water pumps, (vi) hoses, (vii) vehicles, (viii) hand tools and portable fire suppression or controlled-burn equipment; (b) which of the requests in (a)(i) to (a)(viii) were fulfilled; (c) for the requests fulfilled, how long did Indigenous Services Canada take to (i) answer the request, (ii) deliver the resources; and (d) how much funding has been allocated by Indigenous Services Canada for the provision of these resources?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 295—Raquel Dancho:

With regard to the program evaluation of the College and Community Innovation Program and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Community and College Social Innovation Fund, launched in May 2024: (a) what is the current status of this evaluation; (b) when will the evaluation be completed; (c) where and when will the results of the evaluation be published and made available to the public; and (d) if the results are not being made available to the public, (i) why not, (ii) who made the decision to keep them secret?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 296—Melissa Lantsman:

With regard to expenditures incurred by the government related to relocation or moving expenses for staff members of the Office of the Prime Minister, since March 14, 2025: (a) how many staff members had relocation or moving expenses which were covered by the government; and (b) what is the total value of such expenditures to date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 297—Marilène Gill:

With regard to the Canadian Coast Guard and the Canadian Armed Forces: what was the procedure and what criteria led the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre - Halifax to suspend the search on August 7, 2025, for the two people from Havre-Saint-Pierre who went missing at sea on August 5, 2025?

(Return tabled)

Government Orders

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes on October 25.

First, I would like to clarify that I do not believe this issue is a matter of privilege that should take precedence over all other business in the House.

That being said, I would like to inform the Chair that the question raised in the House on October 25 is currently being studied by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, in accordance with a motion adopted by that committee on October 23.

Furthermore, it is appropriate for the Chair to await a committee report to the House before intervening in such matters, and no committee report has been presented to the House.

Therefore, I believe it is premature for the Chair to rule on this question and that it would be more prudent to wait for a report from the committee on this matter, which will provide more context on its study and recommendations. This would also be consistent with the practices and rules of the House, which clearly stipulate that the Chair must not intervene in matters before a committee until a report has been tabled in the House.

To simplify things for the Chair and members who do not sit on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, as noted in the meeting minutes, on October 23, 2025, the committee agreed:

That the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner be invited to appear for one hour in relation to the study of the forms and procedural and interpretative guidelines from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

* * *

[English]

BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORM ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act (bail and sentencing), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I start, I seek unanimous consent to split my time.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Cariboo—Prince George.

It is always a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the fine constituents of my riding, and it is significant for me as a former participant in the criminal justice system for almost two decades. This is an issue that I have been pushing for, and it is an issue for which I have been advocating for change. Really, it is one

of the rationales as to why I left the Crown attorney system in Ontario and sought to become a legislator, which was to make and pass laws that would improve community safety.

If we take a look at the last 10 years, we see rising crime rates, which is a very serious matter right across the country. I have embarked on a cross-Canada tour and engaged with all of the stakeholders we can imagine who would have a position on this. All of them were unanimous in what needs to be done. For the last four years, these stakeholders engaged in their own advocacy with the federal government, writing to not only the current justice minister but also former justice minister Virani to affect change. For four years, that was largely ignored.

We know how we got to this situation. I often get asked the question as to why the Liberals are so preoccupied with the rights of the accused at the expense of victims and community safety. I have never really had a concrete answer to provide without doing a bit of research, so I did that.

Surprisingly, this goes back almost 50 years, to the early 1970s. The Trudeau government, this time the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, appointed a solicitor general by the name of Jean-Pierre Goyer, who stood in the House of Commons, not this building but Centre Block, and proudly proclaimed in the House, at that time, his intention to stress the rehabilitation of individuals rather than the protection of society. That struck me as a wow moment, as it is the origin of the whacked out hug-a-thug mentality of the Liberal government in making it so much easier for them to conduct their trade.

We then heard from Justin Trudeau and his justice ministers, who said to not blame them, that they are simply following what the Supreme Court of Canada literally asked them to do to codify changes in bail with the passage of Bill C-75.

I have read those decisions, both in my professional capacity and, again, as a parliamentarian. Specifically, I am referring to the decisions of Antic, Zora and St-Cloud, which never instructed the federal government to do anything and never instructed it to codify any principle in the Criminal Code.

How criminal justice is administered in this country is that we follow the Criminal Code. We also bear in mind case law, the decisions of our lower courts, the decisions of our superior courts, the decisions of appellate courts and the decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada. That is how the administration of justice works.

Justin Trudeau and the current Liberal government did not have to do anything, but they did.

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At the time, and this was 2019, I was in the trenches. I was dealing with bail court. I was asking myself why it has become exceedingly difficult. There would be an obvious case, such as when someone had proven themselves to be unreliable in making promises and to be a menace to not only themselves but also the community, but they were being released. Of course, we would get memos from our superiors in Ontario and Queen's Park, and, lo and behold, I found out that the federal Liberal government had changed the law, changed the direction and changed the trajectory of what bail court is all about.

• (1615)

This also instructed, in my view, all judges and justices of the peace who hear bail applications every single day to prioritize the release of the accused with the principle of restraint, releasing them at the earliest opportunity on the least restrictive conditions. That is and will always be the origin of catch-and-release. I lived it. I experienced it, and unfortunately, the rest of Canada is still experiencing it.

Then the Liberal government made it worse in 2022 when it decided it had to pass Bill C-5 to make it even easier and softer for criminals to get through the criminal justice system. It decided that, for all the most serious gun offences, to take away the mandatory minimum penalties and to give the ability to ask for conditional sentences for very serious offences. We all know the consequences. Then the government started to hear from the stakeholders, and again it promised that it was listening and would make some changes. Hence, it introduced Bill C-48, which increased reverse onus provisions in the Criminal Code. We know that did not have the desired impact.

When I look at Bill C-14, I see more reverse onus provisions, much like those in Bill C-48. I cannot say that this bill is Bill C-48 2.0, because it is not. I listened to the justice minister, who wants to provide some confidence to Canadians and victims that the Liberals are finally getting it right, that they are striking the right balance and that community safety is going to be paramount, but there is nothing in Bill C-14 that directs judges not to release in certain circumstances. It makes recommendations that they should not give primary consideration to early release, but it does not mandate that these dangerous repeat criminals should remain in custody. We all know what happens when we lock up the repeat violent criminals. It is that crime rates go down. In fact, when we look at Statistics Canada's statistics over the last 15 years, over the last four or five years of the Stephen Harper government, the crime rate went down significantly. When we look at that same graph, we see a spike the moment Justin Trudeau took government and every year thereafter.

I am not saying that Bill C-14 is going to be manna from heaven, because it is not. It is being supported by law enforcement, just like they supported Bill C-48, because, let us face it, law enforcement is desperate for something. I have spoken to all of the major stakeholders who are now saying in the media that they support Bill C-14. They have made recommendations to the government, and some have been captured, but not all. There are many avenues for improvement, and I would encourage the government, as it listens to the debate in the House and, ultimately, as it reviews it at committee, to look at the common-sense solutions in the member for

Oxford's jail not bail act. That would provide direct instructions to judges on how to deal with repeat violent criminals.

If we start by scrapping the principle of restraint and replacing it with the principle of public safety and protection, that is an instruction that would telegraph to judges that, when they are dealing with a class of individual who has been on a number of releases or who has a criminal record, it shows repeated behaviour of not abiding by conditions, and the priority is on the protection of the community, not the convenience of the accused. I encourage the government to look at that.

Bill C-14 is good, but not good enough. Conservatives will make it better.

• (1620)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we all know that the Prime Minister made a solemn commitment to Canadians when he said that we would bring forward bail reform legislation. A phenomenal amount of work has been done in consultations with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, whether it was provinces, territories or indigenous leaders. There has been so much consultation on it. We now have substantial bail reform legislation before us. There are mayors, premiers and individuals who want to see Parliament act on this legislation.

Would the member not agree that it would be a wonderful thing to commit to seeing this bail reform legislation ultimately pass and even get royal assent before the end of the year?

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, it is optimistic for the member to suggest that the bill could be passed by the end of the year. I am hoping, as we consider it as an opposition party, that my friend's party would also consider reasonable amendments to improve the bill. I said that it is good, but it is not the best, and it can be improved.

My friend talks about a substantial bail reform package. I would disagree with the use of the word "substantial". There is some relief here that law enforcement would like. The reality though, in practical terms, is that it would not separate out those offenders who should not be in consideration of getting bail. I encourage the member to read the proposed jail not bail act, which provides great counsel on that issue.

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• (1625)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, the member's take on the legislation is fascinating. I know how hard he has worked in this area. I would be very grateful to share ideas for reasonable amendments.

My sense from the minister is that he and the government are open to amendments. My question to my hon. colleague is this: Has he also been asking to see how open the Liberals are to improve the bill through amendments?

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, could the member repeat her last line? I did not quite catch it. There was some talking in the background and I could not hear it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Apparently there was some issues with the sound.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands can repeat the question.

Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, the hon. member asked me to repeat the last line, which was to ask my colleague if he had indications, as I feel I have, that the government will consider helpful amendments that would allow us to support the bill. I know that he has criticisms, and I have criticisms. Maybe we can compromise and get a better bill.

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, my relationship with our current justice minister is vastly different from those with previous justice ministers. He is open to conversation. We have exchanged our personal cell numbers. I spoke about the bill with him this past weekend. He knows that we are going to be putting forth reasonable amendments. He has indicated a willingness to look at that. In fact, I am even going to suggest that I would pass those on to him even before we get to committee because I think there is an opportunity for the House to work together to make this the best possible bail and sentencing reform that we can produce at this juncture in time.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are hearing a lot today that the Liberal government coming up with workarounds for the old Bill C-75, which introduced section 493 to the Criminal Code, which is the principle of restraint in the administration of bail in bail court.

Instead of doing these workarounds, could we get rid of section 493 altogether? The Liberals are blaming it on the Supreme Court of Canada, but we were never instructed to change the law.

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that excellent question and his equally excellent suggestion. It is a particular issue that, for years, we have been advocating for.

As I indicated in my speech, in 2019, the creation of the principle of restraint and the amendment to the code was the genesis of the problems we face today. It would be a very easy fix to simply repeal section 493.1, the principle of restraint, in the code and use language that emphasizes the protection of the public when dealing with violent repeat offenders.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to see you in the chair.

It is great that we are having this debate today. I want to thank our hon. colleague from Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations for

sharing his time with me. I believe its name has changed, and I hope that is the new name.

Today, we rise to talk about Bill C-14. However, if members will pardon me, I am going to talk about those the bill has an impact on and a piece of legislation we have before us today in Bill S-233.

Bill S-233 is an act to amend the Criminal Code to make it an aggravating factor at sentencing if the victim of violence is a firefighter, a paramedic, a nurse or a health care worker.

I have said this a million times over the last decade of my serving in this House: Our brave men and women who put their uniforms on every day do so knowing they are going to experience some of the worst of the worst in our communities and see people at their lowest point. They experience some horrendous sights, smells, sounds, yet they put their uniforms on every day and go out the door to serve our country, our communities, my family and the families of members. They do it because they care. They want to make a difference.

These are nurses, paramedics, firefighters, police officers, correctional officers, social workers and psych nurses, who are on the streets administering care to some of our most vulnerable. They are facing an epidemic of violence perpetrated against them. How far have we fallen when it is okay to punch a nurse as she is taking one's temperature or a firefighter who is responding to a 911 call? By the way, do members know that firefighters cannot stop what they are doing because they think it is unsafe? They have to respond. They have to go into those burning buildings. They have to go toward danger, risking their life and the safety of their colleagues. I am at a loss with what we are seeing. Acts of violence are being perpetrated against them. Paramedics have to wear bullet-proof vests, because they have been stabbed or shot at. They are attacked just doing the job. Nurses are being attacked by their patients behind closed doors.

When I stood in the House to debate Bill C-321, I read out some horrific stories that had been shared with me. I brought some of them with me: A paramedic was thrown down the stairs, beaten and had both legs broken during a call. A B.C. ambulance attendant in Duncan, near Victoria, was knocked unconscious. A firefighter was stabbed. What we are hearing is horrific.

Over the last three years, we have worked collaboratively across all sides of the House. We got Bill C-321 passed at all levels in this House, unanimously. We did the same in the Senate. Unfortunately, an election was called, so the bill fell off the Order Paper. It disappeared. However, over the last month since we have been back in the House, the Senate, because of the leadership of the senators, saw the importance of getting this bill passed so that our first responders and health care workers knew we had their backs. They brought it forward, passed it at all levels and reported it back to this House late last week. The minister stood up and said that he does not care who gets the credit. I do not care either.

● (1630)

I do know one thing: We are in a minority Parliament. The bill, Bill C-14, still has to go through all the stages and committee, so it is going to take time. There are good discussions being had on all sides of the House right now about friendly amendments, etc., but we could send a message to our first responders and our health care workers that we care.

We could pass Bill S-233 this week and not delay it by waiting for Bill C-14 to pass. When the stakeholder groups, the nurses' associations and IAFF found out that it was put into Bill C-14, they were very happy, but then the reality sunk in that it is still potentially going to take a long time. What happens if this Parliament falls? It is then scrapped again.

We talk about showing leadership. Leadership is about putting our partisan ways behind us and passing the legislation that really matters most. The minister said we should do what we were sent here to do, work together and work in the best interests of Canadians. That is what Bill C-321 was about; that is what Bill S-233 is.

The IAFF, the International Association of Fire Fighters, are watching today. Over 100 firefighters are going to be here in Parliament next week for their lobby days. Do colleagues want to know what their number one request is in their legislative days, or their lobby days? It is passing Bill S-233 to get protections for them. Furthermore, they have been asking for this for years. Transit workers had it within months in 2015. The very same things that we are asking for were given to transit workers, yet we expect paramedics, nurses, health care workers and firefighters, first responders, to go into danger and to suck it up. They are fed up with being used as political pawns. That is how they feel.

We have a responsibility to those who protect us not to play politics with their lives or their safety. I hope that at some point in the very near future, I can stand and call for UC, to see this bill, Bill S-233, passed at all levels.

I will work with all sides on it. I have proven over the last decade that when it comes to our first responders, when it comes to those who serve our country and our community, I will fiercely defend them; I am a champion of them. I will work for all of them, and I will work across all sides to get something done that benefits them, but others should not cross me.

Right now, the firefighters, the paramedics and the health care workers feel they are being used as pawns. I think we can send a message. I hope the House can come together and send a message.

Government Orders

The minister's words gave me hope. Those who are watching also got hope from that.

I just want to say that I thank my hon. colleague for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations for allowing me the time to talk about Bill S-233 as it pertains to Bill C-14. I know we have other champions of first responders and health care workers across the way. I have worked with them for the last decade. I hope they can do whatever they can within their ranks to see it so that if we do come before the House to call for UC, they will be able to support it. Then, once and for all, our first responders, paramedics, health care workers, will know that we cherish them and we have their backs.

● (1635)

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

Madam Speaker, in terms of our first responders, I think that all members of this chamber understand, appreciate and value the work they do. In fact, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence is an honorary member of the International Association of Fire Fighters and has been a very strong advocate. I remember her sitting beside me as the deputy House leader, constantly talking about and advocating for firefighter issues.

I do not want to politicize this. We need to recognize that Bill C-14 is widely supported by all the different stakeholders and sectors of our communities, and it is substantial legislation. As in the question I posed to the Conservative shadow minister, I ask, why not recognize the true value of the legislation, as what the member is referring to is within this legislation, and make an honest commitment to actually see this legislation pass before the end of the year? With the will of this chamber, we can make that happen.

● (1640)

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, we have a piece of legislation before us, Bill S-233. It has gone through all levels of committee. My comment to our hon. colleague is to work with me; let us get Bill S-233 passed as soon as tomorrow. It does not have to go through a lengthy process. We can then send that message to the firefighters, paramedics and health care workers who are watching this debate right now. They feel that their safety is being punted further down into the future, but we could actually send that message today. The work has been done. Let us do it.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to follow up with my hon. colleague in the same vein of questioning. The member had the opportunity to ask the justice minister, and he very correctly stated that he is not worried about who gets credit.

Government Orders

In his speech, the member brought up the concerns about getting this through all stages quickly, not only because it would send the message for next week but also because it is possible that this Parliament may not even exist three weeks from now, based on the posturing by the Liberal government. The Liberals may be indicating that they want to call an election.

Would the member agree that if we can get this through, we are at least getting something done that Bill C-14 would partially address, but that the bill from the Senate that the member formerly brought forward as a private member's bill is important for first responders?

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I do not have a crystal ball in front of me. I deal in facts. We do not know what next week will bring, but we have Bill S-233 here, which is a complete bill, has gone through all the process and could be passed today. That is a good-news story for this House. Whatever happens next week or in the near future, who knows? However, what we can say is that we came together, we valued our first responders and our health care workers and we managed to get something done. It could be done today.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his tireless advocacy for first responders' safety and for introducing a private member's bill in the last Parliament and now again this time. Where would his private member's bill from the last Parliament be today if former prime minister Trudeau had not selfishly prorogued Parliament for purely partisan reasons?

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, it would have been law. The sad thing is that it would have been law. However, I can say that all sides of the House, both here in Parliament and in the Senate, worked tirelessly to get this done during the last Parliament. Colleagues who are in the House right now worked tirelessly to get this done.

It is a plea, because this is weighty stuff, hearing the stories of another firefighter attacked, somebody who has died by suicide because they are done with the violence, or health care workers and nurses who cannot go back to work because of the violence they face each and every day. Bill S-233 could be passed right now. Bill C-321 could have been passed in the last Parliament if it had not dissolved.

The work has been done. The heavy lifting has been done. The sacrifice is done every day by our firefighters and health care workers. Let us come together and pass Bill S-233.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Order.

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 Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Public Safety.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives and Liberals seem to be fighting over who gets to respond to an issue that has been raised. There is an expression in

French for that, but I will not say it because I am not sure that it would be parliamentary. Let us just say that they both want to be more tough on crime than the other. The Conservatives introduced their Bill C-242, while the Liberals introduced Bill C-14, which will obviously be examined before the Conservative bill. Now, we just need to wait and see who will be the toughest on crime. That seems to be the expression of the day.

What exactly are we talking about here? Judges are not obliged to automatically release individuals who appear in court after having been charged with a crime. Judges use their discretion. Basically, they look at three things.

First, are they convinced that the individual before them will participate in the subsequent stages of their trial? If a judge thinks there is a high risk that the accused will not be present, then that person is kept in custody to ensure that they are.

Second, the judge will consider public safety. Is there a danger that, if this individual is not kept in custody, they will commit one or more crimes in the short or medium term, regardless of why? If the judge believes that releasing them would indeed be a danger to public safety, the accused will be kept in prison.

Third, the judge will consider whether releasing the accused will bring the administration of justice into disrepute. They will look at a number of issues with that in mind to determine how the average person would respond. Is the charge so serious that releasing this individual would cause public outrage? Is the charge serious? Are the events documented? For example, some crimes are caught on camera. Perhaps the individual can say that they are not guilty for such-and-such a reason but, if it truly is a serious crime, then the courts will certainly rule that, given the circumstances, this individual must remain in custody to keep the public peace.

Those are the three criteria that the courts currently apply. When someone commits a crime, they appear in court and the judge asks those three questions. If there are any concerns in these three areas, the individual will be kept in custody.

Bill C-14 tells us many things, including the fact that there will be a reverse onus for certain crimes and charges. In the future, it will not be up to the Crown to prove that the individual will fail to appear, is dangerous or will bring the administration of justice into disrepute; it will be up to the accused to prove to the judges that there is no chance that they will fail to appear at the subsequent steps of their trial, that they are not a threat to public safety and that their release at this stage, as they await trial, will not bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

The bill keeps the same criteria, but adds a few more. It is true. For example, the bill adds that the judge must take into account the individual's criminal record and any crimes they were found guilty of in the past 10 years. However, the courts already took these criteria into account, even though they were not clearly set out in the Criminal Code. Does this add anything? I am not convinced it does.

Government Orders

The number of inmates in our prisons who are awaiting trial rose from 66% in 2018 to 72% in 2024. I am not making these numbers up; they are out there. That means that 72% of inmates, a big number, are in prison not because they were found guilty of a crime but because they are awaiting trial. The remaining 28% have been found guilty and are serving their sentence.

● (1645)

Do our courts release people automatically? These statistics lead us to believe that this is not the case. They suggest that judges are diligently exercising the discretion granted to them under the law. Does that mean that the release conditions should not be reviewed? I am not saying that. It certainly makes sense to look at everything and try to see if we can improve things.

Every time a repeat offender commits a crime, somebody always makes the following criticism, and rightly so: They may have been released too soon, or, they were not rehabilitated. That is a key issue. When someone is sentenced to prison for committing a crime, what happens in prison? Do we genuinely rehabilitate them? Personally, I believe in rehabilitation. I think we should strive to build a perfect society. Obviously, it will never be perfect, but I am saying that we should strive for that. We should ensure that all residents of this land behave in accordance with the societal rules we have set for ourselves and do not commit crimes. Of course, there will always be some who do. I am not that naive, although I may be at times. There will always be people who commit crimes, but I do not think we should throw in the towel. We should focus on rehabilitating all those who have already committed crimes.

The problem is that we cannot get there. We cannot do it because we do not have the budget. We do not have the resources. The provinces are responsible for the administration of justice, as we know, and they have to provide those resources to the prisons, but the provinces do not have the money. The money is in Ottawa. When we ask for transfers to Quebec and the provinces, whether for health, education or any other area, the same always happens: We always get the brush-off. The Bloc Québécois made six requests for the budget that is being tabled next week. The indications we have received so far lead us to believe that none of our requests will be granted. Does anyone think that is normal? I do not think that is normal. I think that the federal government has an obligation to meet the needs of the provinces. Our reflection on Bill C-14 on bail conditions inevitably leads us to ask the same question: Does the federal government transfer enough money to the provinces to enable them to fulfill their obligations with regard to inmate rehabilitation? I can say that in Quebec, that is not the case. I am also pretty sure that it is not the case anywhere in Canada.

Preventive detention is not a perfect solution. What does pre-trial detention mean? It means holding someone in custody before they are found guilty or not guilty. As we know, trials rarely occur within three months. They often take one or two years, if not longer. Say it takes a year, and someone is held for a year before their guilt or innocence is proven. After that year, if the court finds the accused not guilty, it means that they were kept in prison for a year even though they were innocent of the crime they were charged with. To me, that is serious. It means that, during that year, the individual in question had no choice but to associate with people

charged or convicted of other crimes. Is that advisable? The answer is obvious.

However, let us say that after a year, the individual is found guilty. Then it may seem like detaining them was a good idea after all, because they were guilty. However, the time that this person spent in prison before being convicted will count as time served. It used to be counted as double time, but now it is counted as time and a half. If the prisoner spent a year in remand and was subsequently sentenced to five years, they would be considered to have served a year and a half already. In a way, it could be said that some accused persons stand to gain by being detained before their trial.

● (1650)

It is even better if the trial drags on a bit, because if someone serves two years, they will be credited for three. I am not saying it is bad to detain people preventively. That is good for public safety in particular. We certainly do not want to release someone into society and find out the next week that they have gone and killed someone else or committed a crime, serious or otherwise, because they were released pending trial. That would not be good news. The fact remains that this is not a perfect solution. There is no reason to believe that we can solve everything by putting people in prison before their trial. As I said, this could lead to even more serious problems than if those individuals had been released. It is important to study this carefully.

Bill C-14 proposes to bring back consecutive sentences for certain offences. However, the Supreme Court has already ruled that many of these sentences are unconstitutional. Are we not just setting ourselves up for another Supreme Court decision that will invalidate the work we are doing? That may be the case. When I hear about consecutive sentences, I see a red flag. This needs to be examined thoroughly.

It is the same thing with conditional sentences. I generally think that getting rid of conditional sentences for sexual assault is a good thing. We certainly do not want someone who has been accused of threatening to kill their spouse, for example, to carry out their threats a week later. In all cases, quite likely, or at least in many cases, the judge will determine that a conditional sentence is not appropriate. However, judges are not all dummies. I have good friends who are judges and who do a really great job. Judges already have the option of deciding whether to give an individual a conditional sentence. They are not required to give an inmate a conditional sentence. They will assess the case and decide whether it is better to send the inmate home with an electronic bracelet or something else, or whether it is better to keep them in prison.

Government Orders

Obviously, judges are not perfect. They are human and they make mistakes from time to time. However, I have to say that I do not hate the idea of allowing for human discretion when it comes to sentencing. It helps prevent some problems, although it can certainly create others. This week, there were media reports about an individual who triggered an alarm 93 times in the span of 66 days by coming too close to his ex-partner. He had been ordered to stay away from her. I am not sure how far away he was supposed to stay, but he violated the terms of his conditional sentence 93 times in 66 days. Obviously, he was charged and convicted. I think it was for contempt, but regardless of the conviction, he was being monitored and the problem was resolved. This is an example of a case where there was a major problem with a conditional sentence. We do not want that. We do not want people to take advantage of the fact they have to wear an electronic bracelet to then further harass and intimidate the partner they had been convicted of abusing. That is a problem, and the other problems are also serious.

We have to weigh the pros and the cons. I admit that the more I read Bill C-14, the more questions I have. I understand the dynamic, though. The Conservatives introduced Bill C-242. Usually these crime issues are not as much of a priority to the Liberals. In any case, no one would accuse them of being tough on crime, as our Conservative friends like to say. Now the Liberals seem to be saying that they are jumping on the bandwagon and that they too will get tough on crime by proposing Bill C-14. Between Bill C-14 and Bill C-242, which one is the best response to a situation that we are not sure we understand?

• (1655)

I gave the statistics on detention. We do not really have statistics on rehabilitation capacity. No real follow-up has been done. At the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, we asked some experts about this and they told us that it was a problem. Data is not being collected, so there are not enough statistics on rehabilitation and on what happens to inmates once they leave. This needs to be monitored more closely. Maybe we will need to study the bill in committee, hear from experts on the matter and come back with an improved Bill C-14.

Incidentally, I wish Bill C-14 had been split. The bill amends the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the Criminal Code. In my view, that may not be wise. There are some questionable aspects to that. I discussed this with some criminal lawyers who work with young people, and they said this is a catch-all bill that needs a lot of cleaning up. Would it have been better to deal with them separately? As is so often the case, the Liberals have introduced a bill that puts all our eggs in one basket. We will have to sort this out in committee, which is unfortunate. That said, we will do it if we have to.

At the end of the day, the Liberals are saying that Bill C-14 is the cornerstone of their tough-on-crime approach. If that is so, I will pass on seeing the rest, because this bill is pretty weak. That is not necessarily a bad thing. Perhaps, after working on it in committee, we can improve it enough to make it acceptable, but it is not going to be a game-changer in fighting crime.

What is the government doing about criminal organizations? I introduced a bill to crack down on criminal organizations three times. Each time, I received an incredibly tepid response from our col-

leagues in the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. I proposed creating a registry of criminal organizations so that we could identify them and impose sanctions against them. Are the emblems that street gang members wear to intimidate the public acceptable in this country? I am not sure. Are we okay with gangs recruiting young people to commit crimes on the assumption that they will get a lighter sentence than an adult? The answer is no.

What are our Liberal colleagues waiting for? They are the government and they need to tackle these problems, which dominate the headlines week after week. People are likely more concerned and stressed about those issues than they are about the fate of Bill C-14. I think we need to look at the issue of young people, criminal organizations and intimidation by criminal organizations.

This summer, criminal organizations were selling T-shirts and ball caps to young people in order to fund criminal activities. These items of clothing bore the famous slogan "Support 81". The eight and the one represent the letters H and A for Hells Angels, respectively, so it means "Support Hells Angels." I am not sure that a 12-year-old boy who goes to school wearing a T-shirt that says "Support Hells Angels" knows what that means. I am not sure that his parents, who bought him the T-shirt, knew what it meant. We have to tackle this; it is our job.

The Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction; it is our job to keep it current. Regrettably, we have failed in that regard. The cornerstone of the government's tough-on-crime approach is a bill that is like some sort of a sales pitch or a way to up the ante on what the Conservatives are proposing. The bottom line is that an individual's release conditions will be essentially the same as they are right now. Again, it will be up to the judge to decide what is appropriate.

I hope that the bill will be studied in committee. I would like it to be split but I understand that this will not be the case. There is work to be done on Bill C-14 in order to make it acceptable and useful.

• (1700)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed the speech by my friend and colleague from the Bloc Québécois.

We have heard the Quebec government repeatedly call for tougher laws on bail.

Does my Bloc Québécois colleague not think that we should encourage everyone here to send this bill to committee so that it can be discussed and passed as quickly as possible? First of all, the Quebec government has asked for this. Second, Bill C-14 responds to those demands. Third, the bill aims to keep Quebecers safe.

Can my friend and colleague from the Bloc Québécois tell us whether he thinks we should pass this quickly and have these discussions in committee as soon as possible in order to pass this bill as quickly as possible?

• (1705)

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and I appreciate her expression of friendship. I have not yet had the opportunity to meet her, but I would be happy to be her friend, if that is possible.

That said, the short answer to her question is yes. I think we need to work on the bill in committee. Now, does the bill address the concerns raised by Quebec? I am not so sure.

[*English*]

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed working with the member for Rivière-du-Nord on the justice committee in the last Parliament.

He is talking about who is going to be tougher on crime, the Liberals or the Conservatives. He was on the committee when we received a letter from 13 premiers asking for bail reform. Bill C-48 was the response, and he was involved in that debate. It did not go far enough, and now we have Bill C-14.

Clearly there is a public perception that the administration of justice is being brought into disrepute by overly lax bail laws. Does the member agree that something needs to be toughened up in that area?

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Madam Speaker, I can confirm that working with my colleague on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights was a true pleasure. I consider him a man of integrity and intelligence. Working with him is always enjoyable.

To answer his question, yes, we have seen the letter signed by all 13 premiers. Yes, it was a concern to us. I was concerned about the situation myself.

However, my remarks relate to the fact that both we and the premiers lack sufficient data on this specific issue. The only data we have tells us that 72% of inmates are awaiting trial. Personally, I think that number is huge. Now, is more data needed? Maybe, maybe not. We will have to study that carefully in committee.

I would like to turn that question back to my colleague. He can ask one of his colleagues to answer if he does not have another turn to speak. I would like to know whether the Conservatives are going to vote in favour of Bill C-14. Even if the bill does not go as far as theirs, it is a step in that direction. Will they flatly oppose Bill C-14? I really do not know.

Yes, we need to tackle this problem. Even if we ultimately determine that there is no problem, if the public and the premiers are concerned, then it is our job to address those concerns, check the facts and suggest solutions.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his highly enlightening speech.

Government Orders

There is something I do not understand. What is causing the growing number of crimes committed by repeat offenders? Something about that perplexes me. Could it be that the causes go deeper than the parole system alone? Should we be looking somewhere else?

My colleague is an expert. I would appreciate it if he could enlighten us on that.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, whom I quite like. He is a true friend, someone I have known for a few years and with whom I enjoy chatting.

Are more crimes really being committed by repeat offenders? That is an excellent question. Unfortunately, I cannot say I am an expert on this, because I do not have the answer. The experts I have spoken with also hesitate to say for sure.

First, what is recidivism? When someone convicted of a crime violates their release conditions, is that considered a repeat offence? They did not commit the same crime again. They committed a new offence by failing to comply with their conditions. The various offences really need to be untangled before any conclusions can be drawn.

First, data needs to be collected. Second, that data needs to be analyzed. Third, a study needs to be done by experts such as criminologists and legal experts. They will be able to tell us what the real problem is and propose things to solve it.

Proposed regulations are being developed right now for a problem that I do not think we fully understand.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, earlier, I posed a question to the Conservative shadow minister with regard to the legislation. Here we have before us the long-anticipated bail reform legislation. It was a commitment given to Canadians by the Prime Minister coming out of the last election.

Given the spectrum of support from the many different stakeholders, would the member not agree that the House should seriously look at the opportunity to have this legislation pass throughout the system before the end of the year? Does he believe that is doable?

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, it is not up to me to decide that, and I can say that we are currently very busy at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We are studying two issues at the same time and have extended our working hours.

Points of Order

We usually meet for two hours twice a week. Now we are meeting for three hours twice a week and we are studying the bail and sentencing issues concurrently. That is kind of what bills C-14 and C-9 are about. We are studying both at the same time. Are we going to add Bill C-14? I would like to because it is important. However, when are we going to do that? Do we have access to meeting rooms? Do we have interpreters?

There are a number of practical questions that I cannot answer. In any case, it is not up to me to decide whether we should fast-track Bill C-14. However, I do believe that this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, and I will leave it to those responsible for managing the business of the House to decide the pace at which we proceed with Bill C-14.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my very humble colleague. He is a lawyer, as members know, and he has some authority or reputation when he talks about a bill that is closely related to his former duties.

I want to ask him the following question. What possible explanation is there for the fact that we now have a huge number of inmates awaiting trial? Is there a delay in appointing judges? Is someone dragging their feet? What could be causing this situation?

From what I understand, Bill C-14 may also lead to an increase in the number of people in jail. We do not disagree with that, but why are our prisons currently overcrowded with people awaiting the outcome of their trial?

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Madam Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague. It is always a pleasure to work with her.

The problem we have, that she rightly raised, is the following. There are people serving intermittent sentences on weekends who are being told to go home because there is no more room. We can increase the number of inmates, but how are we going to deal with this in practical terms? I do not know. As I said earlier, we have a problem with underfunding of the justice system, and we will have to address it at some point.

Currently, there is a shortage of special education teachers in schools, a shortage of doctors, and a shortage of nurses in hospitals. Infrastructure is falling apart. There is not enough money. Funding will have to be aligned with mandates. I think we need federal money to strengthen the judicial system. It is true that we are short on judges, but we are also short on court clerks, bailiffs, and courtrooms. It all goes hand in hand. This needs to be taken seriously.

I have already suggested to the Minister of Justice that he set himself a six-month time limit for filling judicial vacancies. Six months seems reasonable to me. If he says that nine months or three months is better, I am all ears. At some point, we might have to set maximum time limits for filling vacancies. It may be necessary to appoint new judges and transfer funds to the provinces and to Quebec in order to manage the justice system properly.

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ADMISSIBILITY OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-4

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a point of order, and it is in regard to the need for a royal recommendation for the Bloc Québécois amendments to Bill C-4.

Bill C-4, an act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians and another measure, was reported from the Standing Committee on Finance earlier today. I would like to draw to the Speaker's attention 11 Bloc Québécois amendments that were adopted in the committee and ruled out of order by the chair on the grounds that they were inadmissible due to the need for a royal recommendation. These include BQ-1, BQ-2, BQ-3, BQ-4, BQ-5, BQ-6, BQ-7, BQ-7.1, BQ-8, BQ-9 and BQ-10. I am referring to the Bloc Québécois.

On October 27, the chair ruled BQ-1 inadmissible, which also applied to the other 10 aforementioned Bloc amendments, since they were consequential to BQ-1. In relation to BQ-1, the chair stated:

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, states on page 772:

“Since an amendment may not infringe upon the financial initiative of the Crown, it is inadmissible if it imposes a charge on the public treasury, or if it extends the objects or purposes or relaxes the conditions and qualifications specified in the royal recommendation.”

In the opinion of the chair, the amendment proposes a new scheme that will affect government revenues and expenditures. It was clear that this is both a payment and would exceed the royal recommendation which accompanies Bill C-4. Therefore, I rule the amendment inadmissible.

The member for Mirabel moved a motion to challenge the ruling of the chair, and the motion to overrule the chair's decision was carried by the committee. On these grounds, and since Bill C-4, as amended by the committee, is now before the House, I would like to put forward the government's position that the chair's ruling was, in fact, correct. These amendments should be removed from the bill, and the bill should be reprinted without the offending amendments that infringe on the Crown's financial prerogative.

Part 2 of the proposed making life more affordable for Canadians act would amend the Excise Tax Act and other related regulations to implement a temporary GST rebate on new housing for first-time homebuyers. This measure was accompanied by a royal recommendation to authorize the GST rebate for first-time homebuyers in respect of the purchase of a new house. The royal recommendation authorizes the CRA to draw from the consolidated revenue fund to pay to buyers who meet the terms, conditions and qualifications under part 2 of Bill C-4, once the bill receives royal assent, an amount equal to the GST that the buyer paid to the builder of the house.

Government Orders

Let me explain how the scheme operates. First-time homebuyers who qualify under part 2 of Bill C-4 and who purchase a new house from a builder pay that builder the price of the house as well as the GST related to that purchase. The key condition in respect of BQ-1 and the other 10 related consequential amendments that govern the rebate is that the buyer must have entered into and signed a purchase agreement on or after May 27.

Provided that condition and the other qualifying conditions in part 2 of Bill C-4 are met and the bill receives royal assent, the qualifying buyer could file a claim with the CRA for the GST rebate portion of the purchase. CRA would process the claim, and, provided the conditions are met under part 2 of Bill C-4, would be authorized by royal recommendation to draw funds from the consolidated revenue fund to issue a rebate payment for the GST portion to the buyer.

BQ-1 amended the bill to move the start date of the scheme set out in part 2 of Bill C-4 from May 27 to March 20. This would allow first-time homebuyers who purchased a new house on or after March 20, 2025, to claim the GST rebate. This would represent an expansion of the scope of the rebate in a manner that is inconsistent with the terms and conditions of the rebate contained in the bill at first reading. It is not authorized by the bill and exceeds the maximal charge authorized by the royal recommendation. This amendment and the other consequential amendments require a new royal recommendation, which can be provided only at the report stage by a minister of the Crown.

• (1715)

This is not a novel matter for the House to consider in respect of the GST rebate for the purchase of housing. In a previous Parliament, on February 1, 2024, the Speaker ruled on the need for a royal recommendation for Bill C-356, respecting a GST rebate on housing, standing in the name of the then member for Carleton. The Speaker stated:

Following a careful review of Bill C-356, the Chair is preoccupied with some elements that would cause a withdrawal from the public treasury for new and distinct purposes.

The bill [proposes], among other considerations...certain circumstances for which a 100% GST rebate on new residential rental property may be paid out.

[This] would cause new and distinct charges against the consolidated revenue fund, thus constituting an infringement on the financial initiative of the Crown.

Accordingly, Bill C-356 must be accompanied by a royal recommendation, and without one, the Chair will not put the question at the third reading stage of the bill in its present form.

This is the situation that is now before the House. BQ-1 and the 10 consequential amendments would alter the terms, conditions and qualification of the royal recommendation that is attached to part 2 of Bill C-4, specifically including individuals who entered into and signed a purchase agreement with a builder between March 20 and May 26, 2025, who would not otherwise be eligible for the GST rebate under the parameters of part 2 of Bill C-4. This expands the eligibility requirements and thus infringes upon the Crown's financial prerogative.

These amendments were inadmissible to be moved at committee because they require a royal recommendation. I therefore submit that the chair was correct in ruling that BQ-1 and the 10 related consequential amendments were inadmissible to be moved at the

committee. For these reasons, these amendments should be removed from the bill, and the bill should be reprinted without the offending amendments that infringe on the Crown's financial prerogative.

• (1720)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for the remarks, and they will be taken under advisement.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I would just like to inform you that the Bloc Québécois is going to make a statement, but at a later time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is duly noted.

* * *

[*English*]

BAIL AND SENTENCING REFORM ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the National Defence Act (bail and sentencing), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combating Crime), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

I am here today to speak about the bail and sentencing reform act, one of the most comprehensive updates to Canada's bail and sentencing laws in decades. Since 2014, crime in Canada has risen by 12%, and our violent crime severity index is now 41% higher than it was a decade ago. While 2024 saw a modest 4% decrease, people in Canada remain deeply concerned, and rightfully so. They see increases in homicides, sexual assaults, extortion, child sexual offending and violent firearms offences. They see repeat offenders cycling through our system, breaching conditions and reoffending, too often with tragic consequences. The reasons for these increases are many and complex. Criminal law reform can play an important role in addressing these disturbing trends.

People in Canada expect their communities to be safe. They expect a justice system that protects victims, supports those on the front lines and holds repeat and violent offenders to account. They expect all levels of government to take steps to ensure that these things happen.

Government Orders

The federal government is playing its part. The bail and sentencing reform act introduces over 80 clauses of targeted reforms to strengthen both our bail and sentencing regimes to respond to this reality.

The bill is the result of extensive engagement with provinces and territories, police, prosecutors, victims' advocates, indigenous partners and community organizations. Through these discussions, it became clear that one of the most urgent areas of reform was the bail system, particularly for cases involving repeat and violent offenders.

I will first turn to the proposed bail reforms. Over the past several years, people in Canada have seen too many headlines about violent crimes committed by individuals who are already out on bail, sometimes with a long history of prior offences. Police, mayors and victims' advocates have all told us that the bail system is not working as it should in these cases. The bail and sentencing reform act would address these criticisms head on.

First, it would make bail stricter and harder to get for repeat and violent offenders. The bill would create new reverse onus provisions, meaning that it would be up to the accused to demonstrate why they should be released, and not the other way around. In particular, the bill would create new reverse onuses for violent and organized crime-related auto theft, break and enters of a home, trafficking in persons, human smuggling, assault and sexual assault involving choking, suffocation or strangulation, and extortion involving violence. This is intended to help ensure that those who pose the greatest risk to public safety remain in custody until it is proven that they can be safely released.

The bill would offer clarity to police and courts regarding how to apply the principle of restraint. This includes clarifying that the principle does not, in fact, require release, and that the accused should not be released if their detention is justified, including for the protection and safety of the public. At the bail stage, courts would be required to consider key risk factors, such as whether the allegations involve random or unprovoked violence, and the number or seriousness of the outstanding charges that the accused has accumulated while on bail. They would also have to impose weapons prohibitions at bail for those accused of extortion and organized crime, unless it is not required for public safety reasons.

Importantly, in reverse onus cases, the accused would have to present a credible and reliable bail plan. Courts would need to closely scrutinize the plan before granting bail.

These reforms are about protecting the public and ensuring accountability for those who repeatedly show disregard for the law and the safety of others in a way that balances the charter rights of those accused of criminal offending.

• (1725)

Making bail stricter is only part of the solution. Our sentencing laws need to better reflect the gravity of violent crimes and the harm done to victims and communities. The bill therefore proposes significant sentencing reforms to make penalties tougher for repeat and violent offending, including car theft, extortion and crimes that endanger public safety. For example, the act would require consecutive sentences when violent auto theft is committed with a break

and enter, or when extortion is committed with arson. This means that offenders would serve one sentence after another rather than serving them at the same time. This may result in longer penalties' being imposed.

The bill would also enact new aggravating factors at sentencing for crimes against first responders, for retail theft and for offences that impact critical infrastructure such as power stations, water systems and communications networks.

The bill would end house arrest for serious sexual assaults and child sexual offences, ensuring that custodial sentences are served in a secure setting, like jail, appropriate to the severity of the crime.

The bill would restore driving prohibitions for offences like criminal negligence causing bodily harm or death and for manslaughter. It would also improve fine enforcement to make sure that penalties are meaningful and are able to be enforced.

As all members know, the criminal justice system in Canada is a shared responsibility. I want to thank the provinces and territories, which have been strong advocates for these reforms. They have shared their on-the-ground experiences with repeat violence offending, and they have helped shape a package of measures that are practical, targeted and grounded in evidence.

The government is also working to improve the youth criminal justice system to support ongoing successful implementation of the Youth Criminal Justice Act by the provinces and territories. The proposed amendments are very focused in nature to clarify areas that have led to litigation and uncertainty, to assist the provinces and territories in administering sentences and to make some other technical improvements.

The bail and sentencing reform act is part of a broader modernization of Canada's justice system. In the coming months, the government has announced, it will bring forward further changes to address court delays, strengthen victims' rights and better protect people facing sexual and intimate partner violence, as well as take new steps to keep children safe from horrific crimes.

Canadians deserve to be safe in their homes, on their streets and in their communities. They deserve a justice system that protects the innocent, supports victims and holds offenders accountable—

• (1730)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON HOUSING FOR YOUNG CANADIANS ACT

Braedon Clark (Sackville—Bedford—Preston, Lib.) moved that Bill C-227, An Act to establish a national strategy on housing for young Canadians, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure for me to speak, at second reading, to Bill C-227, an act to establish a national housing strategy for young Canadians.

It is rare in political life to get a second chance at a good thing, but I am happy to say I have had that chance with the bill that is before us. As I mentioned during first reading introduction, I introduced a similar bill into the Nova Scotia Legislature almost exactly three years ago, on October 19, 2022. I checked the date today. In the three years that have elapsed since that time, the issue has certainly not gone away. It has remained a significant area of concern both in Nova Scotia, my home province, and across this country. That is the reason I brought it forward, and I hope it will be passed.

As all members know, and as I think all Canadians know very well, housing is not just a roof over one's head; housing is so many other things. It is one of the key social determinants of health. For physical health, having a roof over one's head is very important. For the mental health of Canadians, the peace, comfort and stability that comes from knowing that at the end of the day, whether it has been a rough day or a great day, no matter what, we get to go home, is huge.

Housing is obviously incredibly important for job prospects, financial security, the ability to have and raise a family, and the ability to take care of siblings, friends, neighbours or aging parents. It is essential to so many aspect of our life, and that is why it remains such a key issue and one in particular that affects young Canadians. The bill defines young Canadians as those between the ages of 17 and 34.

Do not just take my word for it. If we look at StatsCan reports from 2024 of Canadians experiencing housing challenges, we see that only 36% of them reported high life satisfaction, being happy, to put it simply. By comparison, 70% of people who do not have housing challenges reported high life satisfaction. It goes without saying that housing is critical, and it is an issue all members of the House agree on, evidently. It is something brought up in the House very regularly, and I hope it is something we can see as a relatively non-partisan issue as I put the bill forward.

Private Members' Business

The structure of Bill C-227 is fairly straightforward and easy to follow. Basically, the bill identifies three things that the government must do. As I said, the first thing would be the creation of a national strategy to address the housing needs of young Canadians, those between the ages of 17 and 34.

The strategy would be informed by consultation with provinces, territories and municipalities, because housing is an issue that has elements in all three orders and levels of government, and if all three orders of government do not work together effectively, we will not solve the problem for anyone, let alone for young people. Provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous organizations, non-profit housing providers and for-profit developers, the entire spectrum of the housing continuum, must work together.

Again, the proposed strategy would touch on all aspects of the housing spectrum, from homelessness, which of course we know is an issue across this country in urban centres, suburban areas and rural areas, to crisis shelters and transition shelters, as well as to subsidized housing, market rental housing and up to entry-level home ownership, which as we know, is the gateway to wealth creation in this country and has been for many decades.

The strategy would be comprehensive. It would not be narrowly focused on any one particular element of the housing market but on all of them, to make sure there is a holistic response to the issue. I should have mentioned co-op housing as well, a really underutilized solution to our housing crisis.

Just last week I was in Halifax to attend the opening of a new neighbourhood, Unity North in the north end of Halifax, with 57 units of co-op housing. It was amazing to see the pride, the sense of community and the joy on everybody's face for the 200 or so people who are living in those affordable, safe, clean and wonderful places to live, as well as to consider all the benefits that will flow from that.

• (1735)

The bill calls for the minister to hold at least one conference with the stakeholders that I laid out, to really get down into the details of the strategy.

The bill also has clear timelines. No matter what government program we are talking about, timelines and measurables are very important. The bill would ask the minister to return to the House within 18 months to table a report with recommendations on how we can move forward, to make sure that young Canadians, not just now and not just 18 months from now but for years and years into the future, are able to be supported and that they are able to fulfill the dream of affordable housing to live in, to own and to have for the rest of their lives.

Private Members' Business

Beyond the 18 months, there would be a requirement for another status report on how things are going, four years subsequent to that. That is an important piece. I know that opposition members, as they should, care about accountability and timelines, and this timeline is in the bill, beyond the life cycle of any one government, to make sure that no matter which party is in government and no matter where we sit in the chamber, we are making sure that young Canadians and their housing needs remain central.

I would also like to thank the wide range of stakeholders that have helped inform the bill over the preceding few months, that have helped to improve it and that continue to do incredible work across the country on the issue of housing, particularly for young people.

I met with Students Nova Scotia last week, at the great institution of higher learning in Nova Scotia, Saint Mary's University. Other stakeholders include Studenthaus, the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, and Generation Squeeze out of the University of British Columbia, led by Dr. Paul Kershaw, which is doing really amazing work on issues confronting young Canadians, housing, of course, being very much at the centre of its work.

There is also the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, as well as many more groups and, of course, perhaps most directly of all, the young Canadians whom I have met during my time as an elected official and during my campaigns, when I knocked on doors. There is no form of democracy more direct than that. There is no better way to learn what issues people are facing.

When I was out knocking on doors just a few weeks ago in Lower Sackville and in Bedford, in my riding, I heard, as I am sure other members heard as well, the concerns coming from young Canadians. While there are concerns, justifiable ones, which is why the bill is here before us today, there is also optimism, resilience and hope. That is what young people are known for, and they are still like that. I think they should be, because the bill and many other efforts we are taking as a government are designed to make sure they have housing now and into the future.

When an issue presents itself to us, there are two ways we, as elected officials and politicians, can respond to it. One way is to try to apportion a blame pie and blame this group for that and that group for this. I understand that impulse. A year ago, I was an opposition member of a provincial legislature. I know that the job of opposition parties is to hold the government to account, to raise issues; that is 100% legitimate. That is what they are designed to do.

However, in my view, opposition cannot and should not devolve into nothing more than the airing of grievances, the pointing of fingers, and the idea that there is a problem and therefore we should look back and try to figure out whom to blame for it, and stop there. I do not think that is a practical, pragmatic or serious way to approach an issue. I hope, on this bill in particular, which as I said at the beginning, I see as a relatively non-partisan one, we can treat the issue as one that deserves serious study and deserves the optimism, hope, resilience and ambition of the young Canadians I am hoping to help with the bill.

I would not sit here and say that Bill C-227 alone would solve the problem. I think we need more humility in the House, so what I

would say is that it would complement a lot of good, existing work that is going on right now.

● (1740)

I will highlight a few things. The national housing strategy, which was launched in 2017, is a \$115-billion program that goes until 2027-28. Another really important initiative, which was done under the previous government, is the first home savings account. It combines elements of an RRSP and a TFSA to allow Canadians, disproportionately young Canadians, of course, to save for their down payment on a house. We know that in many cases that is the single biggest barrier to home ownership. That program has been very successful with great uptake, and I expect that will remain the case for some time to come.

The housing accelerator fund has had positive impacts. In my own region of Halifax, there are cranes all over the city. I think the housing accelerator fund pushed things in a positive and constructive way, not pitting levels of government against one another. It led to changes in municipal bylaws, programs, planning rules and regulations, which at times, in my view, were too cumbersome and time consuming. Absent intervention from the federal government with the housing accelerator fund, I do not think those changes would have happened in as timely a manner. I think that was very positive as well.

Most recently, of course, we began Build Canada Homes, a signature commitment of our government. The goal is to build half a million homes a year in this country, with \$13 billion of initial investment, and to look at different ways to build homes, such as pre-fabricated homes and modular homes. When meeting with businesses in my riding over the last number of weeks, I could see they were excited about the possibilities from Build Canada Homes. Non-profit housing providers in my riding and across the country are interested in how they can leverage Build Canada Homes to make sure that Canadians, young Canadians in particular, who may need additional support have it through an agency and at a scale that we have not seen since the end of the Second World War.

If someone were to go to Halifax and drive up Bayers Road toward the Halifax Shopping Centre, they would see, on either side of the street, homes built in 1946, 1947 or 1948, post-World War II, that people still live in today, 80 years later. They provided safe, affordable housing for many young people at that time, and the goal of what we want to do with Build Canada Homes is make sure that possibility continues. I know that in my riding, many organizations are excited to make that happen.

Private Members' Business

As I said earlier, this problem is not going to solve itself. This problem is not going to be solved overnight, but there are positive signs of progress. In many cities across this country, we are now seeing rents stabilizing, in some places beginning to fall from levels that were, frankly, unsustainably high. There is no question about that. Home prices in many markets have started to stabilize as well. Home starts, which are a key metric, were up 14% in September, year over year.

What I would say to members of the opposition from all parties is that each and every one of us has thousands and thousands of young Canadians in our ridings. We knock on their doors. We see them at the coffee shop. We see them when we are out and about in our ridings, and they have a consistent concern around housing. This bill does not solve that problem in and of itself. What it does is it puts a stamp in the ground that this government, this Parliament and all parties want young Canadians to have safe, affordable housing that will give them entry into the home ownership market so they can build a future for themselves, whether they are in Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Northwest Territories or any point in between.

With that, I want to thank all the stakeholders who helped me craft this bill. I look forward to questions.

• (1745)

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague rhymed off a number of federal programs from the Liberal government that have existed for about 10 years. He talked about a whole bunch of different ones. One of them, of course, was the national housing strategy.

If these programs have worked so well, why is the problem as bad as it is today? What does he hope to achieve with yet another national housing strategy?

Braedon Clark: Mr. Speaker, the national housing strategy my hon. colleague refers to, which was adopted back in 2017, did not have as explicit a focus on young Canadians as I would have liked. I certainly was not here at that time, but the idea, as I said during my speech, is not to endlessly litigate a litany of things that may have happened in the past, but to look forward to the future to make sure that, through this strategy and others, we find ways for young Canadians to have more affordable places to live, rent and eventually own.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, why not simply release the money owed to Quebec and the provinces for housing—we are talking about billions of dollars—with no strings attached, and I want to emphasize the “no strings attached” part, instead of introducing a bill that ultimately aims to issue a mandate for developing a strategy?

We would like to know how this bill really changes anything and what purpose it serves, compared to simply giving a local authority with a greater degree of proximity, and therefore a better knowledge of local needs, the ability to make the right housing choices.

Braedon Clark: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it comes down to which level of government is best placed to address the housing crisis.

[*English*]

There are community organizations for this, and housing is in many ways the responsibility of the provinces. I know that very well having served in provincial legislatures. However, I believe strongly that the federal government has a role to play, which often-times is lacking, in coordinating provinces, municipalities and housing providers, particularly on the non-profit side. That is a role the federal government can and should play through this bill.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his excellent speech and most of all for the important project he is proposing to this House.

Housing is a key issue for our government. It is an important issue for my own riding, Madawaska—Restigouche, as it is for many other ridings across the country.

I would like to hear his view on how this bill would ensure that young Canadians benefit fully from the historic investments we are making in housing through Build Canada Homes.

Braedon Clark: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Madawaska—Restigouche for his advocacy. He is another young member of the House, a bit younger than me, and I thank him.

As I said during my speech, Build Canada Homes is a key part of this bill. Its strategy dovetails very nicely with both Build Canada Homes and the national housing strategy, which is due to expire in 2027-28.

For me, it is critical for the focus on young Canadians, the group most disproportionately impacted by the housing issues across this country, to be reflected in Build Canada Homes to make sure there are many places for students in particular and young Canadians to live, both on the rental side and on the home ownership side. I think there is a natural connection between Build Canada Homes and the strategy I am proposing.

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in the House on behalf of the fine people of Mississauga Centre. It is also always a privilege to rise alongside my colleague and good friend, the member for Sackville—Bedford—Preston, particularly on a topic as important as this one.

I proudly jointly seconded this bill, because at the end of the day, politics is not just about policies; it is about people. Bill C-227, the national strategy on housing for young Canadians act, acknowledges this reality.

I would like to hear from the member how he believes this policy is ultimately going to benefit Canadians, particularly in tandem with other policies we currently have in place.

• (1750)

Braedon Clark: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Mississauga Centre is another great young Canadian in the House.

Private Members' Business

As I said in response to my colleague from Madawaska—Res-tigouche, the spotlight and focus have to be on young Canadians in particular. That is an area where we have perhaps not been as diligent as we needed to be in the past. The strategy I proposed would do that very particularly.

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in April 1910, Teddy Roosevelt arrived in Paris on the heels of his Smithsonian-sponsored, year-long scientific expedition to East Africa. While he was there, he delivered his famous “Citizenship in a Republic” speech at the Sorbonne, made famous largely because of that stirring “man in the arena” passage. However, in his speech about the importance and the value of public participation in our democracy, there is actually another line from that speech that I am thinking about today, which would be this line: “The gravest wrong upon his country is inflicted by that man...who seeks to make his countrymen divide primarily on the line that separates class from class”.

Today, in Canada, we have a housing system that has become a division, class from class, between those who have and those who have not. In our housing system, the lines have quite clearly been drawn. While Teddy Roosevelt was clearly not talking about housing that spring in Paris, his words ring true today here in Canada in an uneven housing system of over-regulation, painfully long approval processes and skyrocketing government charges, taxes and fees on housing.

Seniors, on the one hand, are counting on the equity in their homes to retire; young people, on the other, are saving every penny, hoping that they can one day buy a home. There are young people who know for sure that the bank of mom and dad will be there when they go to buy a house, and then there are other young people who are not too sure how they are going to make the rent payment next month. Tradespeople are sitting at home, waiting for that phone to ring to get back to work to build more homes; meanwhile, housing starts are plummeting in this country at a time when we are desperate for millions of new homes.

For over 10 years, we have heard about Liberal promises with respect to housing. We heard Justin Trudeau tell young people in 2017 that his national housing strategy was going to be “transformational” and “life-changing”. Many young Canadians thought this was the first time that the government was going to take housing seriously in their lifetime. Maybe, just maybe, they were going to be able to afford to buy a home, as the generations before them did. However, we know that this is not what happened. Since then, rents have doubled, prices have doubled, down payments have doubled and mortgages have doubled.

Some think this is when the national housing crisis began, when the national housing strategy actually turned out to be a bureaucracy-building strategy. While the Liberals have made things exponentially worse, the genesis of our current mess actually began with the first Prime Minister Trudeau. Back in the 1960s, there was a period of significant expansion of social housing. The federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, partnered with provinces and municipalities to build large-scale public housing projects, for example, Regent Park in Toronto, Bayers Road in Halifax and Churchill Park in St. John's. The government's aim was to address housing shortages with a focus on integrating public

housing into existing communities, thereby making complete communities. The first Prime Minister Trudeau also brought in a special tax program to incentivize the private sector to build rental units. It was called the MURB program. It was wildly successful. It worked, so he cancelled it.

In the 1980s, the federal government began engaging more, and more directly, with the provinces, and it began to reduce its own leadership role. Recessions and budget constraints led to a slow-down in new social housing development. The focus began shifting away from building new units to maintaining the existing stock. By the early 1990s, the federal government withdrew completely from funding new social housing, transferring responsibility to provinces and municipalities.

By the 2000s, Prime Minister Harper, to his credit, saw this crisis coming. He recognized that there was a growing homeless population all across the country. His government's housing first policy aimed to focus on just that. Non-profit organizations and community groups had funds available for housing, and those organizations actually committed to getting it built.

Then came the second Trudeau era. Before Justin Trudeau, it took 25 years to pay off one's mortgage. Now it takes 25 years just to save up for the down payment. Taxes, charges and fees make up almost 30%, on average, of the cost of every new home. Cities and towns have planning departments that have slowed the approvals process by adding layers of reports and processes and new and ever-more-complicated zoning regulations. All new homes are subject to the high cost of red tape, reports and studies by experts, as well as studies of those studies by other experts. The cost of approvals has skyrocketed.

● (1755)

On top of all those layers of bureaucracy, many cities also use a tool called development charges, a tool designed to help municipalities offset the cost of new housing infrastructure, all related to growth. It has been fairly abused by a lot of municipalities to pay for pet projects and overpriced infrastructure under the mantra that growth will pay for growth. Municipalities in Ontario alone sit on development charge reserve funds of over \$12 billion. Housing-enabling infrastructure is not getting built, and development charges continue to rise, in many cases to over \$200,000 per home, which just sits in these cities' bank accounts.

Private Members' Business

Here we are with a crisis that is quickly becoming a catastrophe. We know what the housing problem young people are facing in this country is. Industry stakeholders and housing experts and advocates have been abundantly clear that the cost and burden of government make it too expensive to build.

The national price of a home today is 58% higher than it was in October 2015. We know what the solutions are. We must cut the cost of building by getting the government out of the way on market housing. We must incentivize the private sector to build affordable units. We must focus scarce public dollars on social and supportive housing for the most vulnerable in our society.

The last thing we or young Canadians need is yet another bureaucratic report for the minister to review and update the House on, yet here we are. We have a proposal from a very well-meaning and earnest new Liberal MP who wants to make a difference, and I applaud that. The problem is that his proposal is to offer more studies, analysis and reporting back to the House of Commons about what the federal government intends to do to solve a problem that has become a national crisis under its watch and national strategies.

They say insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. While the Liberals build more bureaucracy and engage in further studies, the Conservatives just want to get more homes built. To all the people who accuse nasty Conservatives of only criticizing the government, I want to be very clear that while we criticize on housing, we have also proposed many great ideas and solutions, such as cutting the GST on all new homes under \$1.3 million, which would get homes built; tying federal infrastructure dollars for municipalities not to promises on hopes and dreams of being better, but to real results; cutting local taxes, charges and fees on housing, something the Liberals promised in their election campaign and have not done anything about yet, to make homes less expensive; and cutting the capital gains tax on reinvestments into new housing to attract more capital and investment and get more homes built.

These are proposals supported by industry, housing advocates and housing experts that will restore the dream of home ownership once again to the millions of young people in this country who are tired of being patronized with Liberal promises and spin.

Owing a home is an important source of stability in our lives. For generations, owning a home has formed the foundation for building a life. I want to speak directly to the millions of young Canadians who see that foundation slipping further away.

To the young people who have been told by older generations that it was hard for them to buy a home too and that if they work a little harder, they can buy a house, Conservatives know that it is not just a matter of working a bit harder or sacrificing even more. The deck is literally stacked against them. Fifty years ago, \$50,000 could get someone a beautiful home. It was a great start. After inflation, that is about \$300,000 today. The problem is that the average cost of a home today is \$700,000.

The desire of young people to become homeowners has not changed. Young people are willing to compromise to make it a reality, and facing the new reality, young Canadians are adapting their expectations. For 60% of first-time homebuyers, this means com-

promising on the size, location or type of home. Young Canadians are willing to change; they see home ownership as a core part of their identity and aspirations. It remains central to how people define progress, belonging and fairness in this country.

Bill C-227 seeks to assess the current state of housing for youth, but we know the problem is bad. We do not need another national strategy to solve it because we also know the solutions. The crisis is today, not years from now, and it is time for results today.

Young people in this country deserve a home. They deserve the promise of Canada that previous generations have enjoyed. They need a government committed to removing the lines that divide us, class by class, into those who have homes and those who are giving up hope of ever owning a home.

To all young Canadians holding out hope for one day owning a home of their own, do not give up hope. There are solutions, and there is a path for them to own a home. Our Conservative team will never stop until those solutions are implemented and we restore the dream of home ownership to every single one of them.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are discussing Bill C-227, an act to establish a national strategy on housing for young Canadians. After reading the bill, it appears that this strategy would specifically target young people between the ages of 18 and 34 who are having difficulty accessing housing.

I cannot dispute the fact that young people between the ages of 18 and 34 have difficulty accessing housing or becoming homeowners. This week, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Canadian real estate brokers association. They told me that 20 or 30 years ago, people became homeowners, on average, at the age of 26. Now, in 2025, people are becoming homeowners at the age of 36, on average. I am 36. At 36, people usually hope to be able to start a family and have children. I am fortunate to have three children. People sometimes choose to rent, but other times they have no choice. This can mean postponing the decision to have children because it has been too hard to put money aside. If people have not been able to save money by 36 and their biological clock is ticking, well, that is a problem.

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I think that my colleague from across the way has put his finger on an important issue. That is indeed a serious problem. However, the devil is in the details of this bill. What does my Liberal colleague's bill actually do? It does nothing. The only thing it does is say that the minister would now have a mandate to work on this file, consult people and develop a strategy. That is great. I am all for the minister consulting people and developing a strategy. I do believe that it is a problem that needs to be addressed. However, do we really need a law to do that? Does it take a law to address the housing crisis? Does it take a law to develop a strategy to solve the housing crisis? The answer is no. We do not need a law to do that.

The reality is this. On the other side of the House, backbenchers, particularly those in government, are told to keep quiet, ask as few questions as possible, and make as little noise as possible. Everything they say must be in line with the government's position. They cannot make announcements because it is the ministers who make the announcements, and everything is written in advance. As a result, instead of introducing real bills in the House that would really change things, Liberal members often introduce insignificant bills that do not change anything in people's daily lives.

That is exactly what we are being presented with right now. This is a bill that will change nothing and do nothing to address the housing crisis. It is sad because, in the meantime, the average age at which people become homeowners has risen from 26 to 36. A Liberal member will be happy to say that he has passed a bill that may one day lead to a strategy to address the housing crisis among young people. However, he is not the one who will create the strategy, and no concrete measures are included in the bill.

In the meantime, this is monopolizing the resources of the House of Commons. All the members here are going to debate this. The bill will be referred to committee and people will come testify. That is good, because we will be able to talk about the issue, and I think it is important to do so. Despite any merit the bill may have, nothing will come of it. That is the sad part. The fact is we could very well do this work without monopolizing the entire House of Commons. We could adopt policies.

I would like to make a suggestion to my Liberal colleague and his government. It is a very important suggestion. Not long ago, I met with the Union des municipalités du Québec. Its representatives told me that there is still no agreement between the federal and provincial governments about the \$8.5 billion to deal with municipal responsibilities. This is money owed to Quebec that is sitting in Ottawa's coffers. There is a whole stack of envelopes. Who manages most of the housing? Who is primarily responsible for housing? It is the municipalities, and there has been \$8.5 billion sitting in Ottawa's coffers all this time. Perhaps my colleague across the floor could have introduced a bill to force Ottawa to release the money that cities need to build housing.

The Canada housing infrastructure fund alone is worth \$1.3 billion. That would be enough to build a few sewers and a few water mains. I think that would go a long way to improving the situation.

• (1805)

I can give another example of a federal problem that we are currently facing. There is this thing that we now call the Build Canada Homes program. To start with, let me point out that no one in Ot-

tawa could even get its translation into French right; that should give members an idea of how competent the staff here is. Everyone in the media made a big joke out of it.

More specifically, while we are on the topic of the Build Canada Homes program, we were told that federal lands would be used to accommodate prefabricated homes, all under federal management, that some great announcements were on the way, and that we should be pleased that more houses are getting built.

To add insult to injury, the government is still telling us that it is going to work with the provinces, that it is going to work hand in hand with the municipalities and that everything will be all hunky-dory and just fine. It keeps repeating that like a broken record.

In the end, in the case of a project planned in Longueuil that we found out about, the mayor of Longueuil learned of it through the media. The government is working so closely with others that the mayor of Longueuil had to learn through the media about a project about to break ground in her municipality. That is how this government operates.

I can give another example of working hand in hand to help Canada's municipalities and cities. Not long ago, the federal government was planning to build a new courthouse in Montreal, Quebec. They wanted to renovate an old courthouse to make upgrades to it. So far, so good. What we ended up learning was that the federal government wanted to build it without providing the city with any plans, without a clear intent to harmonize the architecture, without anyone knowing what it was going to look like or how many storeys it would have. Right in the middle of Old Montreal, a historic neighbourhood that is bustling with tourists, they were going to build a multi-storey building without anyone knowing what it was going to look like. *Héritage Montréal* warned us that the federal government was going to do whatever it wanted without consulting anyone. That is what it looks like when this government works hand in hand with the cities and provinces.

Every time the Liberals meddle in a project that is not under their jurisdiction—the municipalities are primarily responsible for urban planning and housing—it only leads to more trouble and more problems. The same thing is happening right now. What is going on with all the money I mentioned that is sitting in Ottawa? What is happening during all that time?

While the money is sitting in Ottawa and not flowing to the cities, the Liberals are patting themselves on the back because they announced funding for housing. Meanwhile, what is happening? There is inflation. Cities are going under because everything costs more. Everything costs more, and yet, the money is sitting in Ottawa. Ultimately, we are getting less and less bang for our buck because Ottawa is blackmailing us with our own money, pure and simple.

It is blackmailing us because it wants to impose its conditions, its urban planning rules and its density standards, even though everyone is already committed to those things. That is not enough for the federal government. It wants to decide everything that happens everywhere, as if there were no other governments and no other elected officials. The federal government needs to calm down a little, listen to what the cities are saying, listen to what Quebec is saying and, most importantly, send us the money instead of coming up with new strategies and talking non-stop. In the end, nothing is being done on the ground. I am really disappointed to see that the Liberal government is not disbursing the money it should be.

On top of this, we could mention that one of the causes of the housing crisis is also linked to population growth. This is worth mentioning. In Canada, the population has increased by 1.2 million in the last 12 months. That is quite a lot of people. At the same time, Ottawa has very lax immigration policies. The goal of reaching a population of 100 million by 2100 has ultimately changed the situation on the ground. Perhaps no one considered that this would require housing. Perhaps no one considered that it would require additional resources.

In the meantime, young people are suffering. Newcomers are unable to find housing. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that rents have increased by 26% solely because of the Liberal government's lax immigration policy. It is crazy, but that is the reality. I am not the one saying it, the Liberal government is.

I will conclude by saying that before lecturing others, perhaps they should take a hard look at themselves.

• (1810)

[English]

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is a privilege to rise in the House on behalf of the fine people of Mississauga Centre. It is also always a privilege to rise alongside my colleague and good friend, the member for Sackville—Bedford—Preston, particularly on a topic as important as this one.

I said it already, but I proudly seconded this bill because, at the end of the day, politics is not just about policies; it is about people. Bill C-227, the national strategy on housing for young Canadians act, acknowledges this reality.

This past weekend in my riding, I spent some time speaking to neighbours, joined by over 30 young Canadians from Mississauga. While the conversations at the doors were, as always, delightful and informative, my conversations with those young Canadians served as a firm reminder that young people care. They are watching, and they are counting on us to do the right thing. This is the case for public safety; our role on the international stage; Canadian language, culture and heritage; affordability; and most certainly housing.

The member for Sackville—Bedford—Preston explained the bill perfectly, but I think it is important to contextualize it and its potential relative to the national housing strategy. Introduced in 2017, the national housing strategy was Canada's first-ever long-term plan to make sure that everyone in this country has a place to call home. It was created in response to growing concerns about affordability,

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rising homelessness and the lack of coordinated national leadership on housing. For decades, Canada faced deepening challenges in ensuring access to safe, suitable and affordable homes, challenges that were felt most acutely by young people, low-income families, indigenous communities and newcomers.

[Translation]

The national housing strategy addresses the needs of Canadians, whether they are seniors looking to downsize, young families wanting to move into a larger home, or young Canadians entering the housing market. All Canadians deserve housing that meets their needs. Young Canadians need housing that is right for them.

[English]

The strategy represents a commitment to housing as a human right, anchored in the belief that access to adequate housing is essential to health, security and dignity. By focusing on both immediate needs and long-term sustainability, the strategy seeks to break cycles of poverty and housing insecurity that have held too many Canadians back. At its core, the national housing strategy is about partnership. It brings together all levels of government, indigenous partners, the private sector and community organizations to tackle Canada's housing crisis from every angle.

For young Canadians, the strategy acknowledges the unique challenges of entering today's housing market. It also aims to create pathways to enable youth to find secure, affordable places to live, whether through rental assistance, community housing or programs that encourage innovative and sustainable housing design. It also recognizes that when young people cannot find stable housing, it affects their ability to pursue education, build careers and contribute fully to their communities.

With this mind, over the past few months, time and time again, I have heard from organizations from across the country and in my riding, housing advocates, youth groups and local service providers. They have made one thing abundantly clear: Young people need solutions that are exclusively and explicitly geared towards them. They need policies that reflect their realities, from rising rent costs to barriers in home ownership, and they need to know that their government is listening and responding. I have heard this from high school students, university students and young Canadians entering the workforce. Housing policy must be people-centred, grounded in lived experience and adaptable to the changing realities of today's youth. When we listen to those directly affected, we create solutions that last, that restore hope and that build stronger, more resilient communities.

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Far too many young Canadians experience homelessness. What is perhaps most tragic is that their struggles are often hidden. They couch surf with friends or relatives, stay temporarily with family, or sleep in cars. These are young people whose lives are disrupted, whose education and work opportunities are impacted, and whose sense of security is fragile. This bill recognizes them.

As a young Canadian, I stand proud today in support of Bill C-227, the national strategy on housing for young Canadians act.

[*Translation*]

Housing is not just a roof over one's head. Housing is security. Housing is dignity. Housing is the foundation on which young Canadians can build their lives. Imagine how difficult it is for them to study for exams, start a new job or even sleep well at night when they do not know if they will have a bed tomorrow. That is the reality for many young Canadians today.

I would like everyone here to take a moment to imagine something simple: a room of their own, four walls, a door that locks, a quiet space where they can dream, focus and plan for their future. For millions of Canadians, that is not a given. It is a privilege. That is precisely what this strategy seeks to provide.

• (1815)

Across the country, from Vancouver to Halifax, from Montreal to Mississauga, young Canadians have been clear: They want a fair chance at affordable housing. They are not asking for charity, they are asking for hope, they are asking for stability. They are asking for the freedom to pursue an education, build a career and contribute fully to society.

[*English*]

Let us consider the cost of inaction. A young Canadian who cannot find stable housing may delay finishing their education, miss working opportunities or be forced into unsafe living conditions. They may experience anxiety, depression or a loss of confidence in their future. These are not abstract outcomes. They are the consequences of a system that has not yet caught up with the rapidly evolving realities of today's youth. Here, we have the power to change that.

University is a distant memory for many in the House. For me, it was merely a few years ago. I proudly studied and graduated from the University of Toronto Mississauga. During my first year, I lived right on the Credit Woodlands with three incredible people who have become lifelong friends. They were a year above in a similar program, which, needless to say, came in clutch. We lived 10 minutes from campus, so I had the privilege of being able to go to class, learn and then have lunch at home. It was while I was in that apartment that I found my first job and my first extensive volunteering opportunity. Needless to say, I would not be me without that room. As small as it may have been, it was home.

This is why this bill is about more than mere bricks and mortar. It is an opportunity. It is about hope. It is about equity. It is about telling every young Canadian that they matter, their potential matters, and this country will not leave them behind. We often talk about the future, but the future is not some distant concept. The future is being written today in dorm rooms, first apartments, shared

homes, traditional housing, and yes, sometimes shelters. Every decision we make here shapes that future, and every young person whose life is stabilized by this strategy would become a testimony to what is possible when government, regardless of parties, listens, acts and cares.

This is why this bill matters. It is a promise, a promise to recognize and support young Canadians, to address hidden and transitional homelessness, and to invest in affordable housing solutions that meet their unique needs. It is a commitment that housing is not a privilege reserved for a few, but a foundation available to all. I propose that we act now.

Too often, we see politics take precedence over real priorities. This bill is non-partisan. It is an opportunity to truly demonstrate a cross-party, collaborative understanding of the priorities that matter most to young Canadians in all of our ridings. When young Canadians are secure, when they have a place to call home, they are not just surviving, they are living. They are contributing to their communities, to our economy and to the Canada we all envision. This is why we are here. This is why this bill matters.

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise on behalf of the good people of Abbotsford—South Langley, whom I represent so proudly in the House.

Today I am honoured to rise on behalf of youth across this nation. Young people across Canada are sacrificing their dream of home ownership, just to make ends meet. In my hometown of Abbotsford, the number of people experiencing homelessness continues to rise every single year. Families are struggling, rent is unaffordable and the dream of owning a home feels farther out of reach than ever before. I am tired of watching the Liberal government's political theatre while Canadians suffer.

The Liberal private member's bill before us, Bill C-227, which claims to introduce a national housing strategy for youth, is yet another example of performative virtue signalling, with big promises but no real results. The bill would do nothing to address the root cause of the housing crisis. It would simply create more bureaucracy, more studies and more expensive government offices that would not put a single roof over a young Canadian's head.

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Let us be clear: The housing crisis did not appear overnight. It is not a naturally developing problem. It has been created by the Liberal government's policies. Liberals inflated the housing bubble with excessive money printing and immigration, then blocked supply with taxes and red tape for builders. Building permits in Canada now take longer to approve than in any other country in the G7, stalling development and driving up costs.

On top of that, nearly 30% of the price for new homes is government taxes, fees and charges. CMHC says we need to build 480,000 homes this year to restore affordability. We are on pace to build only 212,000. The government has turned housing into a source of revenue instead of a necessity for all Canadians. That is what we call greed, and it has no place in a government that was elected to serve Canadians and not to profit from their struggles.

Young Canadians deserve better, and so do workers, because the crisis affects not only young families but also all workers whose livelihood depends on construction, including tradespeople and suppliers.

Housing comes down to basic economics: supply and demand. When government restricts housing development through endless red tape, and when construction is bogged down by taxes and fees, supply dries up. When supply dries up, prices skyrocket, and Canadians are the ones who end up paying the price. It is unbelievable that we are facing a shortage in a country as vast and as resource-rich as Canada. We have the land, the material and the talent, but we are missing the leadership.

While the Liberals continue with useless studies, fake announcements and photo ops, Conservatives are focused on solutions. We have introduced common-sense bills that would tackle the housing crisis at its source, yet time and time again, the Liberals have voted them down.

Conservatives have proposed to cut the GST on all new homes under \$1.3 million, saving families up to \$65,000; to tie federal infrastructure dollars to homebuilding, ensuring that municipalities permit at least 15% more homebuilding every year; to cut development charges by 50%, a promise the Liberal government made but failed to deliver on; and to end the capital gains tax on reinvestments in housing, unlocking billions of dollars for the homebuilding sector. These proposals are grounded in research, not rhetoric.

Nearly half of Canada's housing costs stem from restrictive land-use regulations, municipal red tape and government overreach. Homebuilding taxes alone account for one-third of the total cost of a home. Taxes and fees on housing are so high that developers struggle to make projects viable, but many are being forced to lay off skilled workers because they simply cannot afford to keep them employed.

Since the Liberals doubled housing costs, the Prime Minister celebrated the housing accelerator fund as a great Liberal success, but the numbers tell a different story. CMHC's own data shows that the fund does not build homes; it builds bureaucracy. In cities that received the so-called accelerator funding, housing starts went down, not up.

• (1820)

The numbers speak for themselves. Vancouver received \$150 million, but housing starts went down by 10.4%. Toronto received \$471 million, but starts are down 58.5%. Guelph is down 78.6%, Hamilton is down 50.7%, London is down 72.3% and Kelowna is down 33.6%.

This failure is compounded by the Liberals' choice for housing minister. The Liberal housing minister, as the mayor of Vancouver, increased homebuilding taxes by 141% while home prices rose 149%, making Vancouver the least affordable city in North America. In one of his very first interviews as housing minister, he flatly said no when asked if housing prices should come down. He was even caught admitting that the \$4.4-billion housing accelerator fund would not result in more homes being built in Canada.

All the government does is continue to waste taxpayer dollars on studies and not answer Canadians as to the root causes. How dare it claim to champion youth while refusing to take meaningful action.

Young Canadians do not need another Liberal photo op; they need homes, affordable homes. A house is not only a lifetime achievement for many folks, but a safe place for building a generational foundation. It is about more than just owning a property. It represents stability, security and a future to work toward.

What this crisis is doing to people my age in my community is creating anxiety, scarcity and fear. We are watching the opportunity to own a home slip away and are being told to simply accept it. I am afraid to see what the future holds for people my age if this continues.

The Prime Minister has spoken about how young people need to make sacrifices, but I believe sacrificing a stable future with a family in a safe home and a safe neighbourhood is unacceptable. There is nothing fair or reasonable about asking young Canadians to give up the hope of home ownership.

I find it personally troubling that the government continues to deliberately ignore the blaring alarm of the crisis it has caused. The Liberals have had years to act. Housing costs have doubled under their government, and young Canadians are being left behind.

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I want to end my speech with a message to all young people in this country and to those who have been told by the Liberal government to give up, to lower their expectations and to sacrifice their dreams. It does not have to be this way. My message to them is very simple. They should never sacrifice their future. They deserve opportunity, stability and the chance to build the life they have always dreamed of.

The Conservatives are here to make that possible. We will not rest until young Canadians have access to a good job, an affordable home and a fair shot at the Canadian dream. We will hold the government accountable every single day for the failures it has imposed on them. There is still hope, and together we can build a brighter tomorrow.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton. There are roughly two minutes left in this debate.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be with you at this critical time as this sitting of the House draws to a close. During these final two minutes in your company, I will be pleased to speak to you and hope that I will not put you to sleep or make you wonder whether this will ever end.

Since my time is very limited, I will get straight to the point: The Bloc Québécois is going to vote against this bill. In our opinion, it is useless, an empty shell. It claims to be creating a national strategy when in fact it does nothing of the sort. At best, it allows the Liberal Party to boast about having a strategy and claim that it has the knowledge to tell the provinces what to do.

The government already has a whole host of programs and, in any case, its only role is to transfer money to the provinces and, potentially, to cede land that Ottawa owns but does not use. It should be providing transfers with no strings attached and ceding unused land. Even that would move us closer to something that makes more sense as far as housing goes. Housing is a major crisis for most of Quebec's big cities and a common problem in western countries generally, but it could be mitigated with the tools at our disposal.

We know that centralization gets us nowhere because Quebec and the municipalities have a better understanding of local realities and citizens' needs. Although Ottawa claims it wants to collaborate, its usual "Ottawa knows best" attitude leaves little doubt as to how it will implement such a strategy.

• (1830)

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I previously had the opportunity to question the minister on the performance of the CRA after the Auditor General had released a report on her findings on the performance standards at the CRA. I think it is important to start this off by reading a couple of fine points from her findings.

She starts off with a line about how "The Taxpayer Bill of Rights states that callers have the right to complete, accurate, clear, and timely information." I think that is kind of at the heart of the Auditor General's report. It is also at the heart of the experience that Canadians have had when dealing with the CRA over the last number of years.

The Canada Revenue Agency, interestingly enough, has the ability to adjust its own service standards, and it is interesting to note that in 2017:

the Canada Revenue Agency's service standard was to have 80% of calls answered by an agent within 2 minutes. Starting in the 2019–20 fiscal year, the agency lowered the standard to 65% of calls answered within 15 minutes.

The number of complaints relating to the service provided by the contact centres increased by 145% since 2021–22.

That is kind of at the heart of the issue here. The CRA recognized that they could not keep up with the service, so rather than try to figure out how they could offer better service to Canadians, they said they were just going to lower the threshold and criteria that were required to say that they were offering better service to Canadians. Then, they followed that up by providing even less service to Canadians, with wait times being beyond unacceptable. This past summer, there are people who spent entire weeks trying to get hold of CRA without being able to get through, having to call back in at the beginning of the day every day, sitting on hold and not ever getting through.

I just recently received an email. Actually, it was today. It was an email from a lady who spent months dealing with the CRA because of an issue with the CRA. It was not anything she did wrong but something CRA did wrong, and she ended up having to go through the courts in order to be able to get the situation rectified. The court sided with her, and finally she had this issue resolved. It should not have to take going to court in order to get CRA to do their job properly.

I had another case of an individual. We have been working with this person for over four years now, trying to settle an estate. They lost a loved one, and the biggest hold-up in that whole process was the CRA. It has taken over four years to resolve an issue with them, and the issue is still unresolved. That is not acceptable. That is the kind of problem that Canadians are routinely finding themselves faced with.

What has the CRA gotten for that? It has gotten a 70% budget increase for the absolutely abysmal, terrible service that Canadians have been receiving. It would be great to see this government take responsibility. The Liberals have been giving us a word salad about how there is a 100-day action plan for the CRA to get its act together and provide better service for Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

As of right now, tax season was back in April, and we are near the end of the calendar year here, with only a couple of months left, so they are going to say that wait times have improved. Let us just wait until next April, when Canadians start filing taxes again, and see if their 100-day action plan actually bore any fruit.

I am just wondering if the minister or the parliamentary secretary here is going to be willing to stand up today and guarantee that Canadians will receive better service standards than they received this last tax season.

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following the interventions by the member for Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, I am pleased to have the opportunity this evening to speak about the CRA's actions in response to the Auditor General's audit of its contact centres.

First and foremost, let me say that the government accepts the findings of the Auditor General and thanks her for her invaluable audit published on October 21, 2025. It is my understanding that the report is currently being studied at the PACP committee. As a matter of fact, both the Minister of Finance and the Secretary of State for the CRA and Financial Institutions have pre-emptively volunteered to appear at committee to discuss the report and the important steps that our government has already taken to improve service delivery at the CRA.

With nearly 200 million service transactions annually, service delivery is central to the agency's mandate. While CRA agents do exemplary work, it has become increasingly clear that service delivery is an issue facing many Canadians in their dealings with the agency.

That is why the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and the Secretary of State for the CRA and Financial Institutions tasked the CRA with a 100-day plan to examine existing gaps and flaws and develop common-sense solutions to improve service delivery. This process began on September 2 and will run until December 11. The plan encompasses improvements in both the short and long term, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to share with the House the measures currently under way at the agency, as well as the results achieved to date under the 100-day plan.

First, the CRA has reallocated the number of call centre and contact centre representatives available, and as a result, the percentage of calls answered has exceeded the plan's target of 70%.

Second, the agency is enhancing its self-service digital options, including optimizing its website, adding features to the My Account function and expanding AI-based chat support.

Additionally, live chat support through My Account is now available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. eastern standard time. Users with locked accounts can now regain access by re-registering, thus eliminating the need to call. Taxpayers with debts of \$1,000 or more can now set up payment arrangements directly through My Account, bypassing the need to talk to a collections officer. The GenAI chatbot on Canada.ca will soon be able to answer a broader range of questions by drawing from a vastly larger pool of CRA resources.

When combined, these measures are streamlining operations and making the CRA more nimble and efficient in responding to Canadians.

The CRA is also improving the accuracy of responses provided by contact centres. During the last fiscal year, the agency evaluated over 100,000 calls as part of the quality assurance program. Of these, 80% were related to specific taxpayer files. According to our results, these calls achieved an accuracy rate of 94%.

We do, however, agree with the Auditor General's findings, and the agency fully acknowledges, that the remaining 20% of calls, which are related to general inquiries, still require improvement. To respond to audit findings, the CRA's quality assurance program is refocusing its evaluation criteria to emphasize the accuracy and completeness of information shared with callers. Evaluations will more effectively inform improvements, including updated training materials, revised procedures and individualized coaching.

Canadians trust the CRA. They trust it to handle sensitive personal and financial information and to provide accurate and timely advice. We are reinforcing that trust through our 100-day plan.

• (1835)

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, if the target accuracy rate was 94%, the Auditor General would not have gone through the whole process of auditing the department. She has found the complete opposite when it comes to service standards.

I find it a little rich for the government member to stand up and say there is a 94% success rate when that was clearly not the case. It would be nice if the member would get up to explain how there could be such a discrepancy between the Auditor General's findings and the findings of the CRA. When the CRA is looking at itself, of course it is going to point to the number of calls where it knows it got the information right, not look at a bigger body of them, as the Auditor General did.

Quite often, people are hit by this issue. The number of times I have had people come in who are single mothers about to lose their child tax benefit or who are seniors at risk of losing their OAS or CPP or who have had clawbacks to them is absolutely tremendous. The government needs to get this right so that these vulnerable individuals do not suffer at the hands of the CRA.

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Government of Canada will continue to closely monitor the results of this plan in the short and longer term. We will oversee the overall success of this plan, which will be assessed based on improvements in clients' experience.

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Given the agency's commitment when proving the accuracy of responses provided by contact centre representatives, we will be tracking the performance closely. Our expectation is clear: The accuracy rate for general enquiries should be just as high as that for enquiries related to specific taxpayer files.

Finally, we will also monitor key indicators such as reductions in call volume and processing times, and the effectiveness of new solutions such as the platforms and AI tools to ensure better access to timely services for Canadians. Asking the agency to swiftly implement the 100-day plan was a decisive action by the government. Canadians deserve timely, accurate and accessible service from the agency's contact centres, and it is the agency's responsibility to deliver it.

• (1840)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to follow up on my question from earlier this year about the Liberals' inability to follow through on Auditor General reports and actually improve service delivery to Canadians.

It was just back in June that I asked a question about the F-35, and we found out that the original cost of the F-35 jets was estimated to be \$19 billion. However, the Auditor General, after their audit, found that the figure was based on outdated information and that by 2024 the estimated cost had increased to \$28 billion, almost a 50% increase. That also did not take into account several other elements needed to achieve full operational capacity, such as essential infrastructure upgrades and advanced weapons, which would cost another \$5.5 billion. It is past the budget time frame and past the budget costs, and we are still lingering months later with an inability to move forward on that file.

However, that is not the only report the Auditor General has that the Liberals keep messing up. I want to go back to reference another recent Auditor General's report, and that was on the performance standards of the Canada Revenue Agency call centres. This most recent report was not the first one that was done. The Liberals had their wrists slapped back in only 2017, a few years ago, about several aspects of their service delivery that were failing.

The Auditor General came out with a scathing report at that time, talking about service standards and accuracy of information in several ways and giving recommendations as to what the Liberals needed to do to get CRA to give better customer service. It was back in 2017 that the then minister for CRA put out a statement that said:

Our clients have a right to receive information that is clear and precise, when they need it. We have made strides to improve our service

The statement goes on to say:

However, there remains work to be done, and the Auditor General's recommendations will help us make the necessary adjustments.

They had a three-point action plan, and they said:

Beginning in 2018, our clients will see numerous improvements

Fast-forward to today. The budget of CRA under the Liberals, since their time in office, has increased by 70%. I wish I could come here tonight and instead congratulate the Liberals and say that service got 70% better. Literally, when we look at it, service actual-

ly got about 70% worse, I would say. That is closer to the actual reality.

In the second report under the Liberals with respect to the CRA, the call centres and customer service to Canadian taxpayers got astronomically worse. The Liberals had learned nothing except how to make the problem worse. Only 18% of calls met CRA's own service standard. The average wait time doubled. There were invoices paid with little or no validation, which is something we have heard before in the arrive scam investigation. Over 32 million calls were received, but only 10 million people reached an agent. This means that 22 million Canadians were redirected or hung up on.

My question for the Liberals is this. How many more Auditor General reports is it going to take for them to get what I call their "deliverology" in shape, get CRA in shape and take all these other Auditor General reports, like with respect to the F-35, and get something done properly, on time, on budget and with good customer service? Canadians are not expecting too much from the government but are getting the worst deliveries we have seen in recent years.

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last spring, Canadians made it clear they wanted change.

The new government is laser-focused on transforming the ways we do business, but we will not lose sight of our commitment to deliver responsibly for Canadians. From making housing more affordable to bolstering our defence efforts, we are building Canada strong while remaining mindful of our role as stewards of public funds.

We know government spending must at all times meet the highest standards of accountability. To address the member opposite, as we have said before, I will say that the government has accepted all the Auditor General's recommendations regarding procurements made in relation to the development of the ArriveCAN app. We share the demand for accountability expressed by the opposition.

The new government will ensure that rules are followed and that procurement processes are properly applied and documented every time. The government has already implemented several measures to improve how we procure and manage professional services. This includes improving evaluation requirements, increasing transparency, improving documentation, ensuring that work requirements are clear and adding measures for more procurement oversight across the board.

Adjournment Proceedings

The goal, as always, is to make sure we are getting the best value for Canadians. I want to be clear: When it comes to recovering funds, where we can demonstrate fraud or overbilling, we will pursue, and are already pursuing, GC Strategies in court. At the same time, procuring goods and services, particularly those related to defence, needs to be more efficient.

Regarding the member's concerns around Canada's future fighters, a modern fighter jet fleet is essential for defending Canada and Canadian sovereignty, and we plan on delivering in a timely manner. In this rapidly changing and complex geopolitical environment, we must also take a hard look at our defence procurements to ensure that they remain in the best interests of Canadians and our armed forces. That is why we have created the Defence Investment Agency to streamline processes, tailor oversight to project complexity and embed a stronger sense of urgency and prioritization into how we deliver capabilities. This is what responsible governments do.

Canada's new government understands the importance of being fiscally responsible and maintaining high standards while conducting the business of the country. Canadians rightly expect this, and that is why we are committed to transforming the way we do business as we build Canada strong. With all federal procurements and projects, the new government will make sure we are always getting the best value while upholding the highest standards.

• (1845)

Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals were truly intent on getting the best value for taxpayers' money, the recent CRA audit would not have a heading of "The value of the telephony service contract has reached \$190 million from its minimum work guarantee of \$50 million". That is the heading because IBM was provided an original contract with a value of \$50 million over 10 years, and now it is projected that the overall contract value will rise to \$214 million through 2027, which is a quadrupling while service standards are dropping.

As a matter of fact, the Auditor General says that when it comes to the IBM contract, "Shared Services Canada...should strengthen its contract management and conduct a full review of the...contract and its life cycle to identify lessons learned." There are constantly lessons being learned by the Auditor General. The issue is the Liberals' inability to follow up and deliver that change. When are they going to not just talk a good game but actually follow through?

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, our new government is tackling some of the most pressing economic and security issues of our time as we build a strong, united Canada. We are taking bold action to transform government and build up our defence efforts. We are moving quickly, but we are doing it in a responsible and pragmatic way.

As we manage some of the largest federal undertakings this country has ever seen, we will always act in the best interest of Canadians. We have a solid plan to build the economy of the future, and we are building up our military as quickly as possible to keep Canadians and Canada strong and free.

With respect to the well-documented issues around GC Strategies, I want to assure the hon. member that our government is focused on modernizing and fixing our procurement processes. As

stewards of public funds, we know government spending must at all times meet the highest standards of accountability. We will ensure that this happens. Canadians deserve no less.

• (1850)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to follow up on a question I asked the justice minister in June on when we could expect the much-needed bail changes to reverse the Liberal bail system we have in place. As I noted when I followed this up last month during Adjournment Proceedings and could not get an answer from the parliamentary secretary at that time on the specifics of it, this is not actually a new question. This is a question I have actually been bringing up in this chamber since 2022 about the urgent need for massive reversal around the Liberal bail system.

I point out, as well, that this is actually something the Liberal government voted against in early 2023, when we called for those changes here in this chamber. I did not get a specific answer last month, but I am happy to report that today, we are finally debating a recently tabled bill, Bill C-14, which addresses many of the reversals needed around the previous Liberal bills, Bill C-75 and Bill C-5.

As I assume the parliamentary secretary of justice is going to reply to me, out of all the Liberals present, I want to focus the remainder of my time tonight on giving her the opportunity to just focus in on some of the private member's bills we have already tabled in the House and ask her opinion. Can she reassure me that Bill C-14 is going to address these? If not, will she actually support these private member's bills?

This is important because, as I said in my question back in June, in my riding alone and in just the city of Owen Sound, the annual police report stated that violent crimes were up another 14.6%. I have addressed concerns about the fact that the delay specifically tied to decisions around the Jordan's limit is taking away justice for the victims.

Let us get to the three private member's bills I want to talk to the parliamentary secretary about. The first is Bill C-242, the jail not bail act by the great member of Parliament for Oxford. It is focused on a few things that I hope the parliamentary secretary can address. That is, it would repeal and replace the Liberal principle of restraint that came out in Bill C-75, stating that instead, public safety and public protection have to be the primary consideration.

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Bill C-242 also proposes a new major offences category, with reverse onus bail conditions on charges involving firearms, sexual acts, kidnapping, human trafficking, home invasion, robbery, extortion, arson and assault. Bill C-14 would address a lot of the reverse onus aspects, but it would also strengthen bail laws by mandating that judges consider an accused's full criminal history when they are making a decision. It would also prohibit anyone with an indictable conviction from acting as a guarantor. This is something I want to focus on as well.

We have Bill C-246 from the member for Lethbridge, which focuses on consecutive sentences and being able to do that, and I would ask whether Bill C-14 is able to address that.

Finally, there are a couple aspects of Bill C-225, by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, which would force an offender convicted of intimate partner violence within the preceding five years to be released only by a judge.

Can the parliamentary secretary assure me that Bill C-14 will address all the concerns in those three private member's bills?

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to speak about Canada's bail system and to respond to the member opposite, who asked whether the Minister of Justice had specific timelines for introducing bail and sentencing reforms, which is a commitment we were elected on and promised to Canadians with the mandate they gave us.

As the member pointed out, last week, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada introduced Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act. The even greater news is that Bill C-14 was already at second reading today in the chamber.

Earlier this afternoon, the Minister of Justice spoke about how the bill would crack down on repeat violent offenders, making it harder to get bail and toughen sentences. Bill C-14 would strengthen Canada's bail and sentencing system to better protect public safety and prevent repeat offenders. It would require courts to consider random or unprovoked violence in bail decisions and would clarify that restraint does not mandate automatic release. For serious and repeat violent crimes, new reverse onus rules would make the accused responsible to justify release rather than the Crown having to prove the grounds for detention. In regard to sentencing reform, Bill C-14 would add new aggravating factors, require consecutive sentences for certain serious offences and end the use of house arrest for serious sexual crimes, including those against children.

Regarding the member opposite's question on the timeline for this bill, it is important to note that reforms of this magnitude, over 80 amendments to the Criminal Code, require careful and thorough consultation. Let us recall what the Leader of the Opposition was doing all summer. He was targeting his own MP's seat to protect his job. At the same time, what was the Minister of Justice doing? He was targeting repeat violent offenders and building consensus among provinces, territories, police associations and victim groups to develop real, practical solutions. That consensus is what led to Bill C-14. For the first time, we have national consensus, with Conservative, New Democrat and Liberal premiers alike all calling for the swift passage of this bill. When every province and territory

welcomes a federal justice reform system, and I mean everyone, that is not politics; that is partnership and that is leadership.

Finally, while Parliament sets the laws on bail, provinces and territories run the system, conducting most hearings and enforcing release conditions. All levels of government share responsibility for making bail work. We are doing our job with these sweeping reforms, and now provinces need to do theirs. The government remains committed to working closely with them to strengthen the system and keep Canadians safe.

Bill C-14 is balanced, principled and firm. It targets repeat violent offenders, strengthens community safety and upholds the rule of law. This is real reform, not rhetoric. This is leadership that unites and does not divide, which is exactly what Canadians expect and what they deserve.

• (1855)

Alex Ruff: Mr. Speaker, I was actually a little surprised by a few of those comments from the parliamentary secretary. It was not where I expected it to go, but I did not get an answer to my question. I did not need a synopsis of Bill C-14. We are tracking that.

The minister indicated in debate today that he is open to amendments to the bill. The debate today did not shy away from the fact that these are much-needed changes that we require.

Again, I will ask the parliamentary secretary this: Is the government open to enacting the key things in Bill C-242 with the principle of restraint, in Bill C-246 from the member for Lethbridge with consecutive sentencing, and in Bill C-225 with intimate partner violence?

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, it seems that the member opposite missed the news over the weekend and missed what frontline enforcement had to say about our bail and sentencing reform act, so I will bring him up to speed.

The Toronto Police Association called our plan “a step in the right direction”. The Canadian Police Association, for police across the country, said, “This should be the moment of collaboration, not division”, urging all parties to pass legislation quickly to strengthen public safety and rebuild confidence in our justice system. The London Police Association said that this legislation “represents a vital...advancement [and] an essential step in creating a safer [Canada].”

I ask the member opposite, what insight does he have that the frontline officers seem to be missing?

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With regards to the timeline, as mentioned earlier, right now, the reforms are large, as there are over 80 amendments to the Criminal Code, which will require all the necessary time and thorough consultation to get it through.

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

(The House adjourned at 7 p.m.)

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