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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 31, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of Bill C-3, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (2025), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in today's debate. Before I address the substance of this bill, I would like to make two observations.

First, today, October 31, marks the beginning of poppy season, a time when all Canadians remember the great sacrifice, and in too many cases, the ultimate sacrifice, made by the men and women serving in the Canadian military. It is thanks to them that we have lived and, most importantly, continue to live in a free country, a land of freedom where every Canadian is respected. We must always remember the sacrifices of our military personnel. I want to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to my late father, who was a Second World War soldier and veteran.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Gérard Deltell: I thank my colleagues for the applause, but they should save it for my second point, which is even better.

All of Canada will be united tonight. With one voice, we will support the Blue Jays. Tonight, they will beat the other team and bring home baseball's biggest prize. If they should happen to lose tonight, I am not even worried, because they always come back strong. There is no doubt that the Blue Jays are going to win the World Series.

[*English*]

Let me quote the famous slogan from Rogers: "Bring it Home". It reminds me of something, but I do not know what.

[*Translation*]

Now I want to talk about Bill C-3, which deals with an extremely important yet sensitive issue. This bill addresses immigration, citizenship and other delicate situations that must be handled with care. Once again, I am thinking of my parents. I am the son of immigrants. This is a subject that is very close to my heart.

Bill C-3 replaces Bill C-71, which was debated during the previous Parliament. It deals with citizenship by descent, lost citizenship and the status of children born abroad. Why was this bill introduced? It was because, in 2009, Stephen Harper's Conservative government introduced the first version of an amendment to the Citizenship Act. It put a limit on the conditions under which citizenship could be automatically granted to foreign children, and this applied to the first generation. There were some heated debates, but the bill was passed.

The act has been upheld to this day. However, the very nature of a law makes it open to challenge, and citizens are entitled to do just that. That is what happened in Ontario in the early 2020s. In 2023, an Ontario judge ruled this law unconstitutional and set the government a deadline for making adjustments. That deadline has been extended repeatedly in light of political events, including the end of a government, an election and the installation of a new government. We are therefore faced with a situation of some urgency considering that we have until November 25, if memory serves, to pass a bill amending the Citizenship Act.

The amendment has to do with the right of the soil. Can a person born on Canadian soil obtain citizenship automatically, within limits? This is a sensitive but fundamental issue that keeps coming up with increasing frequency. It prompted commentator Mario Dumont, among other observers, to write, "The Conservative Party of Canada has kicked off a real debate....Is the right of the soil completely off-limits?" So far, this right has indeed seemed like something carved in stone, beyond the realm of debate. He says that "the right of the soil is no longer off-limits" and that "the Conservatives are right" to take this action.

Bill C-3 addressed this issue, but in our view, it did not address the most sensitive aspects of it that call for serious, humane and political reflection, because we need to consider how this might affect future generations. That is why we had serious reservations about this bill as it was introduced and why we proposed amendments in committee. A total of 11 issues were discussed in committee, based on the amendments we brought forward.

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• (1005)

These amendments were supported by the second opposition party, and we are grateful to our Bloc Québécois colleagues. We welcome their support and their endorsement of what we proposed, which related primarily to residence, language, knowledge and security.

One thing is certain. If we fail to properly define certain entry routes and to prioritize responsible immigration, the primary victims of our negligence will be the immigrants themselves. Sadly, we all remember the unfortunate events that have occurred over the past 10 years involving immigration practices that did not always show respect for those arriving.

Citizenship requires even more care. We know what a Canadian passport and Canadian citizenship are worth, so we need to treat it with dignity. We proposed several amendments that the Bloc Québécois supported. These amendments were incorporated into the bill because the committee welcomed them. That is great.

Now the Liberals have decided that they preferred the original version. That is a shame because the work in committee was done properly. It feels like the Liberals are saying that they are not interested in any of that work. Need I remind the government members that they were elected to a minority government? Being in the minority means having to work with opposition parties to find common ground. What common ground did we find with the support and assistance of the Bloc Québécois? We agreed on certain points.

With regard to the residency requirement, the parent must demonstrate continuous physical presence in Canada for the same period of time as that required of an applicant for naturalized citizenship, at any time prior to the birth of the child. This is entirely logical, relevant and practical in the context of the approach we wish to take.

With regard to language requirements, individuals must demonstrate proficiency in one of Canada's two official languages, English or French, unless they are children under the age of 18 or individuals over the age of 54.

With regard to the citizenship exam requirement, individuals must demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of Canada, as well as citizenship-related legislation and responsibilities.

With regard to the security assessment, individuals must not pose a threat to Canada's national security, though this does not apply to children under the age of 18.

Can we really call them requirements? They are realities that all of us must deal with as citizens. There is nothing unreasonable or partisan about this. It is all common sense. It is all clear and specific. It spells out exactly what we expect from newcomers who want to become Canadians and who we gladly welcome into our country. We are grateful to them for choosing our country and they are grateful to us for making them welcome. However, there are a few basic conditions they need to meet. We want to require exactly the same thing for the right to citizenship.

In our opinion, our suggestions are fair, balanced, reasonable and, most of all, constructive. They are constructive for the country we love, for the hospitality we need to provide to people interested

in living here with us, and for the approach we want for future generations. The right of the soil is not a given, and it comes with certain responsibilities.

That is why the amendments that we adopted, with the support and consent of the Bloc Québécois, are meant to be positive and constructive. They will ensure we can provide a better welcome and a better life for a lot of Canadians and people interested in becoming Canadians. Once again, certain basic conditions must be met. As I showed earlier, there is nothing unusual about these conditions.

I therefore urge my colleagues to reconsider their current position of rejecting the proposed amendments. It is never too late to do the right thing. Some people look interested, and I congratulate them. I would ask the Liberals to reconsider their position so that all Canadians can come out winners in this debate.

• (1010)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are a couple of things on which I fully agree with the member, and then it gets questionable at the end.

I fully agree that today is an important day. It is a day when we could be wearing poppies to support our men and women of the Canadian Forces, both present and passed, recognizing their heroism and contributions. We are a free nation today because of those who put their lives on the line in the past.

Also, go, Jays, go! This is Canada's baseball team. There is a high sense of excitement from coast to coast to coast. We all hope that the Jays will bring it home and get the World Series.

As for where I disagree with the member, I am sure he will recall that around 2007 or 2008, a report from immigration indicated that people acquiring citizenship via birthright should not have to forego the same procedures as someone who was naturalized, in other words is a permanent resident. I wonder if the member would at the very least agree that if a person is acquiring Canadian citizenship by birthright, they should not have to go through the same procedures as someone getting it through naturalization.

Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, obviously, I recognize the issue we are debating today, but on the other hand, we have to address the issue of our reality in 2025. Life goes on, and we have to adapt to the reality of the day.

I do not want to be too partisan, but I will be. Over the last 10 years, we have seen a lack of responsibility when we are talking about this specific issue. For good or bad reasons, I think the government is responsible for some of the problems we have to address today. That is why we should have a fresh look at them. Yes, some points were raised during the years my colleague mentioned, but we have to look to the future.

Based on what we see right now, our amendments are very correct. Obviously, colleagues can disagree—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I have to stop the hon. member there, as we need to get back to questions and comments. We are running out of time.

The hon. member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have two questions for my colleague. I know he is quite capable of answering more than one.

My first question is this. What does my colleague make of the current situation in Parliament? Two opposition parties worked together in committee to improve a bill, to make it better and more reasonable. Now, with this debate, all the work that was done in committee could be completely tossed aside because the makeup of the House is a little different.

My second question is this. Why does he think this government is rejecting an amendment that we introduced that calls for greater accountability? This transparency would allow us to let everyone in the country know how many new citizens this legislation creates.

• (1015)

Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, in my speech, I did indeed forget to mention those two very important things, one of which is accountability. Canadians are craving transparency and accountability. We need those things so that we know whether the job is being done right and so that we can make changes along the way, if necessary.

Second, with regard to my esteemed colleague's first question, it is unfortunate to see that the government is setting aside the careful, rigorous work of the committee. That work had the support of the witnesses, who felt that we were taking the right approach. We appreciate the fact that the opposition parties are sometimes able to work together, but in actual fact, we are always working together, all parliamentarians, to make progress for the good of Canada.

I would once again invite my government colleagues to consider the fact that they hold a minority government and that they have, maybe not the obligation, but the constitutional responsibility to find some common ground with the opposition parties for the good of Canada and all Canadians.

[*English*]

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, for generations, Canadian citizenship has been a symbol of pride, opportunity and belonging. It has been the envy of the world, a beacon of hope for those seeking freedom, safety and a better life. Countries around the globe have looked to Canada as a model for

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how to build a fair, compassionate and principled immigration system, but today, that reputation is destroyed. After a decade of Liberal government, Canadians are rightly concerned, not because of the newcomers who arrive here with hope in their hearts and a desire to contribute, but because of a government that has mismanaged our immigration system, neglected its responsibilities and introduced policies that dilute the very value of Canadian citizenship.

In Kitchener Centre, residents are deeply frustrated by the federal government's failure to manage the international student program. What was once a pathway to great Canadian education has become a cautionary tale of neglect and mismanagement. Let us be clear. This failure is not the fault of our citizens or the students who came here in good faith. It is the government that failed to protect the integrity of our education system, and now our community is left to deal with the consequences.

Many first- and second-generation immigrants in Kitchener have shared with me at their doors their deep frustration with the federal government's failed immigration policies. These are individuals and families who came to Canada with hope, worked hard, followed the rules and built lives rooted in contribution and community. Now they feel their reputations are being unfairly tarnished by a government that allowed this system to spiral into dysfunction. They deserve better than to be lumped in with the consequences of Liberal mismanagement. They deserve a government that honours their commitment and protects the integrity of Canadian citizenship.

Let me be clear that this is not the fault of immigrants. It is the fault of a government that has broken the system. While the Liberals broke it, Conservatives will fix it.

Canadians were rightly outraged to learn that a convicted child sex offender listed on the national sex offender registry was granted a Canadian visitor visa despite his criminal history. This individual, who had sexually abused his underage niece, was allowed into our country under the watch of the current federal government.

This is not just a bureaucratic oversight; it is a shocking failure of basic due diligence. A simple background check would have prevented this, yet the government chooses to rely on the self-disclosure of applicants rather than proactively protecting Canadians. This case has shaken public trust, further highlighting how broken our immigration system has become under this leadership. Canadians deserve a government that puts public safety first, not one that allows dangerous individuals to slip through the cracks.

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Under the current public safety minister's watch, 599 foreign criminals slated for deportation have gone missing, including 431 convicted of serious crimes such as sexual assault and violent offences. These individuals were under deportation orders but have vanished from the system, exposing alarming gaps in Canada's immigration enforcement and border security.

This is not just a failure of policy; it is a failure of leadership. Canadians deserve to know that those who pose a threat to public safety are being tracked, detained and deported. Instead, we are seeing a system where dangerous individuals disappear into our communities, unchecked and unaccounted for. This is yet another example of how the Liberal government has lost control of our immigration system, and it is Canadians who are paying the price.

Bill C-3 is just the latest example of the Liberals' misguided approach. It is a recycled version of Bill C-71, with portions hijacked from Senator Yonah Martin's thoughtful and targeted Bill S-245. However, instead of building on that work with care and clarity, the Liberals have chosen to abolish the first-generation limit, a measure introduced by former prime minister Stephen Harper in 2009 to prevent the rise of Canadians of convenience. That measure was never about exclusion. It was about ensuring that Canadian citizenship meant something, that it was earned, not inherited, without connection and that it reflected a real and meaningful bond with our country.

Bill C-3 would replace the first-generation limit with a weak substantial connection test: just 1,095 non-consecutive days spent in Canada at any point in a parent's life. There would be no requirement for a criminal background check and no meaningful demonstration of a commitment to Canada.

• (1020)

Let me put that into perspective. Under this bill, a child born abroad could gain Canadian citizenship even if their parent spent just a few months here decades ago. That is not a substantial connection. It is not how we build a strong and united country.

Conservatives believe in restoring citizenship to lost Canadians, those who were unfairly excluded by outdated laws. We support equal treatment for adopted children, ensuring that all families are treated with dignity and fairness. However, we cannot support a bill that goes far beyond these necessary corrections and opens the door to unlimited chain migration, undermining our national identity and creating a two-tier immigration system.

Let us talk about fairness. Immigrants who come to Canada and work hard to earn their citizenship must meet strict residency requirements, pass language and citizenship tests and demonstrate their commitment to Canadian society. They contribute to our communities, our economy and our shared future.

Under Bill C-3, individuals who have never lived here could gain citizenship simply because a parent once did decades ago. That is not fair. It sends the wrong message to newcomers who are doing everything right. It tells them that their hard work is worth less than a technicality.

Residents in Kitchener Centre are frustrated. They see their public services, health care, pensions and housing, everything, under

strain. They worry that a surge of new citizens living abroad who have never contributed to Canada will stretch those services even further. That is why Conservatives took action.

At the immigration committee, we worked constructively to amend Bill C-3 and bring common sense back to our citizenship laws. We introduced amendments to ensure prospective citizens by descent or adoption would go through steps similar to those of naturalized citizens.

We have added a residency requirement. Parents would have to demonstrate a consecutive physical presence in Canada equal to that required of naturalized citizens. On language proficiency, they would have to speak English or French unless they are under 18 or over 54. There would be a citizenship test. They would have to understand Canada's history, values and responsibilities. On security screening, they would have to undergo a national security assessment. On transparency, the minister would have to report annually to Parliament on citizenships granted under Bill C-3, which would include country of residence and any exemptions to security screening.

These amendments are not about exclusion; they are about preserving the integrity of Canadian citizenship. They are about ensuring that every new citizen, whether born here or abroad, shares a real connection to Canada and understands what it means to be Canadian.

We must empower newcomers to place the same value on Canadian citizenship that generations before them have held. We must reassure Canadians there is a better way, a way that is fair, principled and rooted in our shared values.

Canadian citizenship is not just a passport; it is a promise, a commitment and a privilege earned through dedication, contribution and connection. Let us protect that promise, let us stand up for fairness and let us fix what the Liberals have broken.

• (1025)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my wife is a proud University of Waterloo grad, and there are three post-secondary institutions in my riding: McMaster, Mohawk and Redeemer. The member opposite mentioned the international student program. Of course, international students, and post-secondary education in particular, are the responsibility of the provincial government. This issue is mainly unique to Ontario. Will the member opposite acknowledge the responsibility of the Ontario Conservative government in the mismanagement of post-secondary education?

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Kelly DeRidder: Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member opposite's wife for being a graduate of our amazing U of W in Kitchener.

The fact of the matter is that the Liberals are not being transparent about what this bill would do and how the chain of migration would bring in extra strain, hurt, crime, and affordability and health care problems, as well as extra wait times at our hospitals. We need to talk more about how the chain migration being proposed in this bill would put extra strain on our country as a whole.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, as we reflect on the value of Canadian citizenship, I am curious to know my colleague's thoughts on the message the government is sending to Canadians. One of the wonderful things about Canada is that we are a democracy where people get to vote for a representative to send them to Ottawa. When a majority of members vote and make a decision on a piece of legislation, what does it mean to Canadians and those aspiring to be Canadians when the government says that it is not so interested in what the majority of democratically elected representatives say and when the Liberals just want to impose their will against the decision of the majority of parliamentarians, who thoughtfully considered, reviewed and amended the legislation they put forward?

I am very interested in the member's reflections on that.

Kelly DeRidder: Madam Speaker, that is something I did not talk about in my speech, and it is incredibly important.

This is a minority government, and opposition parties have worked together to amend this bill. I have to remind the government that it has a minority, and we are working together in opposition and have put time and effort into this. We represent the other voices of Canadians, and it would be very disheartening to Canadians not to hear the voices from the opposition parties, which are working together on this piece of legislation.

I would ask the Liberals to listen to the opposition parties and do what is right.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not sure if we are hearing the Bloc and the Conservatives in essence saying that all members of the House are not equal. I think we have to recognize, whether we want to or not, that there is a New Democratic Party and Green Party presence in the House. I think the statement the member and others in the opposition have made marginalizes the importance of individual members of Parliament.

Does the member not believe that all members should be equal inside the chamber?

• (1030)

Kelly DeRidder: Madam Speaker, I think that question was just a smokescreen for the fact that the Liberals are not listening to the proper, thought-out amendments being brought forward for this legislation. On that, there is a lack of transparency from the government in not telling Canadians what chain migration is going to do to the systems we currently have in place and what it is going to cost Canadians to do this.

It is time for us to work together and listen to all voices of Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac.

Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am, like all members of the House who are not of indigenous background, the child of immigrants. We are all either immigrants ourselves, the children of immigrants or the grandchildren of immigrants. This is where I fit in.

My grandparents came to Canada, and my grandmother came from a place called Bialystok in Poland. She was a Jew. Bialystok had, at the time she left with her parents in 1914, 10,000 people, and the majority, about 70%, were Jewish. When my mother returned to Bialystok in the 1970s, of course, a few things had happened, including the Holocaust and then several decades of Communist rule.

There were no longer enough Jews in that town to form a *minyan*, which is a 10-man group of people to conduct prayers at the beginning of Sabbath. It is our good fortune that our family was not there because 95% of the Jews were killed. My mother obviously would not have survived that. I am someone who is half Jewish, and it is questionable, depending on which part of Europe one was in, whether I would be have been considered someone slated for extermination or not. This thought crosses my mind when I consider what could have happened.

My grandfather was born in a place called Odobesti, Romania. While 90% of Romanian Jews were killed, Odobesti was far enough into the foothills of the Transylvanian Alps that it was overlooked. When my mother went there in the 1970s, she met with some people from the Jewish community who were able to describe the situation.

I say all of this by way of saying that Canada is the land of hope. It was then for people who were leaving prosecution. In the case of my great-grandfather, who led his family out of Bialystok, he was not trying to escape the Nazis, who did not exist yet. He was trying to escape conscription to the czar's army at the beginning of World War I. My great-grandfather bought a passport from a neighbour, which was obviously an illegal transaction. His family name was Tauber, but the name of the neighbour from whom he purchased the passport was Chaiton. For the rest of their lives, they were known as the Chaiton family.

I say this by way of saying that, even those who come here under conditions that might not meet with what we consider full respect for all laws of all jurisdictions are, nonetheless, often good citizens, and they are welcome here.

If I go to my father's side of the family, who came from Ireland and Scotland, their tale is a little different. They were staying within the British Empire when they migrated, but they had to leave their families and know they would never see them again.

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The immigrants who come here today, fresh from, typically now, Asia or Africa, and sometimes Latin America, also, over and over, demonstrate a deep respect and love for this country. They understand in a way that those of us who are born here can forget, unless we are reflecting on the history of our own ancestors. They understand what an extraordinary gift Canadian citizenship is and what an extraordinary thing it is to become a part of this welcoming community.

This is the theme of the concerns we in the opposition are expressing with this legislation. We do not think it is inappropriate to respond to a court ruling, although I do want to return to that theme in a second because the government acted precipitantly in this manner, but we do think it is reasonable to apply a nuanced view to accept that the government's first draft might not be absolute perfection and that it is worth considering the ideas others, and other parties, are putting forward in the House of Commons.

Let me just talk for a moment about the way in which the government has handled this legislation. It responded to a ruling of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, which was handed down on December 19, 2023. As one of my colleagues noted a little earlier in this debate, a deadline was attached for compliance to that ruling by the judge, and a variety of exigencies, including the recent election, nine months ago now, had the effect of pushing back that date. This was a ruling of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, not of the Supreme Court of Canada. I think we should understand that there is a distinction between rulings of lower courts and of the Supreme Court of Canada.

- (1035)

When the Supreme Court rules, it, of course, has nine members. Sometimes they sit en banc, which means all of them together. Sometimes there is an odd-numbered panel of seven. This allows for something very important to happen. Multiple opinions can be expressed, including dissenting opinions. For the question that is before the court, the simple question of whether party A is right or if party B is right, and which of these two interpretations of the law is right on that specific, narrow question, the majority rule prevails, but there are opinions, both of the majority and of any dissenting minority.

There can be more than one dissenting opinion that is filed. We can have seriatim dissents. In fact, we can have seriatim opinions in favour of the narrow point in question, with different reasoning. The reasoning is what is actually valuable. The reasoning is what pushes forward a more nuanced, intelligent and thorough comprehension of the common law or, in the case of constitutional interpretation, the development of our understanding of that statute. It is a really important concept.

That is why we have the Supreme Court. It is why our higher courts have more members than our lower courts, because higher courts are the ones where judicial reasoning is of particular importance, as it lays that ongoing and ever-building framework of improvement in our understanding of how our laws work and how our Constitution ought to be applied.

It is not with any sense of disrespect that I point out that the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, in its ruling, was the ruling of a single judge, one judge, with neither dissenting opinions from other

judges, nor concurring opinions, for that matter. It would have been appropriate, I believe, for the government to have made an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada in order to get the reasoning of a larger number of justices. We would not have seen the introduction of new facts. We do not in an appeal case, typically. We would have seen a review of what might be errors in judgment or errors in the understanding of the precedents. That is where the value lies. I think that it was regrettable that the government made the decision to not let this go to the Supreme Court.

Having said that, the government did not take the matter the Supreme Court. It took it to Parliament. It introduced Bill C-3. The bill essentially removes the first-generation limit, introduced by former prime minister Harper's government back in 2009, a model which, with variations, exists for many countries around the world. I talked at length about my mother's side of the family. My father's side of the family comes from Ireland.

Ireland applies a limit. My great-grandfather came from Ireland. His son and his grandson, my dad, would be eligible for Irish passports. I am not, which I frankly regret a little, but it is the way it is. Even if my father had gotten his Irish passport, which he thought about doing, I would not have qualified. That is a reasonable limit. My affection for Ireland is significant. My actual connection to the country is very limited. It is a reasonable limit to place.

There are other countries that do something different. Some countries never get rid of citizenship rights but they are typically countries that do not have that combination of people leaving and people coming from elsewhere, at least to the same degree. Malta, for example, extends it. There are very few people who have immigrated to Malta, although there are many Maltese immigrants. It is a significantly different situation.

The common-sense way in which the opposition parties have proposed to deal with some of this is by proposing a series of amendments. They proposed a change to the residency requirement. The parent applying for Canadian citizenship, who is the descendant of those who have left Canada, should be able to demonstrate a consecutive physical presence in Canada for the same time frame as a naturalized citizen. I think that this is a very reasonable rule for extending, effectively, a form of inherited citizenship to their children and grandchildren.

Other amendments include a citizenship test requirement, similar to what one would face if one was a new immigrant to Canada, and a security screening, to make sure that one has not broken the laws, not the kind of law I mentioned with my great-grandfather but the kind of law that we see with individuals who have committed violent criminal acts in other countries.

I think, as well, that our suggested amendments regarding transparency for the ministry would be very helpful, for a minister to report to Parliament on the number of citizenships granted under the terms of the bill every year. That would be a very helpful thing to see. Likewise, a reporting requirement on revealing security screening exemptions would also be something that should be considered by the government.

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• (1040)

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague had a very thoughtful speech. The last part of his speech was about transparency. The government is bringing forward a huge bill to make a huge change to something that is very important, which is citizenship, without any idea about the number of people who would qualify for that nor what the cost would be. The government is introducing a budget on November 4.

Why was the government not transparent and straightforward with Canadians about the major change they are making to the Citizenship Act?

Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, my colleague asked why the government was not transparent. I do not know the answer to that. It has a remarkable reluctance regarding transparency on many issues. The most obvious one has nothing to do with immigration.

It has to do with a certain emigrant who left this country, went abroad for a number of years, became governor of the Bank of England, wound up running Brookfield investments, moved its headquarters out of Canada, caused it to divert about \$6.5 billion in tax revenues out of Canada and is someone who has shrouded his own assets in complete darkness, so we have no idea what he is invested in. I am obviously speaking of the Prime Minister. He makes the claim that he will be recused from anything that is a conflict. We cannot recuse the Prime Minister. He is implicated in every decision, and we have no idea where the conflicts are, although there are clearly many.

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech, which was eloquent, as always.

I feel the amendments that were to Bill C-3 are reasonable. They do not negate the bill, but they do set out conditions for obtaining citizenship. That is reasonable. The fact that the Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives joined forces without the government's agreement is neither excessive nor abusive. It is an improvement and a way of regulating citizenship.

How is it possible that we are debating a bill today when we know full well that on Monday, during the final vote, the NDP and the government will defeat the amendments and improvements to the bill? Once again, these amendments do not negate the bill or its basic thrust. They set out conditions for obtaining citizenship.

Could my colleague talk to us about that?

Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question.

When it comes to the rules for people immigrating to Canada, there is a requirement that they be able to speak one of our two official languages, for example. This is mandatory for people seeking citizenship who were born in a foreign country and who do not have a parent or grandparent who was born in Canada. I think this is a reasonable requirement for people who are in the same situation but who do have a parent or grandparent who was born in Canada.

The rules are there to ensure that both official languages are spoken by the majority of Canadians across the country.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the Conservatives are actually supporting the lost Canadians. They are recognizing their birthright as being Canadian. That is my understanding.

Would the member not recognize that there is a difference between someone who has been naturalized through the permanent resident process and someone who stakes the claim that they have a birthright to citizenship? That is why we see a change in being able to qualify for citizenship, but there would still be the 1,095 days to qualify being applied to both.

• (1045)

Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, there is no requirement for consecutive residency in Canada. I can see why the government might say one consecutive period of three years is too long, but to say there has to be no consecutiveness or a minimum period for any part of that is unreasonable.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is an important debate to have as we approach Remembrance Week and Remembrance Day.

The discussion about Bill C-3 is a discussion about the value of Canadian citizenship: what that means, why it is valued, why it has lasting value, and the freedoms that Canadians enjoy and that Canadian citizenship affords. Whether it is freedom of speech, of religion, of mobility or of voting for and shaping government, these are important freedoms.

In shaping government and in voting, Canadians have clear expectations of what happens in our parliamentary democracy. They send representatives to the House, 343 of us in the most recent election, and there is a well-established process we follow here.

When a bill is introduced by the government, it requires approval at various stages. One of the most important functions is not the sound bites we hear on the news in the evening, see on social media or hear on the radio from question period, but the work that members do in committee, which is incredibly valuable.

The composition of committees represents the composition of the House. While there are members who are elected under the party banners of multiple parties that sit in the House, the parties do not have equal standing. That is how one party gets to form the government, by having the confidence of the House and most often having the most seats. The official opposition is second to that, and then there are additional opposition parties. There is a minimum standard for what constitutes party status. The composition of our committees reflects the composition of the chamber.

When a bill, for example Bill C-3, goes to committee, it undergoes scrutiny. We hear testimony from expert witnesses, and we have debates. Really good work can happen at committee. One of the most important roles of members of the House is their service on standing committees.

Government Orders

The Liberal government's wanting in this case to ignore the work of committee, the amendments to its legislation that get passed at committee, the improvements that get made, seeks to concentrate power in the executive, in the very few. I think if we asked most Canadians, they would want the majority of the work of the majority of members at committee to be reflected in the legislation, and not simply have the Prime Minister, by edict, ram things through the House.

The effect of looking to override and undermine the work of committee is that it erodes public trust, something that has fallen to all-time lows in recent years. I would say, what is more, that it undermines good governance and presupposes that the executive, cabinet, in presenting legislation, had all the answers and that the view of members at committee, their witnesses and the committee debates are not important or relevant.

• (1050)

How did we get to where we can have our parliamentary democracy? What did we do to earn it? It was bought and paid for with blood and sweat.

Thousands of people died, and we stand on their shoulders today, on the shoulders of the more than 118,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who died in the defence and the promotion of democracy, in conflicts since before our country was Canada. It started with the Fenian raids, the defence of Canada against U.S.-based militants. I can only imagine that with less than three minutes left in my speech, members would not think I would be starting in 1866.

It was consistent through the world wars and through the Korean War, the Congo wars, Cyprus, other UN engagements, and Afghanistan most recently, where 159 Canadian men and women, in the lifetime of all of us, died with the Canadian flag on their shoulder, along with seven Canadian civilians. I will note that in Afghanistan, the Brockville Rifles, my local regiment in Brockville, was awarded battle honours for that, in the defence and the promotion of the rights and values we have here at home.

That is what I am reflecting on this week, as well as my service as a regular member of Canada's army. I know there are other members on both sides of the House who served in uniform, and I thank them for their service. I know what it takes of an individual, and I know what it takes of the family. People do not have to have been deployed to have sacrificed. People do not have to have put on the uniform to know, recognize and appreciate that sacrifice.

That is what I want members to reflect on as they take decisions as we go forward in Parliament: what is in the best interests of Canada; what protects the value of our citizenship, of our passport; and what promotes that democracy, our parliamentary democracy, and respects the vote of the people who participated, who exercised their franchise as a Canadian in the last election. We are here to represent everyone, and it is an incredible honour. It is a privilege. However, it is a big responsibility; I reflect on that too.

While we make a decision as a House on what to do next with Bill C-3, I would just ask members to consider our parliamentary democracy, our traditions, how we came to be here, the defence and

the protection of those freedoms, and of course why the process that was undertaken at committee is so important.

• (1055)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a fundamental flaw in the proposition the member has put before the House. He tries to give the impression that the Bloc's working with the Conservatives, and anything they might decide in a committee, should ultimately prevail because they believe they make up a perceived majority.

I have been in a situation, when I was in opposition, where I was part of a political entity that did not have party status. I like to think that my value was just as great then as it was for any member of the Manitoba Legislature, just as I would ultimately argue that representatives from the New Democratic Party and the Green Party, inside the House, should be treated equally with respect to members' rights.

With respect to the 340-plus members, does the member believe that they should be treated equally inside the House, in terms of rights?

Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, of course the parliamentary secretary is ignoring his own actions and his government's own actions. Let us follow his argument all the way through.

The NDP asked to be given official party status to make sure they get the same rights. However, that is not how it works. It is a question of numbers and how many members they sent to the House. The Liberal government has said that.

We are sure that over the last 10 years of their government, the Liberals have said that committees are important and are the master of their own destiny, and that the House will respect what committees have to say. What has been the change? The change is that the Liberals do not have a majority, and they do not want to respect what happened at committee.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his military service.

People who stood in frozen trenches and fought for the freedoms of this country, and people who have fought all along, would not really be happy about the granting of citizenship to people who have never lived in Canada, because citizenship has to mean something. What does the member think about that?

Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, this was why they went to fight: for a future they could not have imagined. There were literal children who were lying about their age so they could go fight for an idea that they had only just come to understand as they were coming of age as adults. They believed in what we have had the blessing and the benefit to enjoy since then: parliamentary democracy.

I will note that committees do not serve in an advisory role to the executive, to the Prime Minister, that he should dismiss out of hand simply because he can. I would say that, responsibly and ethically, he ought not and cannot dismiss it, because this place has been structured in such a way that we send bills to committee. They are referred to a committee by the House.

If the Liberals are just going to do whatever they want to do at the end of the day, then why the pageantry of the more than two dozen standing committees? That is not what this place is for.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

CIVIC DISCOURSE

Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we live in complicated times, when misinformation and disinformation are threatening the safety and security of our communities.

I had the chance to participate in an event hosted by Carleton University, in my riding of Ottawa Centre, with Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, discussing hate, conspiracy theories and challenges to democracy. It was an important discussion, reminding us of the many forces that seek to undermine everything that makes Canadian democracy and our society the envy of the world.

Algorithms and echo chambers have polluted civic discourse, leading to rising disinformation, disagreement and hate in all forms. We must remember that the work of maintaining our values of democracy, rule of law and respect for rights is hard and ongoing, but it is work that we must always keep up. All of us in this Parliament have an important responsibility to always listen to each other and engage in thoughtful debates to build Canada strong.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Madam Speaker,

The budget is coming after Halloween
 So I want to tell you the things I have seen
 Spending so scary it will tax us to the brink,
 With inflation so high it will drive us to drink
 The crime in our streets is now terrifying
 With all getting bail, we are now verifying
 Food prices so high it will spook you for sure
 With more hikes to come that no one can endure
 With nothing being built and no trade deal in sight
 This Liberal government is really a fright
 Job losses are climbing like a very grim reaper
 And this budget for sure will be driving them deeper
 But there's hope in the midst of this terrible nightmare
 For the safe homes and streets that we all want to share
 For affordable lives in a country so free
 Our Conservative team will bring it to thee
 Conservative bills will stop all the crime
 And bring a great outcome to the end of this rhyme

Statements by Members

[Translation]

CAROLINE GAUTHIER

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, I want to pay tribute to Caroline Gauthier, the director of Maison des jeunes de St-Bruno, a youth centre in my riding of Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie. She has had a remarkable career and is celebrating 20 years of work at this vital organization.

For two decades, Ms. Gauthier has been pouring her energy, passion and commitment into giving young people a safe, inclusive and stimulating space. Thanks to her leadership, Maison des jeunes de St-Bruno has become a true pillar of the community, a place where young people can gather, grow and develop their full potential.

I want to sincerely congratulate Ms. Gauthier for her outstanding dedication and thank her for everything she has done for the young people of Mont-Saint-Bruno.

* * *

[English]

YARMOUTH BUSINESS AWARDS

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, CPC): Madam Speaker, last Thursday, the very best of Yarmouth businesses were recognized at the 18th annual Yarmouth Business Awards, hosted by the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce at the Mariners Centre in my riding of Acadie—Annapolis. It was an inspiring evening that celebrated our region's most dedicated entrepreneurs and community leaders. They are people whose hard work, creativity and determination continue to drive our economy and strengthen our community.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the 13 award recipients and all of the nominees. Their achievements inspire our community and reflect the resilience, innovation and pride that define the spirit of Yarmouth.

I give special congratulations to the D'Eon Oyster Company, a family-owned business that earned not one, but two awards this year: the export achievement award and the people's choice award. Its remarkable success not only showcases the world-class quality of our seafood industry, but proves how a business built on local roots, hard work and family dedication can achieve international recognition.

* * *

[Translation]

ELSIE MACGILL

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as Women's History Month draws to a close, I want to honour an outstanding Canadian trailblazer: Elizabeth Muriel Gregory MacGill, commonly known as Elsie.

Statements by Members

In 1927, Elsie became the first woman in Canada to earn an electrical engineering degree from the University of Toronto. Two years later she became the first woman in North America to receive a master's degree in aeronautical engineering. She was the first woman to take the lead in aircraft design, including the design of the Maple Leaf Trainer II and the Hawker Hurricane, a vital fighter aircraft of the Second World War.

As a feminist, she contributed to the historic Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada report in 1970. Elsie grew up surrounded by strong women. Her grandmother, Emma, was a women's rights activist, and her mother, Helen, became British Columbia's first female judge.

From one generation to the next, strong women are building a strong Canada. As Elsie once eloquently said, as soon as we see a need for change, we find a way to make it happen.

* * *

• (1105)

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Madam Speaker, as Canada approaches the November 4 federal budget, families in Windsor are watching closely, and they are worried. Grocery bills are still climbing, housing remains out of reach and fuel prices are squeezing household budgets. Life costs too much, and the government seems to be out of touch.

Windsor is a city that was built on hard work by auto workers, manufacturers and small business owners, but instead of rewarding that work, Ottawa keeps piling on carbon taxes, red tape and run-away spending that drives up inflation.

Canadians do not need more talk; they need action. They need lower taxes on food, homes and energy; a firm cap on the deficit; and a government that puts working families first. Windsor deserves a budget that restores the promise of Canada that if a person works hard, they can build a great life here.

It is time for common sense. It is time to make life affordable again.

* * *

CROSS-CANADA RUN FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Ernie Klassen (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary achievement by my constituent, Mr. Sachin Latti. This year, Sachin, the first South Asian to run across Canada, covered over 3,700 kilometres in 82 days, with only nine rest days, averaging more than 50 kilometres daily.

As a retired law enforcement officer with 20 years of service at the Canada Border Services Agency, Sachin understands the mental health challenges facing those who serve our communities. He channelled this into action, running 100 kilometres in 15 hours, completing nine ultra-marathons in nine months and running 22 marathons in 22 consecutive days.

Sachin has raised \$300,000 for mental health initiatives across Canada supporting veterans, first responders, individuals struggling with addiction and youth in communities from coast to coast.

Join me in commending Sachin for his remarkable journey of hope, healing and barrier-breaking achievement.

* * *

YOUNG PEOPLE IN CANADA

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is Halloween, the season of tricks, masks and make-believe. It is fitting, because Canadians have seen all three under the Liberal government.

Recently, the Prime Minister told a room full of students they will have to make even more sacrifices. Unfortunately, this is nothing new, as young Canadians have had to sacrifice plenty after 10 long years. They have given up completely on their dream of home ownership, as housing costs doubled, and they are struggling to afford groceries with skyrocketing prices. To make matters worse, youth unemployment reached record highs over the summer, at nearly 15%.

This is the season for ghosts and ghouls, but for many young Canadians, the true horror is simply viewing their bank accounts. That is why a Conservative government will cut taxes on food, work and homebuilding to restore the promise of Canada and ensure that young Canadians can have a good job, an affordable home and hope for a brighter future.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MAISON DES JEUNES DE BOUCHERVILLE

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House to mark the 50th anniversary of the Maison des jeunes de Boucherville, or MDJ.

It all started in 1973 when a group of young people dreamed of an opening a youth centre in Boucherville. The community granted their wish, and it was such a success that the facilities have expanded and modernized several times.

Today, more than 1,200 young people from Boucherville regularly visit the MDJ, not to mention all those who participate in its many activities. I myself was a big fan of Pendragon's live action role playing games when I was a teenager.

I would like to congratulate the director, Marie-Claude Malo, who was once my day camp counsellor, Carole Chamberland, chair of the board of directors, and everyone who has made La Piau a place for young people to meet, share, listen, support, and, above all, get involved over the years.

I wish the MDJ a happy 50th anniversary.

* * *

[English]

MAX SHORT

Philip Earle (Labrador, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the late Max Short, a recipient of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and a proud Newfoundlander with strong roots in Labrador. As a fisherman, his life was devoted to the people of the fishery.

From his early days on the water to his leadership in the fisheries union and later as a representative of the federal government, Max brought deep knowledge, fairness and integrity to every role he held. He was the bridge between harvesters, industry and government, always focused on ensuring that the voices of coastal communities were heard and respected. Those who worked alongside Max will remember his steady hand, his sharp mind and his unwavering belief in the value of our fishery as the livelihood of rural Newfoundland and coastal Labrador.

We thank Max for a lifetime of service, leadership and friendship. On behalf of all Labradorians and Newfoundlanders, I extend sincere condolences to his family, colleagues and friends.

* * *

• (1110)

ETHICS

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, this week, we learned that the Prime Minister's company, Brookfield, has been and continues to be one of Canada's largest tax-dodgers. Tax experts revealed that Brookfield avoided paying a stunning \$6.5 billion in Canadian taxes over five years through the use of offshore tax havens.

While he was the chair of Brookfield, the Prime Minister set up three multi-billion dollar investment accounts in the Caribbean, claiming their headquarters was above a bicycle shop in Bermuda. Nobody believes that. He is shielding profits from Canadian taxes, and those are funds that could line the Prime Minister's pockets through future bonus payments. Canadians pay nearly half of their income in taxes and are rightly angered by seeing the Prime Minister dodging his share by putting his money in offshore tax havens.

The question is simple. Despite being asked multiple times, why will the Prime Minister not confirm that he has no investments in offshore tax havens? What is he trying to hide, and why will he not come clean to Canadians over his latest ethics scandal?

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, did members know that Canada makes up 2.5% of world trade? At the same, it makes up 0.5% of the world's population.

In the last election, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians to look for trading opportunities beyond the United States, and we are aggressively doing so. Just last week, the Prime Minister had a wonderful discussion with President Marcos, and

Statements by Members

now we have set our targets on trying to achieve a trade agreement between the two great nations of Canada and the Philippines.

Some of the best coconuts in the world come from the Philippines. Some of the best beef and pork come from the Prairies in Canada. Some of the best potatoes come from P.E.I. There is so much opportunity for trade between Canada and the Philippines.

This is a Prime Minister and a government that are looking to other countries to get trade done.

* * *

FOOD AFFORDABILITY

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Madam Speaker, I visited the Kitchener food bank. Its CEO told me that visits to the centre have quintupled in the last 10 years. What happened 10 years ago to start all of this? The Liberals came into power, promising to grow the middle class, but after 10 years of their massive spending on nonsense like gender-neutral rice in Vietnam, the middle class in Canada can no longer afford to eat. Some 39% of Canadians experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months.

I do not think the multi-millionaire Goldman Sachs banker Prime Minister has any idea what Canadians are going through right now. Every time we bring up this crisis, the Liberals say we should be thankful for their school cafeteria program. If that program was working, why has food bank use by children doubled over the last few years in our country?

Why would Canadians trust the Liberals, who cannot run a post office or a passport office, to do something as important as feed our children? We cannot and will not. Conservatives will fight for a budget that makes life affordable again so that parents can feed their own kids.

* * *

[Translation]

FAMOUS FIVE

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Women's History Month serves as a reminder that equality in Canada is not a given, but rather the result of a struggle embedded in the very core of our institutions.

Oral Questions

Over a century ago, the Famous Five—Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Henrietta Muir Edwards and Louise McKinney—established a fundamental principle of our democracy, recognizing women as persons with rights, and therefore eligible to sit in the Senate. This decision laid the groundwork for women's participation in parliamentary life, with full civic and constitutional recognition.

This legacy continues thanks to five women who were recently honoured here in Ottawa, whose commitment reflects the same vision of justice, leadership and social transformation.

By celebrating them, we are affirming that women's history is not just a thing of the past, but rather it is still being written today in this Parliament, with 40% of the elected members on our side being women.

* * *

[English]

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Madam Speaker, strap in. Tonight, Canadians from coast to coast to coast will be on the edge of their seats as the Toronto Blue Jays take on the Dodgers in the pivotal game six of the World Series.

Across five games and 54 innings, the Jays have excited us, inspired us and shown us the kind of grit and determination that unite us all. Their impressive display against the Dodgers has the entire country believing this could be it. After 32 years, they are one win away from glory. It is an underdog story for the ages and so much more than just another ball game.

Whether they are watching at the Rogers Centre, at a local sports bar or with friends at home, every Canadian will be taking in every pitch, hit and homer with bated breath. Let us get behind the Jays, cheer them on and watch them make history.

We want it all. Go, Jays!

* * *

● (1115)

[Translation]

JEAN MELANÇON

Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, I want to pay tribute to a remarkable leader, Jean Melançon, outgoing director of the Service de sécurité incendie de l'agglomération de Longueuil, or SSIAL.

After 37 years of service with the Longueuil fire department, the SSIAL, including 12 years as fire chief, Jean is getting ready to share his vast experience and expertise with another fire department.

As a man of courage and compassion, Jean dedicated decades to protecting the citizens and property of our region. At the same time, he also inspired generations of firefighters with his commitment to excellence.

In his roles as both firefighter and director, Jean helped create a safer and stronger community. His passion for safety and his sense

of duty will always be remembered. His legacy will live on for years to come.

I thank him for all he has done, and I wish him all the best in his future challenges.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, even with a new Prime Minister, after 10 years of this Liberal government, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Liberal insider friends continue to line their pockets with millions of dollars, while hundreds of thousands of Quebeckers and Canadians are going hungry.

Why is the Prime Minister giving executives at Export Development Canada, Via Rail and the Business Development Bank of Canada annual bonuses of over \$100,000 each instead of feeding young families who cannot afford groceries? Where does the Prime Minister get off asking young people to wait their turn, to make even more sacrifices, when he is paying his rich friends millions of dollars?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to wish everyone here in the House a happy Halloween. Another holiday that is coming up is Christmas.

Canadians are looking forward to Christmas. This has been a big year for Canada. This year, people want to celebrate Christmas, but they do not want to go to the polls. We are going to table a budget. Canadians hope that the House will pass the Liberal plan, our Prime Minister's plan, to build Canada strong.

Will my colleague commit today to not be a grinch and vote in favour of the budget next week?

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is Halloween. Will the government leader stop trying to scare Canadians?

What Canadians need for Christmas is an affordable budget for an affordable life. It is this government's responsibility to deliver that budget.

While the government leader is making jokes, the 2024–2025 Nutritious and Affordable Food Basket Report says that products such as meat, fish, cheese and yogurt are now foods that many families can no longer afford on a regular basis. This is Canada in 2025.

Does the Prime Minister understand that people have nothing left to sacrifice?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Conservatives have consistently voted against support measures that help Canadians make ends meet. Whether it is school food programs, dental care, drug coverage or child benefits, the Conservatives consistently vote against the measures we are putting in place to help Canadians make ends meet.

[English]

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Madam Speaker, after 10 years, Liberal insiders and elites never had it so good, but the Prime Minister forces young Canadians to make sacrifices.

Young Canadians cannot afford a home, yet CMHC executives got \$30 million in bonuses for helping contribute to the Liberal-made housing crisis. Over 700,000 kids line up at a food bank every month, yet BDC executives get \$45 million in bonuses for helping cover Liberal incompetence on COVID benefits.

How many more sacrifices do young Canadians have to make so that the Prime Minister can keep lining the pockets of his elitist buddies?

• (1120)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, do members know what my hon. friend has done? Time after time, on the measures that would help Canadian youth, they are against them. Whether it be student loan relief, the savings program for first-time homebuyers or creating and building national projects that are going to give opportunities to young people from coast to coast, this member stands in this place and votes against it every single time.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Madam Speaker, if any of those programs actually worked, 700,000 kids would not be lined up at food banks every single month.

Incompetence pays in the current government. We can look at the justice minister. There are Liberal-made housing, cost of living and food bank crises. Liberal insiders and elitists get paid to enable Liberal failures.

When will the Prime Minister stop rewarding Liberal incompetence and actually give Canadians an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is Halloween, and we certainly want to wish a happy Halloween to all Canadians.

There is another big holiday coming up. Canadians would like to have a Christmas, a holiday season, in peace; no ads with the Leader of the Opposition, that grinchy guy, screaming at them through their television screens or their telephone screens.

The finance critic on the other side should stand in this place right now and tell Canadians that they can be off the hook; we are not going to have an election. We are going to vote for that great Liberal budget.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, sacrifice more: that is the message the Liberal Prime Minister just

gave to young Canadians. These are the young Canadians living through generationally high youth unemployment, the young Canadians who have mostly given up hope of ever owning a home.

Meanwhile, Liberal insiders get rich. Liberal-appointed executives at BDC are getting, on average, a bonus of \$216,000. A young Canadian would be desperate to have that as a salary.

As the budget approaches, what sacrifices are these young people being asked to make while they get Liberal insiders rich bonuses?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the members opposite claim to be there for youth, or to be concerned about youth, and yet at every opportunity, when there is a chance to vote for investments and supports for our young people and families, they vote against them. They will have another opportunity, in this budget, to support the tax cut for first-time homebuyers, to support the permanence of the national school food program and to support continued investments in early learning and child care. I hope they will join us in avoiding a Christmas election by supporting the budget.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, the question was actually about young Canadians and what they are going to be asked to sacrifice, which of course the government did not answer. Young Canadians are going to have to figure that out in the budget.

Sacrifice they have. They have sacrificed by not being able to own a home. They have sacrificed by having generationally high youth unemployment. The Liberals' message is that they passed all these things and things should be better, except they are not. There are 700,000 children now going to food banks despite their programs. Youth unemployment is the highest it has been in a generation despite their programs. Their programs are not working, and their economics is driving young people into unemployment.

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Conservatives claim to care about young people, yet every time a measure comes to support them, they vote against it. They voted against the national housing strategy, the first home savings account and expanding mortgage criteria, and now they will not commit to voting for cutting the GST, which would save first-time homebuyers \$50,000.

Oral Questions

Do not worry, Madam Speaker. Canadians know the Liberals are here to support them. We hope members on the other side can show they are really serious and care about young people by supporting our budget on November 4 and avoiding a Christmas election.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, Halloween is here, as we have just heard, and the Liberals are trying to give people a fright.

They are threatening to call an election if their budget is not passed, yet they are a minority. All they have to do to get their budget passed is come to an agreement with the Bloc Québécois, the Conservatives, the NDP or any of the parties.

The Bloc Québécois's demands concern Quebeckers. The Liberals can meet these demands or pick others to support their bill, yet they refuse to negotiate with anyone. Are they truly acting in good faith?

• (1125)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me point out to my colleague that the Bloc Québécois, representing 22 ridings, has made 36 billion dollars' worth of demands, along with additional expenses payable by Canadian taxpayers.

Yes, we are listening. Yes, we are working with all the opposition parties. Yes, we obviously want this budget to pass and avoid a Christmas election.

I have a question for my colleague. Will he support the budget or will he vote against it in favour of a Christmas election in Quebec?

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Liberals have the choice of three parties to support their budget. Of course we would prefer that they work with us because our demands meet the needs of Quebeckers on health and seniors' purchasing power. We would like them to invest more in Quebec than in the oil companies or in tax breaks for big tech. It is up the Liberals.

What is the choice of the Liberals right now? They have decided not to work with anyone.

Why are they holding Quebeckers hostage with threats of a Christmas election instead of negotiating?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my leader and my colleague, the Minister of Finance, have shown great openness. It is the Bloc Québécois leader who said, without reading a single word of the budget, that he will be voting against.

Who is the one not being constructive here? Is it the person who says he is voting against the budget no matter what we say or is it the people who are listening, working with the opposition and wanting to pass the budget to avoid a Christmas election?

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, the forestry industry is on the brink of collapse. It can no longer bear the costs of the softwood lumber dispute on top of Donald Trump's tariffs.

Representatives from businesses, workers' groups and municipalities were in Ottawa this week. They are calling on the federal government to cover 50% of future countervailing duties to be paid until the end of the dispute, when our businesses will be reimbursed.

Ultimately, this will cost the federal government nothing, but in the short term, it would save businesses and jobs.

Will Ottawa do the right thing?

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yes, the Canadian federal government is here and will always be here to support the softwood lumber industry and the forestry industry. We are acutely aware that this is a crucial industry in many regions of Quebec and Canada. We will continue to work collaboratively with the provincial governments, including the Quebec government. We are here, and we will continue to be here.

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THE ECONOMY

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal government, 10 years of chronic deficits, Canada's debt has doubled. Running a deficit is like adding fuel to the fire of inflation. Unfortunately, that is why prices are skyrocketing in Canada.

We have a government that says one thing and does another. It is telling young people that they need to make sacrifices while it is spending \$20 billion on consultants, on government cronies.

Will the Prime Minister stop asking Canadians to make sacrifices and instead table an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we will all see this government's budget on November 4. It is a 21st-century budget that will address the very serious problems we are facing right now because of what is happening in the United States. I would like the Conservatives and the Bloc members to vote in favour of the budget so that we do not have to have an economically harmful election at Christmas.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Madam Speaker, what would Quebeckers and Canadians like? They would like the parliamentary secretary to do exactly what he did when he was in the provincial government, which is to balance the budget. That is exactly the opposite of what he is doing now. Is he aware that he is part of a government that, over the past 10 years, has caused 2,250,000 people to turn to food banks? He is part of a government that has caused 700,000 children to turn to food banks for food.

Will the parliamentary secretary act responsibly and present an affordable budget for an affordable life?

• (1130)

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the budget we will be tabling on November 4 is a responsible and ambitious one. The time is now. Now is the time to act to support Canada's economy so that our children's future is well protected. Now is the time to take action. We will take action, and we will take strong action.

[English]

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Madam Speaker, after 10 years of the government, Liberal elites and insiders have never had it so good, but the Prime Minister told young Canadians they need to sacrifice.

While Canadians are lined up at food banks, the Liberal government hired the Prime Minister's buddies to staff his new defence procurement office and Major Projects Office. He is paying them \$679,000 and \$577,000 in salary. Of course, he is paying the woman less; that is his track record. This is at a time when Canadians are struggling to afford to live.

Will the Prime Minister stop making young people sacrifice so he can line the pockets of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. secretary of state.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the party opposite has had a bad week and its members are focused on their leader, but we are focused on affordability. We are focused on building Canada.

On November 4, we are going to come forth with a generational budget that will invest in Canada. We will—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Can we have order?

The hon. secretary of state.

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, I know that party has had a difficult week with its leader and its members are focused on anything but. We are focused on affordability and building Canada.

On November 4, we will come forth with a generational budget that will invest in Canada. We will invest in Canadians. We will build this country because we believe in Canada.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Madam Speaker, so far the Liberals have built up a record-smashing 2.2 million food bank visits, and over 700,000 of those are from children. Rent has doubled. According to the Canadian income survey, 380,000 seniors are living in poverty. They cannot afford homes and they cannot even afford food. Some of them are living in their cars.

When will the Prime Minister stop using taxpayer dollars to make his rich friends richer and finally give Canadians an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives.

Oral Questions

We are laser-focused on delivering a generational budget on November 4. We will invest in Canada. We will invest in Canadians. We will invest in infrastructure, defence projects and housing.

We believe in Canada. We will build Canada into the strongest economy in the G7. I hope the members opposite will join us and pass our budget, and not cause a Christmas election.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Madam Speaker, right when the Prime Minister was telling young Canadians they would have to make sacrifices, he was signing off on bonuses for Liberal elites. These taxpayer-funded payouts included \$11 million for the fat cats at Via Rail, \$30 million for the bureaucrats at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and \$60 million for the bankers at the Business Development Bank, all while everyday Canadians struggle to afford the necessities of life.

Instead of asking Canadians to sacrifice more, why does the Prime Minister not cut off insiders cashing in on Canadians' misery?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we understand the pressures that Canadians are facing, but at the same time, the Conservative Party offers nothing new. Our government is empowering young Canadians to build lifelong careers. This is one of the reasons we are fast-tracking the Build Canada Homes program to get homes built and fast-tracking major projects to create tens of thousands of high-paying careers across this country. Those careers are available to young people, and we know they are at the heart of building Canada strong and building the strongest economy in the G7.

We encourage members opposite to support the budget and avoid a Christmas election.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is impressive that the Liberals are actually recognizing Christmas. Canadians are being asked to pull the wagon through the mud while Liberal cronies ride comfortably on top.

The government is not worried about families lining up at food banks; it is too busy lining the pockets of insiders. The Liberals are not bothered with cutting home prices; they are too focused on cutting cheques to bumbling bureaucrats. They do not care about rising debt and inflationary deficits so long as the money keeps flowing to Liberal elites.

When will the Prime Minister stop using tax dollars to reward his friends—

Oral Questions

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

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.): Madam Speaker, I see the Conservative misinformation spin cycle continues and continues, but it never produces a grain of truth. If the Conservatives want the truth, we will tell them the truth.

The true story is that the Conservatives never stand up in this House when it comes time to support youth. They actively undermined their futures by voting against student loan support and by voting against grants for students. They voted against the national housing strategy many times in this House. They voted against the tax-free savings accounts for youth to help them realize the dream of home ownership. They voted against the national school food program. They—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kenora—Kiiwetinoong.

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FINANCE

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Madam Speaker, according to the Liberals' own numbers, they overspent on the bureaucracy at FedNor by 60% of what was planned last year. That is \$2.7 million spent on themselves that should have been used to support communities across northern Ontario.

While people across the country are struggling with housing costs, which have doubled, and a record 2.2 million people are visiting food banks, the Liberals continue to fund bureaucracy. When are they finally going to stop their out-of-control spending and deliver an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we keep hearing about the Conservatives' deep concern for youth, but they continue to vote against any project or program that would support the youth of this country. They vote against it all. I would like, for once, to hear exactly what they would reduce in order to meet their absurd budget demands.

Let us have a good budget and an affordable budget on November 4, and let us have the support of the Conservatives.

* * *

*[Translation]***TRANSPORTATION**

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, after years of wilful blindness, Ottawa is finally taking action on the Driver Inc. scam, but it is not doing nearly enough.

We were told that 100,000 inspections had been done in the trucking industry, but in the end, the government was forced to admit that it did only 1,000, not 100,000. That is one hundred times less. When we pressed the government further, it finally admitted that it had not done 1,000 inspections, but rather 650. The rest were

more like outreach. As for any fines issued, they were never paid. It is a good thing that ridicule never killed anyone, but Driver Inc. drivers do.

When will the government get serious about tackling this problem?

Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our top priority is keeping our roads and drivers safe. The minister made an honest mistake, but budget 2025 includes funding for a targeted \$77-million program to address the issue of non-compliance related to contractor services and service fees.

The Bloc Québécois can vote for that and for the budget, thereby preventing a Christmas election. Will the Bloc do so?

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, let us be clear, if not for the Bloc Québécois, nothing would ever have happened. We presented 10 solutions to resolve the Driver Inc. issue. The Liberals are implementing one of them and acting as though everything is fixed. There are nine left to go.

There is still no federal inquiry. Temporary immigrants are still getting permission to incorporate. Dating sharing between governments is still not happening. So much the better if the Liberals are cracking down on tax cheats, but the core of the problem concerns dangerous drivers ignoring the rules of the road on our streets.

When will Ottawa finally get serious?

Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me reiterate that our top priority is keeping our roads and drivers safe. Budget 2025 includes important measures to ensure roadway safety. The two opposition parties have a choice.

Will they vote in favour of a budget that advances the cause of trucker safety? I hope so.

* * *

*[English]***FINANCE**

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Madam Speaker, on Halloween we expect ghosts and goblins, not ghoulish government spending, but the Prime Minister told students they need to make more sacrifices, more spooky words from a government that has already drained their wallets.

Young Canadians are haunted by high prices, buried under debt and scared stiff for their future. Liberal spending is out of control. It is a fiscal fright fest.

When will the government stop its reckless tricks and finally give Canadians the treat of affordability?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is fortunate that next week we will have an affordable budget for Canadians. We hope the members opposite will join us in supporting that budget. It will include many ways to invest in young people, in young families, in making homes more affordable, in making food available at schools and in making dental care available, with a number of other things that will support Canadian families. I trust the Conservatives will support us and avoid a Christmas election.

* * *

• (1140)

THE ECONOMY

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians have been struggling for a decade. They have nothing left to give. Canadians are being told to cut back while the Liberal government refuses to cut its own wasteful spending.

Nationwide, food bank visits have hit 2.2 million, including 700,000 children. In my home province of B.C. alone, food bank visits have gone up 80% since 2019.

Canadians cannot afford groceries or basic necessities. They certainly cannot afford another Liberal budget. When will the Prime Minister finally deliver an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Conservatives claim to care about youth and affordability, but on this side, we are about solutions, not slogans. We are cutting income taxes, cutting the GST for first-time homebuyers, putting together a national school food program and launching Build Canada Homes to increase home affordability, and we have launched the Major Projects Office.

Canadians do not live in a pretend world. They know we are here to help them, support them, make life more affordable and build the strongest economy in the G7.

We hope the Conservatives can support us, as I am sure they really care about youth and affordability, on November 4.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, manufacturing companies throughout the greater Chaudière-Appalaches region, including Armoires Bernier in Lévis, are being stifled by 25% U.S. export tariffs.

On January 1, those tariffs are going to double to 50%. The U.K. has 10% tariffs. The European Union and Japan are at 15%. Canada's situation is outrageous. Canadian companies cannot cut into their profit margins indefinitely.

The Prime Minister promised an agreement with the Americans. Why did he break his promise?

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would remind our colleagues that the U.S. is the one that triggered this trade war. We are going to

Oral Questions

come up with an arrangement with the Americans, but not at any price. We will not make just any arrangement. A bad agreement is worse than no agreement at all.

Our main interest is to defend Canadian workers and maintain access to the U.S. market. We will wait as long as it takes for the Americans to return to the table.

[English]

Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, an agreement was finally reached last night at the APEC summit in South Korea. Unfortunately the agreement was between the United States and China, but not Canada, to reduce tariffs. The Prime Minister flew to Asia, met with the Chinese President and had a nice photo op, but there is still no deal.

In this international game of *Deal or No Deal*, why is it always no deal for Canada from the Prime Minister?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to reassure people that Canada is on the diplomatic stage every day, both diversifying trade and defending Canadian interests. We will continue to work every day to ensure that Canadian businesses, Canadian citizens and Canadian residents are well protected in everything we do.

We will continue to negotiate every trade deal we can. The United States is our biggest trading partner, and we are ready to be at that table while we continue to diversify our trade around the world.

Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is not just Chinese canola tariffs that are punishing Canadian farmers. India has slapped a 30% tariff on Canadian peas and a 10% tariff on lentils. Canada cannot export beef to the United Kingdom, but the U.K. can and does export beef to Canada.

When will the Prime Minister finally stop with the photo ops and finally get a deal for Canadian producers?

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we will always stand up for Canadian farmers, whether they are beef farmers or farmers who grow wheat. We will make sure that we will get the best deal for them all around the world.

Oral Questions

That is the work the Prime Minister is doing. He has been in Asia, meeting with various leaders from around the world to make sure we open new markets, new opportunities for Canadians, so we can double our non-U.S. exports over the next decade. We will do that for Canadian farmers, for Canadian manufacturers and for Canadian workers.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Zoe Royer (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have seen first-hand the extraordinary work of our Canadian Armed Forces, its members' courage, their sacrifice and the quiet toll that their service can take. I have seen how easily that service can be overlooked in the rhythm of our daily lives, even though Canadians feel such gratitude.

Could the Minister of Veterans Affairs update the House on how the Government of Canada is commemorating and recognizing Canada's veterans for their service and dedication?

• (1145)

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I note the presence on the Hill today of my colleague, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam's spouse, Gaetan, a 22-year Canadian air force veteran.

I also thank the member for Kitchener—Conestoga for leading the first poppy flag raising on Parliament Hill this morning.

The poppy is an enduring symbol of leadership, of loss and of the responsibility to remember those who have served and sacrificed in uniform. As the Royal Canadian Legion launches the 2025 poppy campaign, I encourage all Canadians to commemorate and remember the veterans who have served.

* * *

FINANCE

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, Food Banks Canada has reported a record-smashing 2.2 million visits to the food bank in just one month, the most ever. The CEO of Food Banks Canada said she is shocked that people are stopping at the food bank on their way home from work because they cannot afford groceries. She said, "It's really shocking to see just how far people are falling behind every single [day]."

After a decade of Liberal deficits and inflationary spending, people just cannot keep up. When will the Liberals realize their inflationary deficits are driving up the cost of food and driving people to the food bank?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is important to once again underline the fact that the report the member opposite cited also lists the Canada disability benefit, the Canadian dental plan, early learning and child care, the national school food program and the national housing strategy among the many tools and investments that support alleviating poverty in this country, all of which have been voted against or opposed by the members opposite.

We will have a budget next week that will continue to invest in Canadians, young Canadians and families. We trust that the members opposite will join us, vote for the budget and avoid a Christmas election.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the only people who seem to want a Christmas election are the members of the Liberal government. Canadians do not want Liberals to force a costly election; they want an affordable budget.

The Liberal government does not seem to get it. There are record Liberal deficits and a record number of people who cannot afford food, with 2.2 million people lining up at food banks, over 700,000 of them children. The more the government spends, the more Canadians pay at the grocery store.

Will the Liberals present an affordable budget so families can afford to feed themselves?

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.): Madam Speaker, it is disheartening to know that Conservatives do not even read the reports they quote in this House.

It is obvious because the very report they are quoting, from Food Banks Canada, asks our government to move forward with income assistance for people living with a disability. They ask for a dental care plan. They acknowledge the work of addressing the housing supply issues in this country. They also mention a national school food program, which that party has voted against time and time again in this House.

When it comes time to take 400,000 kids out of food bank lines, what does the opposition say? It says no.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, first the Liberals made it unaffordable to feed kids; now they want applause for feeding them. Canadians used to line up at the grocery store. Today, they line up by the millions at food banks.

Under the Liberals, Canadians are working full-time and eating part-time, because paycheques shrink while grocery bills balloon. Eighty-two per cent of Canadian households say they do not have enough food to eat. In college, 82% means an A, but for the Prime Minister, 82% of Canadians going hungry means a giant F.

When will the Prime Minister stop failing Canadians and allow families to feed their own kids in their homes?

Oral Questions

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, as I said, Conservatives claim to care about youth and affordability, but on this side, we are about solutions, not slogans.

We are putting in cutting income taxes and reducing GST for first-time homebuyers. We are putting forward a national school food program. We are putting forward a number of measures to increase affordability and increasing the supply of homes in order to lower rent.

We are here for Canadians. Canadians do not live in a pretend world. They know what is going on; they know which party is here for them. That is why they voted for us on April 28. We hope members will vote for our budget on November 4.

● (1150)

Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC): Madam Speaker, each month in Canada, there are over 2.2 million visits to food banks.

We talk about these numbers every day, and we watch them increase every month. These are not just numbers, colleagues; these are the people we serve. Many of them are workers whose paycheques have not gone up the way grocery prices have.

The Liberal government, however, thinks Canadians should sacrifice even more. When will the Prime Minister give Canadians an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have good news for the Conservatives.

They can help 5.5 million Canadians. Do members know how? It is by supporting us on automatic federal benefits, getting benefits directly to 5.5 million Canadians, those who need it the most.

The party opposite has a choice to make. Will they listen to their grinch leader and not support our budget, causing a Christmas election, or will they join with us and pass a generational budget offering hope and affordability to Canadians?

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, Edmonton's Food Bank is serving more people now than at any time in its 43-year history.

Requests for food hampers have gone up 42% in the last 30 months. Food Banks Canada reports record use, with 2.2 million visits in a single month. It took decades to hit one million but only six years under the Liberals to double it to two million.

When will the Prime Minister finally give Canadians an affordable budget for an affordable life?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and to the Secretary of State (Defence Procurement), Lib.): Madam Speaker, this feels a little disconnected. Just last session, we saw the opposition vote against a national school food program, but there is good news. They have a chance to do what is right, correct their error of the past and vote to support our budget in just a few days' time to make that program permanent.

Will they do that, or will they vote for a Christmas election that nobody wants?

* * *

ETHICS

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister told young Canadians that they need to sacrifice more.

However, when he ran Brookfield, he did anything but that. He hid money on a Caribbean island to dodge Canadian taxes, not in a bank but through a bike shop in Bermuda. If this is the kind of sage financial advice that we are meant to follow, I wonder if we can expect the owner of that bike shop to be appointed the next Liberal Minister of Finance.

I have a simple question: Will the Prime Minister confirm that he is not stashing cash in offshore havens?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have a generational budget coming on November 4. It is going to build on the successes of the past couple of months, successes that include, today, announcing billions in new investments in critical minerals and 20 deals with countries across the world.

This is just going to build on that. This budget is exactly what is needed in this moment. I hope the Conservatives support it and help us avoid a Christmas election that absolutely nobody wants.

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, just like the Prime Minister, that is an avoidance of an answer.

Since day one, the Prime Minister has dodged public disclosure of his financial holdings. He has flipped through every excuse in the book, but he is finally running out of pages.

This week, 163 Liberal MPs tried to protect their leader from scrutiny, but they failed. The Conservatives passed a motion to investigate his corporate connections and potential conflicts. Instead of hiding behind a cloak of secrecy, he should finally come clean.

I will ask this again. Can the Prime Minister confirm that he has not a single dollar stashed away in offshore tax havens?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians are rightly focused on the real issues. We face a dangerous and changing world, one that demands big responses. We are going to see big responses in the November 4 budget. We have already heard about many of the initiatives that are coming out of it.

Oral Questions

I hope the members opposite will support the budget, avoid a Christmas election and help Canada lead in the G7.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the media has reported that Brookfield Asset Management, under the guidance of the Prime Minister, stashed money in Bermuda to avoid paying \$5.3 billion in taxes between 2021 and 2024. What is with Liberal prime ministers and their billionaire islands? They just cannot resist them.

While the Prime Minister tells young Canadians that they need to sacrifice, the Prime Minister dodges the bill himself. We are supposed to be in this together, but it appears that the Prime Minister, in his role as chair of Brookfield, is avoiding paying his fair share of taxes.

Can the Prime Minister confirm whether he has any investments in offshore tax havens, yes or no?

• (1155)

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.): Madam Speaker, Canadians know that our economy faces significant headwinds due to trade tensions with the United States. That is exactly why they voted for this government and a Prime Minister with the economic résumé to get us through turbulent times and build a stronger economy.

Next week, on November 4, we will present our first budget as a new government, which will focus on jobs and opportunities, will focus on growth and productivity and will make generational investments to unlock new opportunities for youth and all Canadians. The only question is whether the Conservatives will give—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Parkland.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has an economic résumé, all right, an economic résumé of offshoring tax money to foreign tax havens.

Families are cutting back on meals. Young people are waiting to start a family. They are waiting to buy their first family home. Meanwhile, the media is reporting that the Prime Minister's company stashed billions in offshore tax havens to avoid paying taxes.

We have heard testimony that the Prime Minister's company dodged \$5.3 billion in taxes from 2021 to 2024. That is a lot of programs.

Again, can the Prime Minister confirm to Canadians that he has no investments in offshore tax havens, yes or no?

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.): Madam Speaker, the only thing more frightening this Halloween than the Conservatives' disinformation in the House is a Christmas election, which nobody wants.

The Conservatives are proposing to force an election on Canadians at a time when they expect Parliament to stand together. Our budget on November 4 is going to present a strong path to building

a stronger Canada, to unlocking opportunities for all Canadians and to boosting productivity and growth in the country.

The Conservatives will vote against it. They have already said it. They have not even seen the budget and they are going to vote against it. They are going to force a Christmas election upon Canadians. There is nothing more spooky than that.

* * *

[Translation]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as budget day approaches on November 4, our government remains committed to building an economy where everyone can succeed. Women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ folks have been clear: They want concrete action to ensure they have the tools, resources and opportunities they need to be safe, to feel protected and to thrive.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality tell the House how our government is working to deliver on this commitment?

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is very nice to address a woman Speaker. I salute you.

I want to thank my colleague, who is truly a leader in advancing and promoting gender equality.

Together with my colleague, the Minister of Finance, my colleague, the Minister of Women and Gender Equality, as well as my colleague from indigenous services, earlier this week we were thrilled to announce a \$660-million investment to continue advancing gender equality.

We travelled across the country this summer. We listened to representatives from community organizations and advocacy groups. We will be there. They want predictability and stability. We will be there.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to negotiate a favourable agreement with the United States on softwood lumber. Unfortunately, he failed to do so.

When he took office, U.S. tariffs were at 14%. Now they are at 45%. Under this Prime Minister, tariffs have tripled, and our workers are the ones paying the price.

In communities like Saint-Pamphile, Daaquam, Lots-Renversés and Saint-Juste-du-Lac, entire families make a living from the lumber and forestry industries.

When will this Prime Minister stop betraying our industries, our workers, our regions and their families?

Oral Questions

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to say that I am very surprised at the tone of my colleague's question.

He knows very well that our government is there to support forestry workers. We have been supporting them for a long time and we will continue to do so because we know very well that this industry is vital to many rural, remote communities in Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia and New Brunswick.

It is important to continue our work. We will do so, but we will not sign any old agreement with the United States. We will only sign one that is in everyone's best interests.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC): Madam Speaker, hard-working folks in northern Ontario are once again facing uncertainty. The Gogama sawmill in my riding has shut down for two weeks. When it reopens, it will be reduced to one shift. The Prime Minister promised to negotiate a win with the United States. It is no win. It is tariffs tripling to 45% and a broken promise for softwood lumber.

Our communities deserve better than empty promises. When will the Prime Minister stop selling out our forestry workers—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the forest sector is core to our economy and core to our Canadian identity. My own family has been in the forest industry since long before Canada was a country. We will always stand with forest workers, and my heart goes out to the affected.

U.S. tariffs and duties are completely unjustified. We know that. We are working at all levels to address it. In the meantime, we are also diversifying our economy. The Prime Minister is in Asia right now working on deals. We are going to be masters of our own future, and we will happily work with members opposite to help support the sector.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister promised he would negotiate a win with the United States. He has broken that promise on softwood lumber. When the Prime Minister took office, softwood lumber tariffs were at 14%. Now they are at 45%. This year in north Okanagan, hard-working people are being sent home from mills because of the government's failure to secure a softwood lumber agreement.

When will the government stop driving resource jobs out of Canada, stop taxing families into poverty and start trusting Canadians to stand on their own two feet again?

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, of course we are continuously working and making sure we find new opportunities for our lumber producers. I know that ministers and many members of Parliament are going to British Columbia to meet many of those forest

lumber producers to ensure that we are creating new opportunities, and that is why we are so focused on ensuring that we double our non-U.S. exports in the next decade. That means building new alliances and new friendships around the world.

That is why the Prime Minister is in Asia meeting with leaders to create those opportunities. We will continue to do that hard work so that our lumber producers remain the best—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-3 sets out a balanced, straightforward framework for citizenship. Canadian parents born abroad would be able to pass on their citizenship if they can prove a substantial connection to Canada before the birth or adoption of their child. This is fair.

Would the parliamentary secretary for immigration please share with the House what would be at stake if we were not to act today to advance Bill C-3?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, from the moment she was elected, that member has committed herself to matters of fundamental justice, and that is exactly what is at stake with Bill C-3.

In December 2023, as colleagues will know, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that there is an inconsistency in Canadian citizenship law, so Bill C-3 would rectify that inconsistency. Whereas Canadians who were born here or naturalized here can of course pass down their citizenship to their children, that same right is not available to Canadians who were born abroad with children who were also born abroad.

I urge colleagues to get behind Bill C-3. I thank the NDP for its support. This is the measure that would improve Canadian citizenship law in conforming with the Charter.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac, CPC): Madam Speaker, if we were to learn China uses convict labour, drawn disproportionately from indigenous minorities, to produce products to be sold commercially by the prison system, we would condemn this, and we would ban that product.

What are we supposed to think of a report from the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network that milk produced at the Joyceville prison farm by inmates paid less than a dollar an hour is being sold by CORCAN for profit? Canada's correctional investigator says that, in his view, this represents "a human rights violation."

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I agree with him, and I wonder why the government is doing this.

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the programs offered within our correctional services allow prisoners to learn new skills and ensure that, when they get out of prison, they will be able to find a job and not find themselves back in prison. These programs are very popular among inmates and well liked by the general public.

* * *

● (1205)

[*English*]

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is alarming to hear the Prime Minister talk about sacrifice in the budget when, year after year, his government has sacrificed the safety of indigenous women and girls, ignoring the crisis of our murdered and disappeared loved ones. Now the Liberals push resource projects despite clear evidence that boom-town man camps fuel gender-based violence.

Will the government finally put indigenous women's safety before corporate profit, or will we be left out of the budget yet again?

Ginette Lavack (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people continue to face violence at rates that are deeply disproportionate. This reality is rooted in generations of colonial policies, systemic discrimination and underinvestment in indigenous communities. The calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls remind us that responding to this crisis is not optional; it is a human rights obligation. Our government takes this seriously and remains firmly—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I have to go to the next question.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

* * *

PENSIONS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I wonder if Canadians realize how much many of us as MPs want to be team Canada. We want to be united. We know we need to put Canada first, but the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act requires that we ignore whether Canada is put first when it decides where billions of dollars of our pensions are invested.

Will the government update the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act to make sure Canada comes first?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada's pension plans, the Maple Eight and others, lead the world not only in securing returns and a prosperous future for our retirees and our pensioners but also in ethical and above-board investments all over the world, including in Canada. The CPPIB and other pension funds in this country will continue, I am sure, to take investing in Canada very, very seriously.

POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to repeat my S. O. 31 if possible. I was right behind the member who doing the really big cheer for the Blue Jays, and unfortunately the noise was too much.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Sherry Romanado: Madam Speaker, today, I want to pay tribute to a remarkable leader, Jean Melançon, outgoing director of the Service de sécurité incendie de l'agglomération de Longueuil, or SSIAL.

After 37 years of service with the Longueuil fire department, the SSIAL, including 12 years as fire chief, Jean is getting ready to share his vast experience and expertise with another fire department.

A man of courage and humanity, Jean not only dedicated decades to protecting the citizens and property of our region, but also inspired generations of firefighters with his commitment to excellence.

In his roles as both firefighter and director, Jean helped create a safer and stronger community. His passion for safety and his sense of duty will always be remembered. His legacy will live on for years to come.

I thank him for all he has done, and I wish him all the best in his future challenges.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

• (1210)

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Zoe Royer (Port Moody—Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-China Legislative Association concerning the co-chairs' annual visit to China, which included Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, from March 17 to 21, 2025.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-254, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (promotion of hatred against Indigenous peoples).

She said: Madam Speaker, today I am deeply honoured to table my private member's bill, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to promotion of hatred against indigenous peoples, to end residential school denialism.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East for seconding my bill, a bill that I dedicate to all residential school survivors and our families. Survivors carry truths that this country needed to hear: truths of violence, loss and resilience. They shared their stories not to reopen wounds but to help this country heal.

As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reminded us, without truth there can be no reconciliation, yet today, denialism is spreading: twisting facts, denying genocide and reigniting harm. It is not only hurtful; it is dangerous. It endangers survivors, our families and our nations, who continue the work of truth-telling.

We owe survivors more than words; we owe them action, and the bill is about protecting their safety, honouring their truths and ensuring that the hard-won truth of what happened in residential schools is never erased or denied again.

I call on all members of Parliament to stand with survivors to protect truth, uphold dignity and walk the path of real reconciliation together.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually today to present a petition of deep concern to constituents who are looking at the health of Canada's watersheds, waterways and wetlands. They are asking that the House examine our antiquated laws relating to protecting our waters and watersheds to ensure that they meet the challenges of the 21st century. They ask that the government review, update, revise and enhance protection for Canada's waterways to protect the health of Canadians.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to table a petition on behalf of the BC Recreational Fishing Association urging the Minister of Fisheries to reconsider

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new proposals for chinook salmon harvest closures across most of the south coast of British Columbia. These restrictions would have a significant and devastating impact on the recreational fishing industry and the coastal economy of British Columbia, effectively ending the industry, which is a way of life in countless coastal communities.

The petitioners indicated that over 9,000 direct jobs, \$600 million toward GDP and over \$400 million in direct household income to British Columbia are at risk. The petitioners state that it is time to confront the critical contradiction in the government's policy that imposes harsh restrictions on the recreational fishing industry, despite healthy chinook salmon stocks. According to DFO's 2025 salmon outlook, hatchery chinook stocks on the south coast of British Columbia are forecast to be abundant or near abundant.

The petitioners state that the goal of the closure is to protect southern resident killer whales, but the problem is not a lack of salmon; it is a flood management model that refuses to account for the entire ecosystem.

Recreational fishing has an almost unmeasurable impact on salmon stocks. Federal funding to coastal hatcheries, which is already inadequate, is being cut, and federal funding to fight zebra mussels, an invasive salmon-killing species, has ended. The petitioners indicate the massive impact of invasive predation on salmon stocks is also being ignored.

The petitioners are requesting that the Minister of Fisheries must urgently bring together all relevant stakeholders, including the recreational industry, to complete meaningful consultations and establish effective science-driven actions. They are asking for a plan that supports the recovery of southern resident killer whales while also sustaining a multi-million dollar recreational fishing industry that our coastal communities depend on.

• (1215)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I remind hon. members to give succinct introductions to petitions and to not read the entire petition.

The hon. member for Regina—Wascana.

PAKISTAN

Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present a petition today on behalf of many Pakistani Canadians who are concerned about the arbitrary detention of former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan and the fate of his supporters.

Private Members' Business

Signers of the petition believe that free and fair elections in Pakistan remain a distant hope after widespread reports of the massive rigging of last year's general election in that country. They are also concerned about the lack of independence of the Supreme Court of Pakistan following a recent constitutional amendment supported by that country's military.

Therefore, this petition is asking the Government of Canada to call on Pakistan for the immediate release of Imran Khan from prison, for there to be free and fair elections in Pakistan under international supervision, and for the restoration of democracy in that country.

PARKS CANADA

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I present a petition today signed by 518 people about Kejimikujik National Park. Apparently, beginning this year, firewood will no longer be provided for backcountry campsites in Kejimikujik National Park.

As we all know, campfires are an essential part of the camping experience, and many back country campers, including kayakers, hikers and canoeists, will face significant logistical challenges in expecting them to bring sufficient firewood for a multi-day trip. What will happen is that many campers will resort to foraging wood from the forest and cause unnecessary harm to the local ecosystem.

The signatories are asking Parks Canada to reconsider the decision to not provide firewood to the back country of Kejimikujik National Park.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I would like to wish the hon. member a happy birthday on behalf of his colleagues.

* * *

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. 298 and 309 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[For text of questions and responses, see *Written Questions website*]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The question is on Motion No. 2. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 3, 4 and 6 to 11.

[English]

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

• (1220)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Monday, November 3, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 3, 4 and 6 to 11.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30 p.m so we can begin private members' hour.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC) moved that Bill C-243, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (parole review), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is my profound honour to rise today to speak to my private members' bill, Bill C-243.

Before I begin, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Senator Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu and Senator Denise Batters. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my esteemed colleague, the member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River. I thank them for all their tireless dedication and work on Bill S-281. That was the earlier version of the legislation. It laid the groundwork for what we are discussing today.

Now, Bill S-281 was lost when Parliament was prorogued, but its spirit and purpose endure in the current bill, Bill C-243.

The bill is dedicated to the memory of the late Brian Ilesic. Brian was just 35 years old when he was murdered. He was described as a devoted father, a loyal friend and a cherished son.

Private Members' Business

This callous crime unfolded just after midnight on June 15, 2012. It happened when Brian and three others, Michelle Shegelski, Eddie Rejano and Matthew Schuman, were working as armoured car guards. They were employed by G4S Cash Solutions and were servicing ATMs in the HUB Mall, a food court on the University of Alberta campus in Edmonton. Suddenly, their co-worker, Travis Baumgartner, turned on them. He shot and killed Brian, Michelle and Eddie with point-blank gunshots to the back of the head. After shooting his co-workers, Baumgartner locked them in a vault behind the ATM and fled in the armoured truck.

It was a cold-blooded act of violence that shocked students and rocked our community. Edmontonians have seldom witnessed anything so brutal.

Miraculously, Brian's colleague Matthew survived, but to this day he lives with life-altering injuries. Brian's 12-year-old daughter, Kiannah, was left without a dad. She will grow up with fond memories of her father, but that is all she will have. She will never have her father at her side when she graduates from high school. Her father will not be there on her wedding day. Her children will never know their grandfather. Every father lives to be there for such precious occasions, but death has robbed their family of these precious moments.

In 2012, this savage murderer was found guilty. He was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 40 years. It was the harshest sentence delivered in Canada since 1962. There was some justice in this tragic story, or so we believed. The sentence correctly reflected the depth of the suffering he caused: three people murdered in cold blood, one person disabled for life. However, a Supreme Court of Canada ruling in 2022 overturned the law passed by former prime minister Stephen Harper. The law had allowed judges to give consecutive sentences in the event of multiple murders.

Brian's murderer ended three lives in a horrendous, heartless act, but because of the court's decision, the man who killed Brian could now be eligible to apply for parole in about a dozen years. Brian's parents, Mike and Dianne Ilesic, will now have to decide far earlier than expected whether they will attend a parole hearing for the man who callously murdered their son.

It gets worse. As it now stands, if a convicted murderer applies for parole and is denied the first time, he or she could apply for another parole hearing just one year later. We can think of the trauma that Mike and Dianne would face in that situation. It would emotionally scar them. It would bring back horrific memories of their loving son's senseless murder.

● (1225)

Bill C-243 seeks to right that wrong. It stands for justice: justice for Brian, justice for his family and justice for every victim whose voice was silenced too soon at the hands of a murderer.

Following the Supreme Court's ruling in 2022, Mike and Dianne bravely spoke out against the decision, and they have repeatedly spoken out, not just for their son but for every family member who has suffered at the hands of a cruel killer. Dianne said she and her husband felt deflated by the Supreme Court's decision. That is un-

derstandable. She went on to say that she and her husband had lost faith in the system. The system failed them.

I have recently spoken with Mike and Dianne. They are a true testament of strength and resilience. While we were discussing my proposed bill, they told me this: "This bill would certainly lessen the trauma that victims go through before, during and after the parole process takes place. Avoiding frequent trips for the purpose of attending parole hearings would assure victims that the perpetrators of the crime remain contained in jail."

Mike and Dianne are pleading that all politicians across party lines will answer their prayers. They told me to please tell my colleagues this: "The bill supports all victims left behind. Parole hearings tend to be emotionally draining. Please stop the process of having frequent parole hearings. Please have the House of Commons approve Brian's bill."

Mike and Dianne said it so eloquently. The bill is about protecting victims. It recognizes the horrific heartache families have gone through, and it aims to protect them. Currently, convicted murderers can apply for parole each and every year after having served their minimum sentence. That means that each and every year, victims' families could come face to face with their loved one's murderer. Victims' families have to endure this every year to stop murderers from getting parole.

Can anyone imagine facing, each and every year, the murderer who killed their son, or having to face the person who killed their daughter or best friend, or who murdered their mother? Murderers simply should not be able to revictimize the loved ones of their victims at parole hearings.

Paul Bernardo is another notorious murderer who has plagued our nation. He kidnapped, tortured and killed 15-year-old Kristen French. He kidnapped, tortured and killed 14-year-old Leslie Mahaffy. The lives of these two young women were cruelly snuffed out.

Bernardo has had three parole hearings to date. His first hearing was in October 2018. He was rightly denied. His second hearing was in June 2021; he was once again denied. His third hearing was in November 2024, and he was denied again. That means that the French and Mahaffy families attended two parole board hearings for Bernardo in less than three years. That is outrageous.

The families of Bernardo's victims have been open and honest about the pain the parole hearings have brought them, and it serves to illustrate how painful it is for anyone in this country to have to face the murderer of their loved one.

I want to give a voice to Kristen French's mother, Donna. This is what she had to say about the repeated parole applications:

Private Members' Business

It seems that just as the ink has dried on our previous victim impact statement, Doug and I have to muster up the strength to prepare a second statement.

This is a painful and difficult process as there are no words that can capture the depth of our loss, anguish and despair.

I will also share these powerful words from Donna:

For those who say that time heals, they don't know the excruciating pain that comes from such a horrific loss.

Time doesn't heal the pain. The pain is a life sentence.

● (1230)

Parole hearings for multiple murders are likely far more common than many Canadians would believe. Let us look at a small piece of that dark history.

Between 2009 and 2010, the Parole Board held 23 full hearings for people convicted of multiple murders. As of 2011, there were 4,420 offenders serving life sentences for first- and second-degree murder. Of those, 421 killed more than one person, and of those, 95 were out on full parole. We are in a country that most of the world believes is safe, but it gets worse. Between 2022 and 2023, there were 199 parole hearings where victims gave impact statements.

I read a Public Safety Canada report from 2010, and the report stated:

...families of a homicide victim appear to feel a sense of responsibility to be present to represent their loved one(s). Some families have expressed the view that their presence is essential so that their loved one is not forgotten in a process that is largely focused on the offender.

It is therefore a burden on victims that, presently, hearings for those serving life and indefinite sentences can apply for parole....

We as a country must do better for victims. My bill would spare scores of families from suffering and enduring additional, frequent pain from the justice system. Again, this bill would mean murderers would only get to apply for parole every five years after their first denial.

Our justice system needs to protect families. Families should come first, not murderers. Bill C-243 would take common-sense action to protect grieving families.

With this bill, Brian's parents Mike and Dianne would not have to face, every year, the monster who killed their son. In my view and in the view of the majority of Canadians, the current process makes a mockery of justice.

I want to give my personal thanks to Mike and Dianne for being so brave and so forthcoming in their support for this important piece of legislation. I sincerely hope and pray that my fellow parliamentarians on both sides of this House will support it. Please do it. Do it for Mike and Dianne.

Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite was a journalist in his former life, as I was in my former life. In that role, we get to know a lot of victims of crime. I appreciate the heart the member brought to this legislation and the intent behind it. I, too, know some of the victims he has spoken of today.

I wonder if the member has any concerns that this bill, as it is written, may violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and may therefore not pass muster when it comes to the Supreme Court of Canada. He mentioned that consecutive terms were thrown out by

the Supreme Court at one point. Does he have concerns about this, and if so, what would be his remedy?

Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, I am not a lawyer and I am not about to do lawyers' work or judges' work.

This bill comes from the heart. We need to recognize the pain of these victims. I have to admit that I choked up reading some of the thoughts from Mike and Dianne, who have to face that monster every year. Every year the same person is coming before them and they have to relive it. I can imagine they probably do not sleep at night in the weeks leading up to the hearing. I would imagine they feel tense and tearful. I have gotten to know this fine couple. The fact that they are willing to be so brave and stand up and bring up the memories of their son is so admirable.

I beg members across the way to please get on board with this bill. It is up to the courts to decide the law, but let us rule from the heart on this one.

● (1235)

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Edmonton Griesbach for his account and the testimony he presented to us in the House.

We have to understand the pain and suffering that victims go through when they have to return to the Parole Board. Everyone can understand that.

Has my colleague considered alternatives to limiting the number of times a murderer can apply to the Parole Board? Has he considered other alternatives? For example, we could arrange for the testimony of relatives to be sent to the board without them having to travel and face their loved one's murderer.

[*English*]

Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, the whole intent of the bill is basically to do that, to accomplish that. Instead of the offender coming back year after year, it would mean they had only one shot every five years. Whether somebody appears live, by video or any other way, it still brings up those awful feelings and just puts them through sheer hell. This is the ideal bill to solve that whole issue, help victims and put victims ahead of murderers for once.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, following up on the question posed by the member for Hamilton Mountain, I would note that someone convicted of murder receives an automatic life sentence for good reason.

With respect to the statutory review provided for in the bill, it is one that Parliament has already decided upon and is in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. There is an automatic review every five years. That is the time Parliament determined to be the appropriate time frame, having regard for the gravity of the offence of murder and the fact that it is an automatic life sentence.

Is the member aware that that provision of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act has been struck down by the court? If not, why would the bill—

The Acting Speaker (Scott Reid): The member for Edmonton Griesbach has only a few seconds, please.

Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, that is why the member is a lawyer. I am a former journalist. I thank the member.

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak to Bill C-243, an important piece of legislation formerly known as Brian's bill, in honour of Brian Ilesic, a young man who was tragically murdered in Edmonton.

I think we are all aware of the ongoing trauma that victims' families experience during parole hearings when they are forced to relive the heinous crimes committed against their loved ones over and over, as countless parole applications are filed by individuals convicted of first- or second-degree murder.

Bill C-243 seeks to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. Under the proposed amendments, once the Parole Board of Canada has made an initial decision to cancel, deny or revoke an offender's parole, the offender would be required to comply with the statutory time frames for future reviews. They would not be able to reapply annually.

The idea behind Bill C-243 is simple: to bring some comfort and peace to the victims' families. This bill responds to the legitimate concerns of Canadians, who believe that our justice system sometimes prioritizes the rights of criminals over the rights and needs of victims. It recognizes that a life sentence for murder is a serious punishment for the irreversible loss of a human life.

Repeated applications for parole force families to constantly relive the worst moments of their lives, compounding their suffering indefinitely. For many families, this measure does not do justice to the victims. Instead, it prolongs their suffering.

We have a duty in the House to listen to these victims and take action. We owe it to them to put an end to the emotional suffering they experience every year or every other year when hearings are held and they come face to face with the person who murdered their loved one. The premise of this bill, namely to limit excessive parole applications after an initial refusal, is a necessary measure to support victims and to make the judicial process more compassionate toward them.

That being said, we also have a solemn duty as parliamentarians to uphold the supreme law of our land, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A law that is bound to be challenged in court at the earliest opportunity does not serve the best interests of victims if it cannot pass the charter test. Although the principle behind

Private Members' Business

Bill C-243 is commendable, in its current form, the bill could give rise to significant legal challenges over an offender's charter right to liberty and security of person.

Let me explain. The ability to apply for parole even after being previously denied is fundamental to an offender's successful rehabilitation, something that our criminal justice system is also designed to encourage. Parole is not a "get out of jail free" card. It is a form of conditional release, a structured and supervised transition from incarceration to release into the community. For offenders serving a life sentence for murder, parole is always granted at the discretion of the Parole Board of Canada. Offenders have to earn it through a demonstrable improvement in their behaviour, a reduction in risk and an ongoing commitment to their rehabilitation.

Even if an offender is granted parole, they continue to serve the remainder of their sentence under strict supervision and stringent conditions. In offering offenders the opportunity to earn conditional release, we strongly encourage them to participate in the correctional program. We address the root causes of their criminal behaviour, such as substance abuse or mental health issues, and develop a credible release plan with community support measures.

Furthermore, when the Parole Board assesses an offender's case, it makes a decision based on a thorough review of all the information available to it. This includes victim impact statements, psychological assessments, the offender's behaviour while incarcerated, and their progress in their correctional plan.

• (1240)

The Parole Board must be satisfied that the offender's release will not pose an undue risk to society. If the risk cannot be safely managed in the community, parole must be denied. This happens regularly.

That said, parole allows for a more gradual, more structured transition with conditions that include ongoing supervision and the ability to return the person to custody if they fail to meet their conditions.

By involving offenders in their own rehabilitation and providing them with a framework for supervised release, we are actively working to reduce the risk of recidivism. This measure helps prevent future victimization and improves the safety of our communities. Reducing the risk of recidivism is one of the ways we are fighting crime.

Private Members' Business

As parliamentarians, we must ensure that any legislation we pass is guided by fairness as our objective, while fully respecting the Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We must strike a balance between taking victims' needs into account and ensuring that all legal rights are respected. That is why I want to emphasize that further analysis is needed to ensure that the bill is charter compliant. This legislation must be fair and respect the fundamental charters and principles of Canadian justice.

* * *

• (1245)

COMMITTEE TRAVEL

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

If you seek it, I believe you will find the unanimous consent of the House to adopt this motion.

That, in relation to its study on the development of critical minerals in Canada, three members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources be authorized to travel to Sudbury, Ontario; Saguenay, Quebec; Montréal, Quebec; and Québec, Quebec, in the Fall of 2025, during an adjournment period, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Scott Reid): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-243, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (parole review), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are here to debate Bill C-243, introduced by my colleague from Edmonton Griesbach. Under this bill, someone who has been convicted of first- or second-degree murder will no longer be able to apply for parole a second time if their first application is refused. That person would have to wait a minimum of five years before submitting a new application.

Before discussing the bill itself, I would like to talk about certain principles that govern our society, principles that are enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These are fundamental freedoms.

Section 12 states that everyone has the right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment. There is also section 7, which states that everyone has the right to liberty. This liberty may be restricted, but only in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

My colleague from Edmonton Griesbach wishes to amend another extremely important principle that is enshrined in the law, and that is the very purpose of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act:

The purpose of the federal correctional system is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by (a) carrying out sentences imposed by courts through the safe and humane custody and supervision of offenders; and (b) assisting the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and in the community.

This shows that the goal is to strike a balance between public safety and rehabilitation. These are the guiding principles that we live by and that we are trying to reconcile.

The problem that Bill C-243 seeks to address is real. I think that we need to pay attention to that. There are families whose loved ones have been murdered. These people appear before the Parole Board of Canada and have to relive their suffering. Obviously, that stirs up all the feelings of grief that follow such acts of violence. It is completely understandable that this is extremely hard on these people. Under the existing legislation, a person who is denied parole can reapply the following year. The victims' families say that this is too much to bear, that it is a terrible burden.

That is the problem that needs to be addressed, and I think we need to address it. Now, is the solution devised by the Conservative Party or by my colleague from Edmonton Griesbach the right one? Let us look at that together.

First, it is a solution that raises constitutional issues. I touched on that briefly. For example, I talked about section 12, which talks about cruel and unusual punishment. We could also change the Constitution. A political party could ask to reopen the Constitution and change the charter. However, as long as we are in the current system, it is there, and all laws that come out of Parliament must comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Conservative government passed legislation that aimed to allow consecutive sentences. Everyone remembers when Alexandre Bissonnette walked into a mosque in Quebec City in January 2017 and killed six Muslims in cold blood while wounding five others. This case went all the way to the Supreme Court. The Crown prosecutor had requested that Mr. Bissonnette, who pleaded guilty, be given a life sentence without parole for 25 years for each of the six murders. This meant that Mr. Bissonnette could not apply for parole for 150 years. The challenge focused on this point, and the Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional because it violated an individual's fundamental right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment.

In its 2022 ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada stated that the sentence in this case was so absurd that it “would bring the administration of justice into disrepute”. It far exceeded human life expectancy. The Supreme Court also stated: “A life sentence without a realistic possibility of parole presupposes the offender is beyond redemption and cannot be rehabilitated. This is degrading in nature and incompatible with human dignity. It amounts to cruel and unusual punishment.”

That is the instruction of the Supreme Court. If anyone here does not like it, we can change the Constitution. However, those are the instructions we have at this time.

• (1250)

Is the solution put forward in Bill C-243 likely to be challenged? Yes, definitely. This is not exactly the same thing as consecutive sentences, but it still has the same objective of delaying and restricting not the right to obtain parole, but the right to apply for parole. That is one problem with this solution. The other problem is that, when we look at the statistics, the existing parole system seems to be working. It is not true that a person who is found guilty of first-degree murder gets a life sentence. There is a possibility of parole after 25 years. However, that is not guaranteed. The offender must go before the Parole Board of Canada.

According to a 2023-24 report, only 32% of parole applications were granted. This report also shows that parole seems to help with one of the objectives of the law, rehabilitation. That is the case, for example, when day parole is granted. Day parole is when a murderer or someone convicted of another crime is allowed to leave the prison during the day but has to return at night.

Ninety-nine per cent of day parole supervision periods were completed without reoffending, while 97% of full parole supervision periods were completed without reoffending. What we are seeing is that people are being rehabilitated and the objective of the act, namely balance, is being met. Sentences need to be fair: They must not be too lenient, but they must also allow for the offender to work toward rehabilitation.

Those are the problems I see with my colleague's proposal, Bill C-243. Several of the Conservative Party's initiatives in this Parliament give me the impression that they are beating around the bush. What they are really trying to do is amend the Constitution. I would therefore say to the Conservatives that they should come straight out and ask to reopen the Constitution. If the Conservatives believe that people who commit murder are beyond redemption, they should go for broke and propose the death penalty, and then there will be a debate on that. Right now, however, they are using bills to try to change the system.

Let me get back to what I was saying at the beginning. There is a problem that needs to be fixed, and I think we need to be sensitive to victims' families, who are forced to go through such a terrible ordeal when they have to face the murderer to oppose their parole. What else can I say about that?

First of all, we completely understand why families feel they have a duty to testify before the Parole Board of Canada, or PBC, but it is important to point out that this is not mandatory. It should also be noted that, as the John Howard Society of Canada has

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pointed out, testimonials have no real legal impact on the PBC's decision. According to the John Howard Society of Canada, the parole process does not in any way involve holding the offender accountable for the crime they committed, because their sentencing hearing already took place during the trial. The purpose of a parole board hearing is more to determine whether the offender has begun a rehabilitation process that allows for a possible reintegration into the community. That said, two things must be taken into account: first, the pain felt by the victims' families, and second, their desire to testify.

The Bloc Québécois will vote against the bill. However, we are open to discussing the matter. I would argue that alternatives may exist. For example, when family members come to give a statement at the first PBC hearing, their testimony could be recorded and resubmitted at the next hearing. It could be transcribed and resubmitted at a later hearing. This would ensure that the victims' viewpoint is heard, without burdening them. We are going to vote against the bill, but we are open to discussion and to taking legislative action in support of the legitimate wishes of families who have lost a loved one under horrific circumstances.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-243, Brian's bill, in honour of the memory of the late Brian Ilesic.

On June 12, 2012, Brian, with his colleagues Michelle Shegelski, Eddie Rejano and Matthew Schuman, were working as armoured guards at the University of Alberta's Hub Mall servicing ATM machines. They were, unfortunately, with another co-worker, who, in an act of pure evil, opened fire on them, shooting Brian, Michelle and Eddie multiple times, point-blank in the back of the head as he ran off with \$360,000 in cash.

Brian, Michelle and Eddie did not survive. Matthew miraculously did survive, but he has sustained life-altering injuries. His life will never be the same.

That triple murderer, who attempted to murder a fourth victim, Matthew, was the first murderer to be sentenced under a law passed by the Harper government, which simply gave judges the discretion to apply consecutive parole ineligibility periods for persons convicted of multiple murders to take into account the life of each victim and to, frankly, see that the worst of the worst murderers never see the light of day.

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Alberta Court of Queen's Bench Associate Chief Justice Rooke sentenced this triple murderer to 40 years behind bars for taking the lives of three people and attempting to murder a fourth. For Mike and Dianne Ilesic, Brian's parents, who were constituents of mine when I represented Northwest Edmonton and whom I have had the opportunity to get to know over the years, told me that the only sense of justice and comfort they felt after their son had been brutally murdered was believing that they would never have to sit through a parole hearing in their lifetime to face Brian's murderer. That sense of justice, that sense of comfort, was shattered in May 2022 when the Supreme Court issued the Bissonnette decision, which struck down that very just and very reasonable law.

As a consequence of the Supreme Court's decision, some of Canada's most notorious and worst murderers have seen their sentences significantly slashed. For Mike and Dianne, it meant that, as of 2022, instead of Brian's murderer being eligible for parole in 30 long years, he could suddenly be eligible for parole in only 15 years, and today, in only 12 years.

Mike and Dianne came to me, as their member of Parliament, and asked what could be done. I said to them that there was a very simple path forward, and that would be for the government to invoke the notwithstanding clause to override the Supreme Court's unjust decision. However, seeing that the Liberal government is not prepared to invoke the notwithstanding clause, I suggested that, at the very least, an amendment be made to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act so that convicted murders would not be able to apply for parole on a frequent basis, year after year, after they have served the mandatory incarceration period of 25 years for first-degree murder, and between 10 to 25 years for second-degree murder. Hence, there is Brian's law.

• (1300)

I championed this in the last Parliament along with Senator Boisvenu, who, like Mike and Dianne, knows what it feels like to live with having a child murdered. I want to thank Senator Denise Batters and my colleague from Edmonton Griesbach for bringing forward this bill in this Parliament.

This bill would provide that someone who is a convicted murderer has their parole considered, but only at the time of the automatic review provided for in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which occurs approximately every five years. Murder is the most serious offence under the Criminal Code. It comes with an automatic life sentence, and for good reason.

Let us face reality. If someone is convicted of first-degree murder, for example, and they serve the mandatory incarceration period of 25 years, at year 25, their parole will be considered. If, at that time, the Parole Board determines that the murderer is not releasable, as is often the case, what are the chances that they would be releasable in year 26 or year 27? They are next to nil, yet as it stands, that murderer would be able to apply year after year.

How does that make sense? How is that just? How is that fair? How is it just to put the families and friends of murder victims through frequent parole hearings, year after year? It revictimizes them, retraumatizes them and forces them to prepare victim impact statements when the ink has barely dried from the previous victim impact statement, and to what end? For what purpose? It is for a pa-

role application that is almost certainly going to be rejected because, after all, we are talking about convicted murderers. We are talking about people who have been given an automatic life sentence.

All this bill says is that if someone has been convicted of murder, they would get a kick at the can every five years. Parliament has already determined that to be the appropriate time frame for the parole status of a convicted murderer to be reviewed. It is already in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

In closing, let me say that this bill would strike the right balance between regard for the very serious gravity of the offence of murder and the public interest. It takes into account the rights and real vulnerabilities of the families and friends of victims who have to go through frequent parole hearings. It would spare the taxpayer from having to foot the bill for frequent, frivolous and hopeless parole applications. It would save scarce resources at the Correctional Service. It would also respect the charter rights of murderers, which we kept being reminded of by the parliamentary secretary and the Bloc member, because at the end of the day, their parole and incarceration status would continue to be reviewed on the fairly frequent basis of roughly every five years.

Brian's bill is straightforward, it is targeted and it is common sense. If the government has any sense of justice and any regard for the rights of victims, it will vote for it.

• (1305)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to pick up on a statement the member just made that if members had any thoughts about the victims, we would actually vote in favour of the legislation, I would say it is a very difficult issue. I recognized that from the onset.

I listened very closely to the member for Edmonton Griesbach in the presentation of the legislation. He did a fairly good job at presenting it by encapsulating it in his own words. He said that was how he felt. There was a question posed to him with respect to the legislation being charter-compliant. His response to that question was that he is not a lawyer. Nor am I. I am not a lawyer either. He was expressing how he felt.

If I pick up on that point, I believe that more than 95% of Canadians would be sympathetic and understand how the member for Edmonton Griesbach was feeling about the issue. They would be very sympathetic toward him. I for one think of the horrendous crimes we see in society. They are often televised to the nth degree or used through mediums of communication, with graphic descriptions of what has taken place. One can only imagine the feelings of family and friends as a result of that horrendous crime. I think we all need to appreciate the emotions of family, friends and the public as a whole, when we hear about crimes of a nature like the one that was cited.

I applaud the member in terms of recognizing this as Brian's bill. That is an appropriate thing to do. I believe the member was saying that Mike and Dianne are the names of the parents. I cannot imagine, which I should not even say, what the parents had to go through from the moment they heard of this horrendous crime that had taken place in the community, let alone going through the judicial system and now having to deal with the issue of parole. One can have sympathy, but to have empathy is another thing.

First and foremost, for anyone, I think we can all agree to send condolences, offer prayers and express sympathy when there is a vicious, horrendous crime. It is really important to recognize that right up front. When I think of the types of laws that we debate and talk about here on the floor of the House of Commons, we have these giant hearts, we want to be sympathetic and we want to act on our feelings. However, there are other things that we have to consider as legislators, such as the Charter of Rights and superior court rulings, particularly Supreme Court of Canada rulings. We cannot just ignore those.

The previous speaker referred to our having the notwithstanding clause. I think we need to be very concerned in regard to the degree to which parliamentarians, whether at the provincial level or at the national level, are prepared to engage and say we are going to use the notwithstanding clause.

• (1310)

I would take a look at the origins of the notwithstanding clause, which came in the early eighties. It was put in place for a specific reason that is, no doubt, very compelling. The federal government has never used the notwithstanding clause. We have to be very concerned in regard to when members start asking to use the notwithstanding clause.

There is a reason I caution members on this. It can be upsetting. Many things take place in our judicial system that upset me. All forms of decisions are made that I might not necessarily agree with and that I suspect many of my constituents would not agree with. However, what I do know is that this is absolutely essential. It is a centrepiece to the foundations of our democracy.

We are all wearing poppies. The members of our Canadian Forces fought the wars that preceded us for the pillars of democracy, independent judiciaries and an independent media. These are the types of things were fought for. That is why we are all wearing the poppy today.

We should not, under any circumstance or even in special circumstances, turn to the notwithstanding clause. We should look at the importance of recognizing the independence of the judiciary. That means decisions will be made that we do not necessarily agree with.

As legislators, as the Bloc has expressed, that does not mean we have to take a tangible position today on a private member's bill. What it does, and this is where I applaud the member, is it allows for more discussion to take place on an important issue that no doubt Canadians are concerned about.

From a government perspective, all members should be concerned. What we have to look at, and what I look at, are two things

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in particular: judicial independence and what the Supreme Court of Canada is saying, and the issue of the Charter of Rights. I have personal feelings that I share with the select few individuals here in regard to the crimes that take place in our communities, but I have a legislative responsibility that I believe is absolutely critical in the discussions on issues of this nature.

I would like to think that when I look at the bigger picture of parole, whether it is day parole or full parole, the Parole Board of Canada has done a pretty good job for Canadians. I believe it has a success rate of over 90%. If it can assist in reintegrating individuals, I see that as a positive. I will not comment on what I would do in Brian's story if I was sitting on the Parole Board, but I would like to think that judicial independence also ensures that justice is served in a very real and tangible way.

To Brian's family, I am always open to hearing their perspective first-hand. I suspect they are following the debate. Whether they want to write, have a phone call or meet in person, I am always open to doing that. As a parent and as a grandparent, I know the loss of a child is pretty difficult, let alone what they have had to go through.

My prayers are with the family. We will have to wait and see what happens as the debate continues through the House.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, As one of the parliamentarians present in the House on Fridays, I can attest that the last hour of debate is moving.

Last week, we debated Bill C-222, introduced by the member for Burnaby North—Seymour, and it was quite emotional. The bill proposed amending the Employment Insurance Act with respect to maternity leave in cases where a parent is grieving the loss of a child. It proposed that benefits continue to be paid so that the parent could have time to grieve instead of having to return to work too soon. It was very moving. Conservative colleagues who had experienced the loss of a child gave heartfelt testimonials.

We know that a private member's bill is often based on something that affects us personally, something meaningful, something we want to change or connect with on a more human level. This is what Bill C-222 was all about.

Today, we are once again faced with a bill that affects us as parliamentarians and as human beings, because it appeals to our empathy and our humanity. Losing a loved one to violent murder is a terrible tragedy. I cannot even imagine being able to overcome such grief. Our minds immediately turn to finding solutions. How can we put a stop to this? How can we ensure that others do not have to go through what we are going through? How can we improve the system? How can we put an end to this suffering?

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Often, an MP who is truly listening to their community, such as the member for Edmonton Griesbach, will introduce a bill that supports families in need. That is, if they are lucky enough to be randomly selected. I understand that. It is fundamental, and it is one of the beautiful aspects of this Parliament. As members of Parliament, we have the opportunity to introduce bills that are meaningful to us.

When my colleague from Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj spoke earlier, I admired his eloquence. He always knows how to present the pros and cons of a bill in a very thorough manner, without judgment. He uses facts and figures that allow us to improve our understanding and knowledge. Like many of my colleagues here, I am not a lawyer. What I understood from his speech is that we must maintain a balance between listening to families and listening to prisoners, who have rights under certain laws.

I want to say to the families who have lost a loved one in such a horrific way that we empathize with them and that the parole system needs to improve. We think that some parts of the process

could be significantly improved and that there are ways to prevent families from experiencing and reliving the trauma every time the offender applies for parole.

I hope the debates will continue so that we can fully explore all of the bill's implications.

• (1320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): 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.

[*English*]

It being 1:21 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:21 p.m.)

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