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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 28, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

COMMISSIONER FOR MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed from October 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act respecting the Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to be blunt. The relationship between the Crown and indigenous peoples is not built on fancy titles or shiny new offices. It is built on honour and keeping our word, and the Liberal government has a real problem with that.

Bill C-10 is just another level of bureaucracy that is not needed. We do not need another office in Ottawa to tell us again that the government is not doing what it promised to do. We do not need a commissioner to point out failure. We can see that from here. We can see that in our communities all across our country.

In my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, indigenous leaders are living this each and every day. Just this week, Chief Willie Sellars and the Williams Lake First Nation council were in Ottawa. They did not come here looking for a handout. They came looking for partnership, especially on the reconstruction and redevelopment of the St. Joseph's Mission, a residential school in my hometown. They want real action, not more red tape, and who can blame them? In fact, when they asked to meet and discuss their plans, it was the Conservative Party that stepped up and said yes immediately. The shadow minister for indigenous services, the member for Edmonton Northwest, worked diligently to accommodate them, listen to them and make sure they had everything they needed.

Reconciliation has to be about more than words; it has to be a partnership. What I have seen in the last 10 years is the leadership on the other side standing, dabbing a fake tear, putting their hand on their heart and saying they really care, but what we have seen

under the guise of reconciliation is that they have pitted first nation against first nation and first nation against non-first nation.

When Chief Willie and the council from Williams Lake First Nation asked to meet with our leader, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot stepped up immediately. He changed his schedule, took the time to listen, asked questions and worked to understand the path forward. That is what a real leader does. That is how we build trust. That is how we reconcile differences: leadership to leadership, not an agent of the government to leadership of first nations.

When they asked to meet with the Liberals, the government, the people with the ability to get things done, it truly was like pulling teeth. I know there are others on the other side, one of whom I am looking at right now at the centre of the Liberal caucus, who stand and say, as he does every day, that they have done this and that, but the reality is that the experience our leaders felt this week was less than desirable. Maybe if the Liberals spent less time creating new bureaucracies and more time actually listening, they would be in a better position to move our country forward on a whole host of issues.

I want to thank our shadow minister for Crown-indigenous relations, the hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, who, like the member for Edmonton Northwest and the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, stepped up, changed his schedule and took the time to listen.

Communities like Lheidli T'enneh, Nazko, Lhtako, McLeod Lake, Cheslatta and Williams Lake First Nation are working hard. They are building economies, creating jobs and planning for the future, not just for their community but for our regions. However, the federal government keeps tripping over its own departments. It picks winners over losers. As I said earlier, it pits first nation against first nation. It has endless delays, points fingers and makes promises with no follow-through. However, instead of fixing anything, the Liberals want yet another office on Wellington Street to tell us what the government is not doing.

Government Orders

We do not need more bureaucrats. We need the ones who have the jobs to do their jobs. What is happening right now in Williams Lake and around the province is unacceptable, full stop. For decades, families, ranchers and long-time landowners have been living in limbo because of unresolved land claims. People deserve clarity, they deserve honesty and they deserve a seat at the table. Instead, they are getting brushed off while decisions that directly affect their livelihoods are made behind closed doors.

Indigenous land claims are serious matters historically, legally and morally, and no one disputes that, but when governments mishandle them, when they communicate poorly and when they ignore the people whose homes, businesses and generational lands are in the middle of it, they create fear and distrust. That is exactly what is going on with the B.C. government right now in my province.

● (1005)

What we are seeing play out across British Columbia right now should concern every single one of us. The latest court rulings, including the Cowichan decision that threw long-established land titles in the city of Richmond into doubt, have sent a shockwave through communities and should send a shockwave across our nation. Families that worked their whole lives to build something are waking up wondering if the land they bought in good faith is still truly theirs.

Why are we at this point? It is because successive governments have abdicated their duties. Ministers of the Crown have passed on their duties and responsibilities and abdicated them to their agents. The sad truth is that people are asking these questions because governments at every level have failed to bring clarity, failed to lead and failed to protect the people caught in the middle.

Let us be clear. Indigenous rights and title matter. They must be respected, but respecting indigenous rights and treating landowners fairly are not mutually exclusive. The problem is governments that refuse to do the hard work. The governments that need to resolve these issues before they explode into uncertainty and anxiety for everyone are failing. Instead of stepping up, the province is dodging responsibility. The federal government is talking about creating new bureaucracies, with more layers, more delays and more confusion.

British Columbians need leadership, not another game of pass the buck. It is time for Ottawa and Victoria to get their act together, sit everyone down at the same table and finally build a process that delivers justice, certainty and stability for all. We have ministers of the Crown. Can they not meet with these first nation leaders and come up with a solution that is acceptable to all? Rather than stepping up and taking responsibility, the province is shifting the burden onto everyone else.

There are landowners in the Chilcotin who have waited 10 years to find out whether their farms, ranches and guide and outfitting businesses are worth anything. The province is shifting the burden onto everyone else, and the federal government, instead of bringing leadership, clarity and support, is floating the idea of yet another bureaucracy. It is another layer, another office and another department. It is another way for the Liberals to say this is not their problem while pretending they are solving something. It is another way for them to have plausible deniability.

We all know what this really means: more delays, more red tape, more confusion and more people left in the dark. Ranchers in Chilcotin are not asking for anything unreasonable. They are asking for transparency, for respect and to be heard before decisions are made, not after. Landowners are not the enemy and indigenous communities are not the enemy.

The real problem is governments that refuse to communicate and refuse to lead. This does not have to be a fight. These issues can be resolved through real partnership. That means the province doing the job it is responsible for. It means the federal government and the ministers making sure that Canadians are not caught in the crossfire. It means both levels of government recognizing that their decisions have real consequences: Families wonder if their land will still be theirs, businesses are unsure if they should invest or expand and communities are left uncertain about their future.

Passing the buck is not leadership. Creating new bureaucracies is not leadership. Ignoring the people directly impacted is not leadership. The people of Canada deserve better.

Our governments, provincial and federal, need to stop sidestepping responsibility, start doing the hard work and bring all parties together, with no more delays, no more excuses and no more hiding behind the process. They need to fix this. We do not need another level of red tape or another commissioner, who will likely be a friend of the Liberal Party and get a high-paying job. We do not need that. They need to fix this. They need to listen to the people who are affected and do the right thing.

I stand here today embarrassed. I was proud of the leadership of the first nations from my hometown who came to this town to present their vision for their community and our region. What I have seen is them being snubbed by the Liberal Party time and again, being passed down and being told, "I want to finish my coffee before I meet with them." Yes, that is a direct quote; that was said to me.

I work through these issues in a non-partisan way whenever I can in my community. I am proud to bring people to our region. I will offer this. We do not need another level of bureaucracy and we do not need more red tape. We need the people at the heads of these governments to sit down and do their jobs right now.

Government Orders

• (1010)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me pick up on the word “embarrassed”. If the member is embarrassed, he should be embarrassed that the Conservative Party wants to do economic projects without any formal consent from indigenous communities.

He stands up and talks about reconciliation. He should listen to the questions the leader of the Conservative Party has put across related to pipelines.

How can the member possibly say that ignoring the interests of indigenous people in B.C. is a form of reconciliation? He has the audacity to say that we are not listening. Seriously, he should think about the issue.

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I will take no lessons from the hon. colleague across the way.

For nine years, he stood behind a leader who dismissed the first female indigenous attorney general and absolutely ran her right out of his government. When first nations protesters came to one of his events, the previous prime minister yelled at them and said, “Thank you for your donation.” At every turn, he pitted first nation against first nation and first nation against non-first nation, and he hid behind reconciliation for all his misdeeds.

I will take no lessons from that colleague.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lestiguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, what is going on right now is rather ironic. In fact, it is beyond irony. It is black comedy. Here we have a Liberal bill that we agree on, which talks about reconciliation with indigenous peoples and the need to consult them in advance. However, just yesterday, this same government announced an agreement to shove a pipeline down the throats of indigenous people in British Columbia that they do not want. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on that.

Does he not understand how resentful, if not completely alienated, all indigenous peoples in western Canada feel when they see that this government, which says that it wants to consult them before implementing international treaties, is announcing a pipeline and saying that it will consult them after the fact? In fact, it is clear that it will simply be shoved down their throats.

[*English*]

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I will go with the words of our colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley, who was the chief councillor for the Haisla Nation for six years and was a councillor for eight years. During that period, he was the treaty chairman and also led his community through massive economic projects, like the one with LNG Canada. He stewarded them through economic prosperity.

Obviously, there are first nation proponents and first nation opponents to these projects, but that is all the more reason we do not need an agent of the government to sit at the table. We need the ministers of the government to sit at the table and listen to the concerns so we can find a path forward for all of Canada.

• (1015)

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): Uqaqtittiji, I would like to ask the member about how important it is that this issue be a non-partisan issue, especially given that organizations like the Land Claims Agreements Coalition have been working hard for 20 years to make sure this bill is introduced, because it would, for example, honour UNDRIP and implement a portion of UNDRIP for indigenous peoples.

Taking a non-partisan approach to creating accountability will hold the government to account, no matter who the government is. That is why creating this commissioner position is important, and we should avoid taking partisan potshots at each other.

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, here is my concern with having yet another layer of bureaucracy, which I am sure my colleague can appreciate. This building, this hall and parliaments all across our country are filled with studies and commissioner reports saying that government does not listen. If the government has ministers at the table speaking directly with leadership from all across our country, maybe they can come to some agreement on how we move forward.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak strongly against Bill C-10, the proposed modern treaty implementation act. Although the government frames this legislation as a step towards reconciliation and improved accountability, it is neither. Instead, it expands bureaucracy, repeats mechanisms that are already in place and diverts energy away from the real work in reaching agreements with the nations.

Conservatives believe in the importance of Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples. We believe deeply in honouring the treaties this country has signed, both historic and modern. Modern treaties represent decades of the negotiation, collaboration and sacrifice of first nations, Inuit and Métis partners. They define land rights. They established jurisdiction, and they provide a clear path towards local decision-making and economic certainty. These agreements matter, and they deserve to be implemented.

Bill C-10 does not advance that goal. In fact, it does the opposite. Since the 1970s, Canada has sought to move beyond numbered treaties and develop modern, comprehensive agreements that are grounded in partnership. Today, more than two dozen modern treaties are enforced across the country, from Nunavut to Yukon, Quebec and British Columbia, where I represent my riding.

These agreements form a critical foundation for reconciliation, economic development and indigenous self-government. They are supposed to be binding and enforceable, and they are supposed to hold the federal government accountable, but the government has consistently failed to meet its obligations under those agreements. This is not a matter of opinion; it is a matter of record, and that record has been documented clearly, repeatedly and exhaustively by the Auditor General of Canada.

Government Orders

This brings me to the central flaw of the bill. Bill C-10 creates the position of a commissioner for modern treaty implementation, an office that would review, monitor, assess, evaluate and report on federal performance. Those are the words we have all seen before because they describe the existing mandate of the Auditor General. For nearly 20 years, the Auditor General has published report after report identifying federal failures in implementing modern treaties. These reports all say the same thing: There are chronic delays, unfulfilled commitments, inadequate coordination between departments and no meaningful consequences when obligations are ignored.

The oversight already exists. The findings exist. The recommendations exist. What does not exist is the government's willingness to act. One has to ask, where has accountability been? Who has faced the consequences for failing to uphold these treaties? I have yet to hear a single minister held responsible for years of missed deadlines and ignored commitments.

Instead of fixing the problems that have been highlighted by the Auditor General, the Liberals want to create a new office to highlight the same promises over and over again. This new commissioner comes with a price tag. It is not free. It comes with a price tag of \$10.6 million over four years, money that could instead be used to actually implement treaty obligations, support indigenous governments' capacity or accelerate negotiations that have been solved for years. This is bureaucracy posing as progress, and Canadians are expected to cover the tab.

Yes, indigenous partners have expressed support for this bill because they want stronger oversight. They want something to actually be done, but accountability comes from implementation, not from another layer of review. Communities are calling for results, safer housing, reliable water and treaty commitments to be fulfilled. The only thing that will deliver that to them is a government that is willing to act on the oversight already in place, and the government has not done that.

To illustrate how redundant this office is, I will point out that the bill contains an entire section explaining that the commissioner must avoid duplication of work with the Auditor General and other oversight bodies that already exist. Even the legislation seems a little embarrassed by it. It states that the commissioner must "coordinate their activities" to prevent overlap. When a bill has to explicitly warn itself to not duplicate functions, it is clearly duplicating. That alone should tell the House everything it needs to know, but it gets worse.

• (1020)

The bill notes that the commissioner would not be a dispute resolution body. The commissioner would not be a performance auditor. The commissioner would get to decide their own priorities, including the number and frequency of reviews they would like to produce.

In other words, the office cannot solve failures, cannot enforce compliance and cannot even be compelled to work at the pace required to match the seriousness of the issues that are at hand. These issues are serious, not just in the province of B.C., where, in some places, they are exploding, but throughout Canada. Again, I ask

what the office is supposed to do. The answer is nothing meaningful.

The problem is not a lack of oversight; the problem is a lack of action. The government has a long history of substituting announcements, offices and photo ops for actual implementation.

When faced with a problem, the Liberal instinct is always the same, to create a new bureaucracy and hope that symbolism distracts from inaction. Let us look at the record. Since 2015, despite promising a renewed nation-to-nation relationship, and despite promising to respect modern treaty partners, the government has negotiated zero new modern treaties. There has not been one in 10 years. There has been zero progress.

Meanwhile, under former prime minister Stephen Harper, Canada saw real results. Nine communities reached a final modern treaty agreement in six years. These were not symbolic gestures. They were fully negotiated agreements that required hard decisions, interdepartmental coordination and political will. Conservatives got things done, and the Liberals have not.

This context matters. A government that has failed to negotiate treaties and has failed to implement existing obligations now wants Parliament to believe that creating another office would miraculously fix the failures it has spent a decade ignoring. The claim is not credible. The Liberals argue that a commissioner would provide direction, but modern treaties do not need more direction; they need delivery.

Out of respect for our first nation partners, our neighbours, departments need to implement the agreements that have already been signed. Ministers need to enforce obligations already written in law. Commitments that have been sitting untouched for years need to be acted upon, not observed from afar by a new commissioner. Reconciliation is not achieved by expanding Ottawa's payroll. It is achieved when commitments are honoured.

Treaty partners have been patient. Some have been waiting for implementation milestones for decades. They deserve measurable progress, clear timelines and accountability, not more reports confirming what they already know, which is that the federal government has failed to meet its responsibilities.

Conservatives believe reconciliation must be practical and grounded in partnership, not in Ottawa-centric bureaucracy. We respect treaty rights. We respect the work, time and investment indigenous communities put into these agreements, and we believe that honouring that work requires implementation, not layers of duplication.

Government Orders

Let us be clear. If Bill C-10 passes, nothing will change. In four or five years, the Auditor General will still be issuing the same warnings, departments will still be missing deadlines, treaty partners will still be waiting and Canadians will still be asking where the money went. Oversight is not the issue; leadership is the issue. That is why Conservatives cannot support Bill C-10.

We will continue to advocate for transparent accountability. We will continue to push for the meaningful implementation of modern treaties. We will continue to insist that reconciliation requires action, not new offices in Ottawa.

• (1025)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member can explain how it is that the Conservative Party respects treaty rights and is in favour of reconciliation when the leader of the Conservative Party is saying what he has been saying for the last week or more about what he believes the Conservative Party would do with respect to a pipeline. He does not believe that he has to consult and work with indigenous leaders, particularly in the province of British Columbia.

Looking at the bill itself, indigenous communities want to see an agent of Parliament. How does she reconcile that?

Helena Konanz: Madam Speaker, what is important about the bill is that it is not going to end with any results. It is a repeat of the bureaucratic layers that we already have. The Auditor General is already doing exactly what the Liberals plan to spend \$4 million on.

We need to start actually doing the work. Our relationship with these communities, throughout Canada and B.C., is extremely important. We cannot waste time on bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for highlighting a concern that I think lots of Canadians have, and that is accountability measures and increasing bureaucracy.

The Liberals, over the last decade, have demonstrated that, when they increase bureaucrats, there is actually poorer service delivery. In this case, I really believe in what the member spoke about in her speech. There is a lack of accountability. It is not going to change by creating more bureaucracy. It is actually a leadership failure by the current Liberal government.

Could my hon. colleague comment on and re-emphasize her opinion on what this lack of accountability does under the current leadership of the Liberal government?

Helena Konanz: Madam Speaker, we do not need more bureaucracy, as the member mentioned. Relationships with first nations are extremely important, but when we set up more bureaucracy, it only makes things worse. There is more finger pointing and confusion. It sets communities against communities, and it sets us all up for bad faith and friction.

We need to help the relationships and work on the relationships between our communities, so that real progress can be made and real treaties can be made. In other words, we need to do the work.

• (1030)

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I wonder what the member has to say to the over 130 indigenous groups that helped co-develop this bill in its original form, Bill C-77, of which Bill C-10 is a carbon copy. What does she say to them about the hard work they did to ensure that Bill C-10 could reach the stage that it is at?

Indigenous groups have been asking for the role of the commissioner to be created so they can see legal obligations finally implemented. As she correctly said in her statement, there is not enough implementation of legal treaties with first nations, and there needs to be a commissioner position to ensure that these obligations are being met.

Helena Konanz: Madam Speaker, my colleague is definitely an expert in this field. I want to tell her that I actually want work to happen. I want this to move forward.

As she knows, the more bureaucracy and the more money that is thrown into a repetitive process, the less real work is going to be done. We need these treaties to actually happen. When there are no treaties, there are only delays and broken promises. It breeds contempt—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I will just interrupt the hon. member as the French interpretation is not working.

It is working now. The hon. member may finish her comment.

Helena Konanz: Madam Speaker, I just want to say that I want it to really happen. Conservatives want this to really happen, and we feel that another layer of bureaucracy will not allow that.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to an issue that, perhaps paradoxically, touches on one of Canada's most important yet too often overlooked relationships: our relationship with indigenous peoples.

The riding I represent includes the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. Like many members in this House, I can candidly say that when I was first elected to represent the area we share with Tyendinaga, I did not truly understand as much as I should have about the community. I lacked an understanding of its history, culture and heritage. I did not fully appreciate the role Joseph Brant played during the American Revolution, the alliance he and his people forged with the British or the promises made to the Mohawk people in recognition of their fierce and loyal support. I did not know the full story of their migration after the war, the lands they lost or how Brant led his people to what would become their home in Canada, and for one group in particular, to the shores of the Bay of Quinte.

Government Orders

I like to think that from talking, engaging and, most importantly, listening, some of my earlier misunderstandings have begun to fall away. With many conversations, and incredibly patient and strong local indigenous leaders, advocates and community members, including colleagues in this very House, I have begun to learn more about the rich and diverse history of indigenous peoples in Canada. Every year I look forward to the celebration of the Mohawk landing in Tyendinaga. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Chief Don Maracle, the council and the people of Tyendinaga for their kindness, guidance and patience. It is an ongoing learning journey, but it is one in which I hope to continue to make meaningful progress.

There is one more misconception that I, especially as a federal legislator, must set aside when it comes to understanding indigenous communities, which is their relationship with Canada and the Crown. The most effective way to begin to do that is by listening. This means listening to the concerns of the council, the chief, local business owners, builders, educators and anyone else who wishes to have their voice heard. Of course, listening is a very important skill when engaging with any group, whether it is business leaders, foreign dignitaries or members of this chamber.

However, the relationships between Canada and indigenous communities are too often steeped in sadness, violence, betrayal, deception and neglect. They are numerous, and, most importantly, each of them is distinct. Too often, we speak of the indigenous community as though it were a single, uniform entity. It is not. There are indigenous communities, each with their own histories, governance structures, cultures and needs. Even the word “communities” fails to truly capture the full diversity and complexity that exists. This misconception is, if not the core, then certainly a major contributor to the veil that has obscured the understanding of far too many policy-makers and decision-makers here in Ottawa.

That misunderstanding, unfortunately, extends to this very place. The simple truth is that since its inception, Ottawa, and indeed Canada, has too frequently been unable or perhaps unwilling to treat every first nation, Métis and Inuit community with the individual respect, understanding and reverence it deserves. My concern is that the creation of yet another centralized office in Ottawa risks adding only another layer of bureaucratic indifference when what we require is a streamlined, responsive process capable of negotiating, settling and addressing historical wrongs with the attention each community merits.

I quote:

Non-Aboriginal Canadians hear about the problems faced by Aboriginal communities, but they have almost no idea how those problems developed. There is little understanding of how the federal government contributed to that reality through residential schools and the policies and laws in place during their existence.

That is from “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada”. While it speaks specifically to the horror of residential schools, that same issue can be applied to far too many interactions between the state and aboriginal communities at a larger scale. That is what we parliamentarians need to do. It is what we need to do better at.

• (1035)

The reason this office has garnered some support from stakeholders is that they feel it is needed because government is not doing its due diligence in listening, engaging, learning and advocating for the treaty rights of first nations. The only thing Bill C-10 would do is create another office to release reports that would be ignored, reiterating what we already know is happening: The government is not doing its job.

What is worse is that it may remove the onus from far too many parliamentarians to engage and listen to indigenous communities regarding treaty rights, because they will just wait for the report and let the government deal with it, especially those parliamentarians who do not share their borders with an indigenous community.

There is another glaring issue at hand here. The government has an aversion to properly funding these offices and allowing them to maintain independence if they do not toe the line. Our procurement ombudsman does not have enough money to do their job, which they openly stated. The government is firing the interim Parliamentary Budget Officer because he spoke out against the government. In fact, the advertisement for his replacement is already published in the Canada Gazette.

I support treaty rights because I respect the rule of law and I respect the courts. To me, this is a fundamental underpinning of being a Tory. In many ways, these are the same reasons that convinced Joseph Brant and the Mohawk to ally with the British those many years ago. I want to be a part not of a government but of a House, a legislature and a nation that removes bureaucratic barriers to reconciliation, not doing what I fear would be putting them up. Ultimately, when the state is involved, action is only limited by will.

To put on my partisan hat for just a moment, I want to highlight some of the actions the Harper government took when, and I stress when, political will was shown. In 2013, the Conservative government implemented a change that accelerated and improved the process for resolving specific claims, itself an extension of the 2007 specific claims action plan. Following that, in 2008, through legislation developed in tandem with the Assembly of First Nations, was the Specific Claims Tribunal. It also achieved a number of modern treaties, including with the Tł̓ch̓q, Déline, Maa-nulth and Tsawwassen. This was done without the addition of a commissioner for modern treaty implementation. Was it enough? No, but it was done.

I do not believe I will support the legislation, because I believe it signals a silent abandonment of what we should be doing more of in the House: bringing that too-ignored relationship between Canada and first nations into this place, properly funding departments and agencies, and removing the barriers to settlement so that not just indigenous Canadians but also non-indigenous Canadians can move on with their lives, together.

Government Orders

Right now, in the area that I represent, there is a settlement ongoing after years of negotiations. The government has not been forthcoming with either the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte or the Town of Deseronto about what the final steps will mean for each of them. This is unacceptable for what is supposed to be one of the most straightforward treaties in the country.

I sincerely hope that the ministers will work and, importantly, communicate with both communities as this long-standing process moves towards a conclusion. Above all, most importantly, I hope they will listen. If people in the House never listen, we will never learn and our ignorance will never drift away.

• (1040)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, I want to pick up on the idea of listening.

I want to point out that this is a very serious issue, and the leader of the Conservative Party has been very clear, in terms of how he envisions things such as pipelines. He believes that there is no duty or responsibility to work with indigenous leaders when it comes to pipelines. The Conservatives try to give this false impression that they actually believe in reconciliation.

When it comes to the Conservative Party's self-serving political interests, Conservatives are prepared to forgo indigenous concerns. Could the member explain to people who are following this debate why the leader of the Conservative Party has taken the position that he has on the issue of the pipeline?

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, we are not here today to talk about Conservatives. We are not here to talk about politics. We are not here to talk about partisan issues, as one of my colleagues spoke of earlier in a question. We are here to talk about Bill C-10.

It was very clear in my speech that a large problem we have is a failure to keep indigenous conversations in this place, and that member's question alludes to exactly that. Oversight is not the issue; leadership is.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it the height of hypocrisy to hear the parliamentary secretary and the Liberals talk about their commitment to treaties and reconciliation when they are violating the treaties this very day.

In my riding of Parkland, the Parkland School Division has had to lay off 100 educational assistants and has had tens of millions of dollars in losses because the current Liberal government cut off Jordan's principle funding for at-risk and vulnerable indigenous students. It is not just in my riding; it is across this country. Yellowknife Catholic Schools had to lay off 200 members because of the Liberal government's cuts to indigenous education funding. Could my hon. colleague talk about how the Liberal government is currently failing indigenous people?

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, the question of Jordan's principle is a conversation that has come up time and time again with trustees from my local area. The question is falling, seemingly, on deaf ears with the government. I have asked time and time again for some consultation, for communication and where we are moving forward.

• (1045)

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am just as disgusted with the Liberal parliamentary secretary and agree about the hypocrisy of the Liberals' so-called mandate for reconciliation, which we know is not sincere. I wonder if the member agrees that because we have an important role in the Auditor General, which does make sure that there are audits going on with government operations, maybe we need the role of the commissioner to be able to call out such hypocrisy in this House.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, I could not agree more that hypocrisy is not welcome in the House, but we hear it time and time again.

This is not a true step toward reconciliation. We spoke earlier about \$10.6 million over four years: bureaucracy posing as progress. What indigenous peoples are looking for is safer housing and reliable water, but Bill C-10 would not do any of that. It would be just another study and another study, when there are already recommendations in place that we need to fulfill. Let us just do and implement these things. We do not need another bureaucratic prism to do that.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will talk about NDP hypocrisy on another day.

One thing I can say is that the legislation is substantial. It is something indigenous leaders have been calling for and assisting with the drafting of. Can the member tell the House again how the member reconciles being in favour of reconciliation with not supporting legislation of this nature?

Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Madam Speaker, Bill C-10 clearly, with no doubt, would only add another voice that governments have been ignoring for years. The issue is not people's raising awareness; the issue is the government's ignoring them, and that would not change with Bill C-10.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, when we talk about treaties, we are not talking about paperwork; we are talking about promises, solemn commitments made between the Crown and indigenous people. They are commitments that define land, governance, rights and the very shape of our shared country, and the truth is that a promise is only as strong as the people responsible for keeping it. For decades, indigenous partners have asked for something that every Canadian understands: respect, fairness, and a government that keeps its word, not just speeches and photo-ops but real action.

Bill C-10, which would create a new commissioner for modern treaty implementation, is supposed to be that answer, but we cannot solve a problem of execution by creating more bureaucracy. Accountability does not come from a new office; it comes from leadership, responsibility and courage to deliver on commitments that already exist in law.

Government Orders

Before we talk about implementation, we need to be clear about what modern treaties actually are. A modern treaty is not symbolic; it is a legally binding agreement, a negotiated settlement that clarifies land ownership, resource rights, governance and jurisdiction. In many cases, it includes self-government provisions that give indigenous communities authority over education, health, culture and local services.

These agreements were meant to end decades, sometimes centuries, of litigation and uncertainty. They are not suggestions; they are federal law, so when Canada signs a treaty, the honour of the Crown is on the line, and that honour cannot be delegated to another office and cannot be outsourced or buried inside a new bureaucracy. It has to be lived out in real action.

Here is the heart of the issue. The problem is not that there is too little oversight; the problem is that there is too little action. There is no shortage of reports; there is a shortage of results. The Auditor General, time and time again, has already told Parliament exactly where the system is breaking down: late funding, inconsistent interpretation of agreements, poor coordination across departments, unclear accountability, and almost no consequences when obligations are ignored. There have been multiple audits over the years by the Auditor General of treaty-related obligations, and there are still delays, missed commitments, and indigenous governments being forced back to the table to fight for what was already agreed to.

Now the government has proposed a new commissioner, someone who would monitor, assess and report, but reports are not roofs, and they do not build homes, bring clean water, deliver policing or create economic opportunity. The new office would have no power to compel compliance or enforce obligations. It would have no direct accountability to Parliament. It could not direct departments, impose consequences or resolve disputes. It would be just more smoke and mirrors, because oversight without enforcement is a system built to observe failure, not to fix it.

Indigenous leaders have shown us what real partnership looks like. Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band captured it well when he said, "We're business people. Our goals are to build a strong future [and] to pursue the good life".

That is the spirit we should be supporting: indigenous communities building their own future through hard work, collaboration and opportunity. A government that keeps its word and delivers on modern treaties does not create dependency; it creates the space for that success to flourish. Good things happen when everyone does their part: when indigenous governments lead, when local businesses invest and when Ottawa actually follows through on the commitment it has already signed.

We know that the agreements can be negotiated and implemented when the government is focused, disciplined and accountable. Modern treaties and self-government agreements are possible. They are not easy files; they require discipline, focus, trust and constant conversation with indigenous partners, but they can be delivered.

Let me remind the House what success looks like. Tsawwassen is located just an hour from my riding. The Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement, which happened under Prime Minister Harper, is one of the most significant modern treaties in our country's recent

history, not because it made headlines but because it made progress. It came into effect in 2009, giving the Tsawwassen First Nation clear authority over its land, its resources and its economic future. It replaced uncertainty with clarity, and decades of stalled negotiations with a real and enforceable partnership.

● (1050)

However, what stands out about Tsawwassen is not just the treaty itself but what the community built with it. It used its rights, the way any government should: with discipline, vision and a plan for the next generation. We can see it in the development around Tsawwassen Mills and Tsawwassen Commons. We can see it in the jobs created, the businesses launched and the sense of momentum that did not depend on speeches and symbolism but on hard work and steady leadership.

Here is the real lesson: When the treaty is clear, when the federal government does its part, when the rules are respected by everyone at the table, indigenous communities do not just participate in the economy, they help drive it. The Tsawwassen treaty succeeded not because Ottawa created a new office; it succeeded because the agreement was honoured and because the Tsawwassen people turned opportunity into outcomes.

We love to take our grandkids out to the Tsawwassen Mills mall to wander around Cabela's checking out the displays. When it first opened, we threw a few gutter balls in the bowling alley at Uncle Buck's Fishbowl and Grill, and the kids loved it. It is a living example that when we keep our word, show up, follow through and respect the commitments we have already made, good things happen: stronger communities, stronger partnership and a stronger Canada.

More agreements like the Tsawwassen agreement will not come from a new office, a new commissioner or a new layer of bureaucracy. They will come from a government that respects the negotiating table, honours deadlines and holds itself accountable for results. They will come from ministers who show up, officials who execute their mandate and indigenous partners who share the future of their communities.

Conservatives believe in accountability. We believe in honouring the Crown. We believe in a strong nation-to-nation relationship grounded in trust. Yes, oversight matters, but real oversight comes from Parliament, from the Auditor General, from the treaty governance bodies and from the courts, not from yet another monitoring office.

Conservatives believe there is a better path forward, one rooted in accountability, partnership and respect. We would strengthen responsibility inside the ministries that already exist, setting clear expectations, forcing performance milestones and requiring regular reporting to Parliament, with real consequences when obligations are missed. We would use the tools already written into modern treaties, the dispute resolution clauses, the courts and the work of the Auditor General. Instead of creating more layers of bureaucracy, we would put responsibility back on ministers and departments, where it belongs.

If the commitment is delayed, Canadians deserve answers from the people who signed the agreement, not from another office with no power to enforce it. We would honour the sovereignty and self-determination of indigenous partners by making accountability something we build together, not something imposed by Ottawa. Above all, Conservatives are focused on results, because homes, infrastructure and opportunity are delivered by governments that do their job, not by more commissioners and more reports.

Indigenous governments have been clear: Yes, they want accountability, but more than that, they want progress. They want the federal government to deliver what it already agreed to. They want implementation that is timely, consistent and respectful. Bill C-10 would give us new reports but not new results. Canadians, indigenous and non-indigenous, expect more than that.

Reconciliation is not a new title, a new commissioner or a new office on Wellington Street; reconciliation is when a treaty is honoured, when communities see a real change and when the federal government does what it already promised to do. Let us choose the path of integrity and a future where treaties are not words on paper but living commitments, upheld with discipline and delivered with honour, measured in real progress on the ground. We do not need more bureaucracy; we need a government that does its job.

• (1055)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-10 is before us because of the strong leadership from indigenous people and the grassroots from indigenous community members, along with a co-operative government seeking through reconciliation to bring forward positive legislation. That is the driving force of what we are voting on, but the Conservatives continue to want to filibuster to prevent the legislation from passing. My question is why.

While the member is addressing that particular question, maybe she can also address the issue of how we can reconcile the Conservative Party's, and in particular the leader of the Conservative Party's, approach in dealing with the pipeline going through B.C., feeling that there is absolutely zero obligation to indigenous people or the Province of B.C.

Statements by Members

Tamara Jansen: Madam Speaker, let us be honest. The question distracts us from the core problem. The government's answer to every failure is to stack another layer of paperwork on top of the last one. Bill C-10 would create just another monitoring office that would not be able to enforce a thing. There is more paper with the same problems.

The budget is full of new departments that will not solve a thing. It is time to get serious and ensure that departments that already exist actually follow through on their responsibilities.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, once again, we listened to the Liberal parliamentary secretary talk about how Conservatives are not honouring reconciliation in our treaties. Meanwhile, the Liberal government is attacking indigenous children who have autism, fetal alcohol syndrome and other vulnerabilities. It has cut funding for indigenous education that was mandated by the Supreme Court of Canada and the treaties.

I wonder if my hon. colleague could talk about the hypocrisy from the Liberals on indigenous funding.

Tamara Jansen: Madam Speaker, we Conservatives oppose the approach the government is taking. A new bureaucracy does not hold anyone to account; it shields ministers from responsibility. Instead of fixing delays, the government creates another office to talk about the delays. That is not progress, and it adds a whole lot more cost.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

TREE OF HOPE

Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it was my absolute honour to participate in the Tree of Hope ceremony organized by the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition.

This is an important event that raises awareness about the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. There was a procession beginning at the Ottawa police station, leading to Ottawa City Hall and finishing right here at Parliament Hill. Along the way, we lit red lights in trees as a reminder of the lives lost and as a call to action to support and protect indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ community members.

I thank the elders and the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition for hosting this important event and for their continued leadership to advocate on behalf of the urban indigenous community in our city.

Statements by Members

• (1100)

SANDON HYDROELECTRIC PLANT

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Madam Speaker, nestled deep in the mountains of my riding lies the historic town of Sandon, British Columbia. It was once a thriving silver mining hub and was the first community in our province where every citizen had access to electricity.

At its heart stands the Silversmith Power and Light plant, commissioned in 1897, which is still humming along today using equipment made when horses were still our primary mode of transportation. Now in its 128th year of continuous operation, it remains Canada's oldest hydroelectric facility, producing clean, renewable energy that can power almost 500 homes.

For decades, Hal Wright and his family have dedicated their lives to preserving this extraordinary piece of Canadian history. Through their stewardship, Sandon remains not just a ghost town, but a living symbol of resilience, innovation and heritage.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the last election, the Prime Minister talked a great deal about expanding trade opportunities. To that end, we have seen the Prime Minister and the government travelling the world to ensure that we are able to expand our export markets. This is so critically important for all of Canada.

Personally, I am looking at some of the things that have come out of that, such as a commitment to work with the Philippines to try to get a trade agreement in 2026, and working with India to try to get a trade agreement in 2026.

These are interesting times we are in, and there are so many opportunities through trade. Canada is a trading nation. We have 0.5% of the world population, yet we contribute 2.5% of world trade. This is a Prime Minister who understands the importance of trade.

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CHRISTMAS EVENTS IN ABBOTSFORD—SOUTH LANGLEY

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Madam Speaker, Christmas cheer is all around us, especially in my community of Abbotsford—South Langley. I hope families will come out and enjoy the Aldergrove Christmas Light Up Parade. I would be thrilled to see them there as I hand out candy canes.

Throughout this month, our office will be collecting non-perishable food items for our local food bank. Times are hard, and if people are able to give back in any capacity, it truly helps.

I want to take this moment to thank our volunteers, first responders, parade organizers, local charities and organizations that make this season so special for us all.

To my friends back home in Abbotsford—South Langley, I wish them the merriest Christmas and happiest new year as Christians celebrate this holy season and the birth of Jesus Christ.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since 1978, every year on November 29, we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, but the solidarity did not begin in 1978.

For over 75 years, millions of Canadians and hundreds of millions around the world have stood in recognition of a reality defined by displacement, loss and enduring hardship. It is also a day that reminds us of the extraordinary resilience of a people who have endured far more than any ever should.

[Translation]

The perseverance of the Palestinian people in the face of decades of hardship reminds the entire world of the power of hope and human dignity.

[English]

Canada's proud role on the international stage carries a collective responsibility that we owe to all who face injustice. It is one that demands not only our sympathy, but our humanity in action.

I rise proudly on behalf of many in my community and across this country to send a message to the people of Palestine. They have not been forgotten and they are not alone. We stand with them.

* * *

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, members of Parliament, above all else, are servants of the Canadian people. Whether we are working in the chamber or in the committee rooms, we must carry that hallowed responsibility wherever we go. Constituents are counting on us to carry out the work they sent us here to do.

Right now, members of the transport committee are being denied that opportunity to work and serve. Liberal MPs are obstructing our work because they do not want to hear the testimony of victims in our study of unsafe truck driving practices.

Voting against our motion to hear from victims is the Liberals' democratic right. However, cancelling meetings to avoid a vote is not just wrong; it is undemocratic. Enough is enough. Liberal members of the transport committee need to fulfill their democratic responsibility, let victims be heard and let parliamentarians get back to work.

• (1105)

OTTAWA SALUS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING COMPLEX

Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, aging is difficult for most people, but for those who have experienced addictions and mental health challenges, including hospitalization and periods of homelessness throughout their lives, it is even more challenging.

Recently, I toured the soon-to-open Ottawa Salus 54-unit affordable housing complex in my riding of Ottawa West—Nepean. This federally funded project will provide low-barrier supportive housing to older adults with complex social and health issues. This unique, purpose-built apartment and townhouse project near the City View Curling Club has a variety of bright social and recreation spaces, clinics and other services. It is very impressive, and it will allow residents to age in place in dignity and safety.

This is just one tangible example in my riding of how our housing strategy is working and will change lives for the better.

* * *

COST OF FOOD

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Madam Speaker, families across my riding on Vancouver Island are struggling to house and feed themselves as the cost of living continues to rise.

The Duncan Foodbank and Lunch Kitchen and the Goldstream Food Bank in Langford are beyond capacity and are struggling to keep up with demand. This is heartbreaking. There is a new veterans food bank in Langford scheduled to open in mid-December, yet it is already being overwhelmed with requests for assistance from veterans, and even serving members of the military. This is heartbreaking.

I have risen in this House multiple times to fight for vital industries, like fisheries and forestry, that are in dire situations and facing shutdowns that will kill jobs and force even more people to food banks. These are all signs of a failing economy driven by the government's handouts and subsidies, which are fuelled by endless borrowed and printed money that serves only to further drive up the cost of food.

We must act now to help Canadians who are struggling. We must scrap the industrial carbon tax which drives up the cost of fertilizer and farm equipment and, ultimately, the cost of food. We do not need deficit-funded handouts. Canadians deserve more than—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has listened to workers, including those in seasonal industries, who felt that they were not understood or taken into consideration in the latest Liberal budget.

Statements by Members

There is nothing for EI, even though groups defending the rights of the unemployed, unions and the Bloc Québécois are demanding a major overhaul of the legislation. The measure that had temporarily increased regional unemployment rates was not extended, even though it provided a breath of fresh air for workers.

As the holiday season approaches, the Liberal government is once again offering us nothing, even though the spring gap is just a few weeks away for workers in seasonal industries. The Liberals may ignore workers, but the EI spring gap does not spare them.

These workers are essential to keeping our regions alive and ensuring the success of our forestry, tourism, fishing and other industries. I want them to know that the Bloc Québécois will reintroduce a bill that will propose real EI reform.

* * *

[English]

GREENER BUILDINGS IN WHITBY

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Whitby is not just talking about sustainability; it is demonstrating action. At last week's Durham Greener Buildings awards, which recognizes success in achieving climate targets, with two awards, our community walked out with some serious hardware.

First up is the Whitby Centennial Building, which earned the Best Emission and Energy Performance Award for Performing Arts. It proves we can honour our heritage while still hitting new heights in energy performance.

Second is Whitby's sports complex, which also stepped up. It received a Leadership and Sustainability Impact Award, showing how a local recreational hub can and will lead the charge on environmental responsibility. Our government backed that vision with a \$25-million investment through the green and inclusive community buildings fund. That is paying off.

Together, these wins say something very meaningful. Whitby is building a future that lives up to the hype and will be smart, sustainable and vibrant for generations to come.

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PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this week, I said it is always a good day for Brookfield. Yesterday was a great day for Brookfield as the Province of Alberta was pushed into a \$16.5-billion deal on carbon capture. One of the companies looking forward to a windfall will, of course, be Brookfield.

Statements by Members

Let us not forget that last week, the Prime Minister gave a \$500-million contract to the European Space Agency which is housed on property 50% owned by Brookfield. Let us also not forget that three days after the Prime Minister had a meeting with President Trump, the President personally signed an agreement for \$80 billion with Brookfield for nuclear energy. Just this week, the CEO of Brookfield testified at committee saying that when Brookfield does well, the Prime Minister does well because of how many shares he has in Brookfield.

The question that Canadians want an answer to is this: With 2.2 million Canadians going to a food bank every single month, why is the Prime Minister's focus enriching Brookfield and himself?

* * *

• (1110)

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Lisa Hefpner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as a kid at Christmas, all I wanted to unwrap was the latest *Little House on the Prairie* or *Nancy Drew* book, and as I hit my teens, it was all about Margaret Atwood. Her books informed my feminism, inspired my sense of humour and instilled in me a lifelong love of dystopian fantasy fiction.

Earlier this week, at the start of 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence, I saw her on stage in Hamilton in front of 1,500 rabid fans, and I was reminded of just how powerful a woman's voice can be. This event was for Interval House of Hamilton, which supports women fleeing violence and trains men and boys to avoid hypermasculine misogyny.

I have read them all, but my favourite Margaret Atwood book is the *MaddAddam* trilogy, where we read, “we must be a beacon of hope, because if you tell people there's nothing they can do, they will do worse than nothing.” Beacons of hope, like Margaret Atwood and Interval House, remind us that we can all do something about gender-based violence.

* * *

ETHICS

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians pay their taxes and expect fairness, but surprise, surprise, the Prime Minister's budget did nothing to inconvenience powerful corporations like Brookfield and prevent them from enjoying Canada's two-tier tax system.

Canadians cannot ignore that not long before taking office, the Prime Minister served as the chair of Brookfield, a senior position of a company now known for pushing tax avoidance to the max. During an ethics committee meeting, we heard that Brookfield is the most aggressive tax-avoider in the country, shifting profits into offshore havens and dodging \$6.5 billion in Canadian taxes.

While the government protects these loopholes, it saddles Canadians with the biggest budget in our history. Workers pay for it twice: once through higher taxes and again through the hidden inflation tax that follows the massive deficits and drives up the cost of everything.

Families in London deserve better than a system rigged for insiders. Conservatives will fight for fairness.

* * *

[Translation]

BOURASSA YOUTH ROBOTICS TEAM

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I am extremely proud to celebrate the remarkable journey of a youth robotics team from our riding of Bourassa.

I want to give a shout-out to the gold medallists of the FIRST Global Challenge world championship in robotics: Aaraf Alam Choudhury, Ashley Carolina Vazquez Cabrera, Donnovon Manlius, Iyad Zaabi, Justine Dubuc, Kenlee Suy, Manuela Christy Nzali Wakem, Raul André Vargas Ramirez, Sara Kaïdi and Taha Bouhou.

These young people took the gold medal at the FIRST Global Challenge, a world championship in robotics held in Panama. After the NBA success stories of Luguentz Dort, Bennedict Mathurin and Chris Boucher, here comes another group of young achievers charting the future of robotics in Bourassa, Quebec and Canada.

Congratulations to each and every one of these young people, who are with us today in Ottawa.

* * *

[English]

CANADA-U.S. TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister called himself the master negotiator, bragging that he alone could land a deal with President Trump by July 21. He puffed out his chest, promised “elbows up” and told Canadians he was ready to fight, but now that he has failed, he shrugs, asking, “Who cares?” and says he does not have a “burning issue” to discuss with the President.

In months, he went from lacing up his gloves to throwing up his hands. He has not negotiated; he has surrendered. While he wanders the world for photo ops, our workers are getting knocked to the mat.

Conservatives care, and so do the 40,000 manufacturing workers in Ontario whose jobs have vanished since April, not because of global forces, but because the Prime Minister fumbled the negotiations and left Canada without a deal, without a plan and without a lifeline. Those workers do not have the luxury of saying, “Who cares?” because their mortgages care, their grocery bills care and their futures care.

Will the Prime Minister look those 40,000 workers in the eye and tell them he cares about their jobs, their paycheques and their livelihoods, or will he just keep throwing up his hands, walking away from the table and asking, “Who cares?”

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Jaime Battiste (Cape Breton—Canso—Antigonish, Lib.):
Madam Speaker,

It's not for me to rock the boat,
But what's the deal on last week's vote?
We won the thing, so I won't gloat
But Robert Fife, I'd like to quote:

He spoke about some sneaky deeds
Where two were, hiding in the weeds,
Which served the Tories voting needs
“Embarrassing!”—the headline reads.

Their outline makes it all but certain
The two that hid behind the curtain,
With a snap election, they were flirtin'
Credibility shot, their polling hurtin'!

They tried to blame it on the app,
But fact and fiction showed a gap!
The answers shared were all over the map
It sounds like just a pile of...inconsistencies!

So what it is, I'll try to say
Next time try to make your way,
Into the House, and make our day
By voting for the BIA!

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, a growing number of Canadians are wondering how they are going to pay their bills, but not the Prime Minister. His personal fortune keeps growing a little bigger every day as his decisions make his company, Brookfield, richer.

For example, he went to see the U.S. President and returned empty-handed, with nothing for Canadians, yet his company signed a \$80-billion nuclear deal that filled its pockets. People say he manages his cabinet like a private company.

Why does he get to pocket profits while Canadians always get stuck paying the bill?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, Canadians are celebrating the results of our incredibly strong economy, which is becoming the best in the G7. The Canadian economy grew 2.6% in the last quarter.

What does that mean? It means opportunities for our young people. It reflects our military spending. It reflects our economic development efforts. It is the result and the fruit of our work with the

provinces to build and achieve the economic ambitions of all of Canada.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, before becoming Prime Minister, the president of Brookfield moved his offices from Canada to New York City. Before becoming Prime Minister, the president of Brookfield created three investment funds, including one located on the second floor of a bicycle repair shop to avoid paying taxes in Canada. That is called tax avoidance. Now that he is Prime Minister, the former president of Brookfield is raking in profits by making government decisions that benefit his own company.

Why does the Prime Minister keep acting like the president of Brookfield by putting his own interests and those of his friends ahead of the interests of Canadians who are the ones paying for all this?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I sympathize with the members of the official opposition. They do not know whether they are coming or going. Every day, we are practically being harassed by the members opposite, who are demanding economic growth and results.

This morning, we have the proof. The economy grew 2.6%. That means jobs and economic development for our regions. The results are there. We are building Canada and we will continue to do so.

[*English*]

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister's trust may be blind, but the math is not. This week, we found out from Brookfield's chief operating officer that the Prime Minister stands to make millions in carried interest payments from his company's success related to the climate and infrastructure schemes he set up. Many, if not all, of the public financial instruments, funds and policies the Prime Minister started pushing when he was pulling Trudeau's strings as his economic adviser in 2020 align with Brookfield's strategy and success.

How is it ethical when the Prime Minister is using the power of his office to benefit him and his company?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday, I met with operating engineers from all across the country who came to talk to me about the investments we are making in building Canada strong. They are so excited about the work for their members. As the proud mother of an operating engineer, I could not be more thrilled as well. These are great jobs for young people and tradespeople all across the country. This is how we build a country strong. We invest in the workers of today and tomorrow.

Oral Questions

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, Brookfield's COO also confirmed that the umbilical cord between the Prime Minister and his company will stay attached until 2034, because the fund the Prime Minister set up will mature then. That means if it does well, he does really well.

Here is the problem. He knows full well what is in his blind trust and is using the power of his office to promote policies that benefit his company and him. AI, modular housing, carbon capture, nuclear and the transition model of public risk for private returns he set up while advising Trudeau will make him millions.

How is this ethical, if not illegal?

• (1120)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada's GDP growth last quarter was 2.6%, blowing out economists' projections. That is what growing Canada strong looks like. It is an investment in the potential of the country. It is an investment in right now. We have the highest rate of women ever in the workforce. Do members know why? It is because we have an affordable child care agreement.

Yesterday, Saskatchewan signed an extension of five years, at \$1.5 billion, to make sure that we not only get women into the workforce but keep them there. I have one more thing: \$10-a-day has been achieved in Saskatchewan.

That is real action. That is partnership with provinces and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has vast conflicts of interest with Brookfield. That is why the Ethics Commissioner specifically told him not to meet with Brookfield. Despite this, the Prime Minister secretly met with the chief operating officer of Brookfield in October.

I have a simple question. Why did the Prime Minister violate the clear direction of the Ethics Commissioner?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when members resort to personal attacks and deal in conspiracy theories, it speaks to a larger issue.

The member from the province of Alberta is unable to celebrate the agreement we have achieved. His own premier is celebrating in public about the opportunity to protect the environment and create good jobs. If he will not stand up for Alberta, I, as somebody from the east coast who spent five years there, absolutely will.

The GDP number for the past quarter, which we saw go up 2.6%, means good jobs for people and food on the tables for families. We are here to create jobs. It is a shame the Conservatives are opposed to that.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is not a conspiracy theory. The Ethics Commissioner

told the Prime Minister not to meet with Brookfield and then he did so.

This is a Prime Minister who was the chair of Brookfield and who stands to make tens of millions of dollars in future bonus pay and from stock options. Not only did the Prime Minister clearly violate the direction of the Ethics Commissioner, but he attempted to cover it up by not disclosing the meeting.

Is this the Prime Minister's idea of ethics?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think my colleague left his tinfoil hat in the men's room before he attended question period today. He is here talking about things that do not matter to the people at home as much as things like doctors, jobs and lower taxes do. Frankly, it is a shame that members of this House of Commons are simply not focused on the priorities of Canadians. The GDP increased 2.6% in the past quarter. The last jobs report showed 67,000 new jobs. Every month since the Prime Minister has held that office, wages have increased faster than inflation.

We are going to stand up to build an economy that can stand on its own two feet, advance major projects and create jobs for people at home. I wish they would support it.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lestiguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, this is no time to celebrate. The Canada-Alberta oil deal announced yesterday is climate betrayal.

We were worried that the Liberals might announce one new pipeline in the west. Instead, they announced that there could be several, in addition to the Trans Mountain expansion, to extract at least 1.4 million more barrels of oil per day. The Liberals are also openly threatening to impose their oil fantasy on British Columbia in one of the worst documented cases of predatory federalism. This is exceptionally aggressive, in terms of both climate change and respect for the provinces.

How can elected officials who claim to be progressive—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, does my colleague want to talk about respecting provincial jurisdictions?

Let us talk about Quebec's development ambitions, which include mines, critical minerals, renewable energy and clean energy. Our approach is paying off, with 2.6% growth in the last quarter. What does that mean? It means that in my esteemed colleague's riding, moms and dads can have ambitions for their children's future. It means good jobs in all regions of Quebec.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Liberal's ridiculous pipeline announcement yesterday betrays the climate and betrays voters who thought that voting Liberal would be greener than voting Conservative. It betrays the Liberals who went into politics to help the environment, and it betrays the victims of increasingly frequent natural disasters who expect their elected officials to behave responsibly.

The question today is not why the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie left cabinet. The real question is how the other Liberals justify staying in this government.

• (1125)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are strong here on this side of the House. Why? It is because we are steadfast. Unlike the Bloc Québécois, we are steadfast in keeping our election promises. What were those promises? We promised to build Canada, to respect jurisdictions and to work with the provinces to meet their economic objectives. We also promised moms and dads in Canada that their children would have an economic future as strong and bright as our own. That is what we are doing. We are keeping our promises.

I would invite the Bloc Québécois to do the same.

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, Quebecers know what it feels like to be steamrolled by Canada.

Today, British Columbia is experiencing its own night of the long knives. The Alberta Liberals left British Columbia out of an agreement they reached to impose a pipeline on B.C. in the name of the national interest. Quebecers had better be careful, because the federal government has been mulling over the idea of forcing us to accept a pipeline across the St. Lawrence River for more than a decade.

If this is how the Liberals are acting today, will they do the same to Quebec?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this morning, I heard some good news about the economy. Canada's economy grew 2.6%. What I did not hear was people from British Columbia saying that they needed the Bloc Québécois to stand up for them.

We will work with the Province of British Columbia. We will work because we have a duty to consult and respect the first nations of British Columbia. That is what we are going to do. We will be able to achieve all of this without the help of the Bloc Québécois, which wants to break up our country.

Oral Questions

[English]

ETHICS

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister's priorities are clear. He has gone from elbows up to putting his hands in the air and saying "Who cares?" when it comes to negotiating for Canada. However, he is still working hard for the interests of Brookfield.

We learned in the recent budget that the Liberals are giving \$500 million to the European Space Agency. Guess who owns 50% of the U.K. campus where those funds are going. Members guessed it right: Brookfield.

Why does the Prime Minister continue to put his financial interests above the interests of Canadians?

Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy (Canada-U.S. Trade), Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me remind the member that we are doing very well. We woke up to tremendous news this morning. He can rest assured that our government is entirely focused on building our economy and supporting industries and workers who require our help. We were elected to build Canada, and that is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, we continue to hear these old, tired lines from the so-called new government. The Liberals tell us again and again that Canadians have never had it so good. Here is the reality. Food bank usage is at record rates, with over two million visits per month. Meanwhile, Brookfield's stock has gone up by over 20% since the Prime Minister got elected. Maybe that is just a coincidence.

Why do Canadians have to continue to suffer while Liberal elites get wealthier?

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me remind the member, who comes from the same province that I do, that we are helping invest in the new Darlington nuclear project in Bowmanville. It is a project that is going to build four new small nuclear reactors, the first of its kind in the G7. It is going to provide clean, reliable electricity to power 1.2 million homes. It is going to reduce our carbon emissions. It is going to create 18,000 good-paying, quality jobs for the people of Ontario.

Why do the members opposite not get on board and support a plan that is actually growing our economy 2.6% this year?

*Oral Questions***ETHICS**

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, to get elected, the Prime Minister promised to negotiate a win, but now that the election is over he says, “Who cares?” Canadians were promised a Churchill, but what we got was a Chamberlain.

He appeased the U.S. President by dropping the digital services tax. He appeased the U.S. President by withdrawing our softwood lumber challenge. However, appeasement did not get us any trade peace. We thought we got nothing, but in fact he just got nothing for Canadians. Brookfield got an \$80-billion nuclear deal. Is that coincidence or cause and effect?

Why does it appear that the Prime Minister continues to put his private interests ahead of those of Canadians?

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 really challenging to take the Conservatives at their word when they are trying to purport to care about Canadians. They vote against everything with the word “care” in it: dental care, child care, pharmacare and even health care infrastructure to build hospitals in my community in Durham Region where the member is from. They will not even support that.

If they want to show that they care, they should step up to support major projects in this country, like the new nuclear project at Darlington that will create 21,700 jobs in our region. The member voted against it.

• (1130)

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians and Conservatives care about the integrity of the highest office in the land, the Prime Minister. Conflict of interest rules are clear for members of the House. They are to arrange their private affairs in a manner to avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest.

An \$80-billion nuclear deal for Brookfield, \$500 million to the European Space Agency to benefit Brookfield and undisclosed meetings with Brookfield executives raise serious issues of conflict of interest. Why does it appear that the Prime Minister continues to put his private interests ahead of those of Canadians?

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 member would rather question the loyalty of our Prime Minister, who is securing deals all around the world to drive investment into Canada and protect jobs and who is stepping up with packages of support for tariff-impacted industries.

The member will not even stand up to support a hospital in Durham Region with the health care infrastructure funding that we put in the federal budget. He will not stand up to support a major project that will provide 1.2 million homes in our region with clean energy and 21,700 jobs. How can he say he cares about anybody but himself?

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, Black Friday is here, but there are no deals for Canadians.

This week, we found out that the Liberals gave \$528 million to the European Space Agency, 10 times more than the amount specified in the previous agreement under the former prime minister. Guess who owns 50% of the European Space Agency campus? That would be Brookfield.

Once again, the Prime Minister is putting his personal interests ahead of the interests of Canadians, or should I say, putting his interests first at the expense of Canadians' interests, at the expense of investments here, in Canada, and at the expense of jobs for Quebec and Canada.

Why is the Prime Minister incapable of putting Canadians first, ahead of his personal interests?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is not complicated. Everything we do is for Canadians. Bringing up ethics is an attempt to distract certain people from the real work we are doing. The budget includes a package of measures for Quebec that will benefit our economy and our workers: ports, roads, work being done with Hydro-Québec to boost its production, mines and jobs. That is what building Canada is all about. Let us stop creating distractions and start working with us on the real issues.

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, the devil is in the details. Yesterday, the Liberal government made a series of announcements in Alberta, and the Prime Minister once again found a way to benefit himself. He announced a carbon capture plan. Which outstanding company has the technology for this kind of megaproject? Brookfield does. If Brookfield makes money, the Prime Minister makes money.

Each announcement seems like another opportunity for the Liberal government to dip into Brookfield's catalogue for its megaprojects. Why?

Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want my colleague to know that we are working with all provinces and all sectors. We have a mission. Our government was elected to build a strong economy, a sustainable economy and a future for our children. The proof that our approach is working is that we learned today that our productivity is increasing. That is very good news. Our policies are working. I urge my colleagues to join us and vote in favour of our measures.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Madam Speaker, every time the Prime Minister talks trade, he seems to be closing deals for his old firm Brookfield, while Canadian workers and taxpayers are left out on the sidelines. He went to Washington and Brookfield walked away with an \$80-billion nuclear deal. He went to London and Brookfield got over \$500 million for the European Space Agency. He hosted Swedish royalty and Brookfield announced an AI deal with Sweden. Now he is forcing Alberta to pour billions of taxpayer dollars into carbon capture just to get a pipeline, exactly where Brookfield holds major stakes.

When the Prime Minister said he would build at scale and speed not seen in generations, did he really mean just for Brookfield and not for Canadians?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it appears that my hon. colleague has not really been cognizant of what the Prime Minister has been doing: \$70 billion in a financial commitment of investment from the U.A.E. We can also list the Philippines, Indonesia, Germany, Thailand and India. These are the trade deals we are embarking upon.

On the other side of the House, they focus on issues that Canadians are not going to benefit from. We are here for Canadians, building Canada strong.

* * *

• (1135)

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, the new Minister of Energy and Natural Resources seriously crossed the line yesterday. When commenting on the resignation of the former environment minister, he said that people who are concerned about the Liberal shift towards more oil are nostalgic for the past and are looking for magical solutions. It seems that nowadays, caring about the environment is considered nostalgia and wishful thinking. This is very troubling, knowing that the minister and the Prime Minister have been very close ever since their early days as bankers at Goldman Sachs.

Has the fight against climate change become nothing more than nostalgia for the Liberals?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources mentioned, the economic and trade situation has changed recently. I think that all Quebeckers understand that we are in a new era when it comes to trade with the United States and perhaps with the rest of the world. That is forcing us to secure our economy, work with the provinces, meet our economic objectives and implement major renewable energy and critical mineral projects in Quebec.

We were elected to build and that is what we—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, what we are hearing is frightening.

This same minister also called his worried Liberal colleagues boy scouts and naive, according to the Toronto Star. In Canada today, it is normal for a natural resources minister to think that worrying about the expansion of dirty oil pipelines is simply nostalgia, magical thinking, naïveté and behaving like boy scouts. Even the Conservative leader is not that much of a climate denier.

Quite frankly, how can the Liberals from Quebec support the comments coming from this minister?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we used to have one province that was reluctant to join us in our fight to achieve net-zero emissions. Today, that same province has just agreed to increase the price on carbon. More importantly, it has just agreed to reduce its methane emissions by 75%.

For the project to go ahead, there has to be an agreement with British Columbia. There has to be an agreement with the first nations. There has to be money.

That is what it means to move forward, even nature—

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

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, the United States is imposing crippling 45% tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber.

This weekend, when asked whether he had talked about trade with Donald Trump, the Prime Minister replied, “Who cares?” I can say that people in Beauce care, as do the people in Chaudière-Appalaches, where the softwood lumber industry supports about 8,000 jobs.

Does the Prime Minister have the guts to rise today before the 8,000 workers in our region and repeat that he does not care?

Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we need our forestry workers in rural areas. We need our Canadian softwood lumber, which is a source of pride in Canada. In my riding, I have proud forestry companies.

This week, we announced important measures to support the industry. We know that things are not easy, but when times get tough, we support each other. That is exactly what we are doing in the forestry industry. We will resolve the dispute with the United States, but in the meantime, we are pulling together.

Oral Questions

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, unlike the Prime Minister, we care about softwood lumber. No loan program can replace \$780 million in annual salaries in Chaudière-Appalaches. The Prime Minister promised a quick deal with the Americans. In reality, things have gotten worse. Tariffs have tripled. Loans are not what businesses want. Businesses want a trade agreement with the Americans, our vital market.

Will the Prime Minister quit hurling insults, quit saying “who cares” and “I don’t care”, address the real issues and fix the softwood lumber deal with the Americans, yes or no?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when it comes to the forestry sector, we will take no lessons from a Conservative member.

We are in a trade war. In the case of softwood lumber, the trade war has been going on for 40 years. The United States has not budged on this issue. What are we doing? We are responding by supporting our workers. We are responding by supporting our businesses. We are responding by modernizing and diversifying our offerings. We are responding by mandating the use of Canadian lumber in large-scale home construction projects in Canada. That is what we are—

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

[English]

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, in 2006, our Conservative government negotiated an end to the longest softwood lumber war. We negotiated a 10-year agreement with a one-year grace period, which the government squandered.

The Liberals have failed to do this in 10 years. This is thousands of jobs. Over 30 mills have closed in the province of British Columbia.

The Prime Minister ran an entire election on the false premise that he was the man with the plan, that he could get the job done. Now he says, “Who cares?” as our lumber industry is crippled and communities are decimated.

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are in a trade war. We are in a very difficult situation, and in that situation, this government is standing with affected workers. We are moving heaven and earth to help them. We just announced another \$500 million of supports two days ago. The member is fully aware of this. We are open to more ideas for more supports.

We had a take-note debate the other night. I asked the Conservative members for their ideas, and how many ideas did I get from them? It was zero. How about we get some ideas on the table?

We are happy to support. We are happy to work with members to support. Let us get some ideas on the table.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, if they want a flipping idea of what to do, they could get a flipping deal done. It has been 10 years. It is another week, and

there has been another mill closure in my riding. That is 100 direct and indirect jobs lost. That is hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes for our municipalities. That is \$1 million of taxes from our community of 100 Mile House.

Do the Liberals want to know who matters? It is the families that lost their jobs. They are the ones who matter. I ask the Liberals to get the job done and get an agreement. Will the Prime Minister come to our region to tell them? Will he look them in the eyes and tell them that they do not matter?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, helpful ideas like “Just get a deal done” are not going to get the deal done. We need ideas. We need support for workers, the workers the member and I both care about. How about we work together to help this industry, instead of these histrionics in the House? How about that?

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister was asked whether he had spoken to Trump about trade, and guess what he did. He brushed off the question, saying, “Who cares?”

The Prime Minister may not think it is a serious matter, but Conservatives do and so do auto workers in Oshawa and across Ontario and Quebec, who are seeing their jobs disappear. Thousands of auto jobs are leaving Canada, and workers justifiably feel that their jobs do not matter because the Prime Minister said so.

If the Prime Minister will not fight for Canadian auto workers, then who is he fighting for? Is it Brookfield?

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 would like to ask the member what she cares about.

Does she care about access to critical care and health care in our region? I wonder, because she voted against budget 2025, including the health care infrastructure fund, which would fund hospitals and health care facilities all across Canada, including in Durham region. Does she care about 21,700 jobs at the new nuclear project in Darlington? I wonder, because she voted against that as well. It is clear that she does not care about our region—

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

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Madam Speaker, NATO has long been a cornerstone of the rules-based international order that has ensured peace and stability since the Second World War. Our allies and partners will be meeting in Brussels next week to discuss the conflicts and challenges facing our alliance.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs share with the House how she intends to represent Canada and work with our allies to advance our interests in the lead-up to this important meeting?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

I will be at NATO next week to discuss very important issues with our allies, including topics like Ukraine, the Arctic and our collective defence.

With an \$80-billion investment in budget 2025, we are here for the Canadian Armed Forces and our defence sector. Canada will always play its part in collective defence and in protecting our country.

* * *

• (1145)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister promised Canadians a pipeline, maybe, someday. He is not sure. Meanwhile, the environment minister cannot even say the word “pipeline”, and another minister just jumped ship. This is not a grand bargain; it is a grand ransom.

The only thing certain is that Canadians' industrial carbon taxes are going up. Canadians have sacrificed a lot, and all we have received so far are vague Liberal promises. Will the Prime Minister tell us what year we will see shovels in the ground on a new oil pipeline to the west coast?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we had, yesterday, a very comprehensive display of meeting the ambitions and meeting the moment in western Canada in Alberta, making sure that we have a better path to fighting climate change and a higher price on industrial carbon. Premier Smith has signed on to a radical set of new measures to make sure we have clean electricity, to make sure we build data centres and to make sure we build nuclear energy.

Do members know who is going to do all that? Canada's building tradespeople will do that, the men and women of Canada's building trades. We are going to build Alberta strong and build Canada strong.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, notice he did not say the word “pipeline”. As part of the great ransom, taxpayers will be required to invest billions of dollars to pump air into the ground.

Oral Questions

Meanwhile, by pure coincidence, I am sure, the Prime Minister's company Brookfield is the largest investor in Entropy, a carbon capture company. The Prime Minister is using taxpayer funds to underwrite his company's investments. Brookfield's \$300-million investment in Entropy is already backed by \$200 million in taxpayer funds. That is not Canada strong, that is Brookfield strong. How much does the Prime Minister stand to gain by forcing Canadians to fund his carbon capture projects?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, tinfoil is actually made of aluminum, so I would like to thank the member for his first act in supporting that sector in the House.

The fact of the matter is this: Yesterday, we announced an MOU with Alberta that increases economic prosperity for this country, increases environmental sustainability and the durability of environmental action in this country, and makes us less reliant on the United States.

That is a good day for Alberta. That is a good day for Canada. I welcome the members opposite to get on board.

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Madam Speaker, this week, we saw reports that the B.C. Liberal caucus is “seething”, “anxious” and “angry” about the Prime Minister's pipe dream to the Pacific coast. To keep them quiet, he even gave the B.C. Premier a veto on the project, and will increase the industrial carbon tax, which will only make everything worse.

When the Prime Minister said that he would build at a scale and speed not seen in generations, did he mean taxes, not projects?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday was a great day for Canada because it got us onto a better course of action and a more common ground and confederation between Alberta and Canada, which will also lead to a better course of action across the entire country. Part of the agreement was that we would work with British Columbia, that we would work in a tripartite table, and of course, that we would all respect the indigenous rights of peoples.

This is great for Canada. This expands our markets. This expands our economy, and this makes environmental action more durable.

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Madam Speaker, families need stronger paycheques and affordable energy, but instead of building pipelines to the Pacific, the Prime Minister gives us more paper, more delays and more vetoes. The MOU guarantees nothing except seven months of waiting and two years of federal studies.

When will the Prime Minister finally get out of the way and give Canadians a firm construction date for the west coast pipeline, or will this be another Liberal broken promise?

Oral Questions

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister is focused on making sure that we are creating good-paying jobs for all Canadians. We are investing and building things like they have never been done before. We are making sure that we diversify trade, so we are investing in our ports right in British Columbia so we can export more to other markets, such as the Indo-Pacific.

That is the focus of the government. That is the focus of the Prime Minister. We will not rest until we create good-paying jobs for all Canadians.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Madam Speaker, Liberal MPs in B.C. are telling the media that they are “seething,” “anxious” and “angry” about a pipeline that would end Canada’s economic dependence on the United States. The Liberal caucus is falling apart over this.

The Prime Minister must not give his “keep it in the ground” caucus or Premier Eby a veto. Only he has the constitutional and legislative power to approve a pipeline today.

Will he ignore the naysayers and approve it today, or will he offer more delay?

• (1150)

Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are committed on this side of the House to co-operative federalism with the province of Alberta, but we remain committed and we remain respectful of aboriginal and treaty rights, as well as the free, prior and informed consent of communities that is entrenched in UN-DRIP. We are going to continue to respect these rights. It is not only the right thing to do; it is also the law.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us be clear on what was signed yesterday. It was a memorandum that will hike the industrial carbon tax and, in exchange, the Liberals will allow a pipeline proposal to be further studied for the next two years. There are no timelines for approval, and many Liberals are demanding that the timelines be never. The Liberal caucus is divided.

Will the Prime Minister ignore them, forget the tax hikes and just approve a pipeline today, or is this pipeline a pipe dream?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the slogans continue on the other side. What is lacking is seriousness. They condemn a decision signed by the Premier of Alberta. Yesterday was a great day for Alberta and for Canada. The government was elected on a policy vision to ensure more jobs in this country, economic stewardship and environmental stewardship at the same time.

We will maintain that vision from start to finish. I invite the member to join us.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Madam Speaker, we hear that the B.C. Liberal caucus is “seething,” “anxious” and “angry” about a possible pipeline, so the Prime Minister is appeasing them by hiding behind the provincial NDP, just like Brookfield hides behind Caribbean tax laws.

After nine years of Liberal energy mismanagement, Canadians want a pipeline.

Will the Prime Minister do his job, stop the political games and immediately get shovels in the ground on this oil pipeline?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the far-reaching memorandum of understanding with Alberta includes a number of timelines. I invite members to read it. By July 1 of next year is when a pipeline proposal will come from the Province of Alberta. There are timelines, and we are seeing that there is not just talk about pipelines, but talks about AI data centres, nuclear energy, and many ways we can grow the Canadian economy in a clean way, in a big way and in a way that does not rely as much on the United States of America.

This is a good day for Alberta. This is a good day for Canada. I invite members opposite to get on board.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government is not just divided, it is cracking. B.C. Liberal MPs are publicly venting. Unnamed ministers are warning of serious problems, and now the Quebec lieutenant has walked out of cabinet entirely. While the Prime Minister struggles to hold his team together, Canadians are left paying the price. We sell almost all our oil to one customer, the U.S., because we have no pipeline to the Pacific.

When will the Prime Minister stop putting political damage control ahead of the national interest and give us a date for when the pipeline will be built?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Liberal caucus is only cracking open wide enough to welcome Conservatives to come join us.

My hon. colleague would like a date for a pipeline to the west coast. How about May of last year, when the Trans Mountain expansion got new Canadian products to markets, which is driving up the price of Canadian resources?

The Conservatives failed to get anything built when they were last in government because they ignored the role of provinces and because they ignored the rights of indigenous peoples in this country. By working together with different levels of government and indigenous rights holders, we are able to advance major projects. This is not some idea; this is our record.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, a pipeline to the west coast is not just another project; it is a nation-building decision that falls squarely under the federal government's authority. Canadians expect the Prime Minister to act, but instead, he has given the NDP Premier of B.C. a veto in an effort to manage the uproar in his caucus, a caucus that is now losing senior ministers over the issue.

When will the Prime Minister stop passing the buck and use the federal authority that rests with him alone to ensure that this pipeline gets built?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is talking about the constitutional authority of the Prime Minister. If she actually read the entirety of the section that she is referring to, she would notice that it also gives the constitutional authority to provincial governments to build or not build the infrastructure, the roads, the electricity and the water services that would make it possible to have a pipeline actually operate in the first place. In addition, section 35 of that very same constitution demands that governments respect the inherent and treaty rights of indigenous peoples in this country, including by consulting them on advancing major projects.

By working together, we can get big things done. That is a path forward.

* * *

• (1155)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Atlantic Canada is a culture of innovation, and my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is home to leading ocean technology and maritime defence researchers and innovators, many of whom are located strategically along the shores of beautiful Dartmouth Cove. These companies and partners are driving major advances in ocean tech and strengthening Canada's national defence and security.

Can the minister highlight the work the government is doing to support these important security and defence initiatives in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his work and for his advocacy for Atlantic Canadian excellence.

This past weekend, we announced Canada's first maritime defence innovation secure hub, or DISH, at COVE in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. This is a brand new, \$30-million hub. We will bring together, for the first time, defence and security partners, industry, academia and naval operators to develop, test and transition new maritime technologies. From coast to coast to coast, we are investing millions in building up a resilient innovation industry right here at home.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, millions of Canadians do not have a family doctor, and Canada's emergency rooms are overflowing, but non-citizens who have had their asylum claims rejected are eligible for all sorts of federal health benefits that Canadians are not entitled to, such as mental health support and vision care. It is unfair to offer people with no legal reason to be in Canada better federal health benefits than what Canadians have access to.

Why are the Liberals giving bogus asylum claimants, who have no legal reason to be in Canada, access to better health services than Canadians rather than simply deporting them?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member knows very well that those who are not eligible to be here will face the consequences of Canadian law. We trust authorities to carry that out.

As for services in this country, we understand that there has been a strain on services and that the immigration system has a part to play in that. What is also at stake is that we put policy on the table to address those issues. A sustainable, responsible immigration system is exactly what we are pursuing to address those service challenges.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, people with no legal right to be in Canada should not have access to federal health benefits.

The Liberals have given yet another chance to stay in Canada to a Dutch Somali national who gave multiple false names and birth dates to immigration officers and who also lied about being in a polygamous marriage. Lying to immigration officers should immediately invalidate somebody's ability to stay in Canada. The decision to let someone enter or stay in Canada should be made on truthful information; this is a no-brainer.

Why are the Liberals rewarding non-citizen liars with the right to stay in Canada?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I say this with all due respect. The member has been the immigration critic for the Conservative Party for almost 10 years. She knows very well that when new information comes in, it can lead to the cancellation of existing visas that allow individuals to be in Canada in the first place. When we understand these matters, we leave it in the hands of authorities to address those matters.

On this side of the House, we continue to be seized with the importance of ensuring a sustainable, responsible immigration system that is focused on the economy from beginning to end.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, in that case, the government found out that the person was a polygamist and lied about it, and it still let them stay here.

Oral Questions

We also this week heard the Liberals argue against my bill that would remove the ability of activists, judges and lawyers to give leniency to non-citizens convicted of serious crimes like sexual assault. For a non-citizen, being able to stay in Canada should be considered a privilege, not a right. Non-citizens convicted of sexual assault or those who are caught lying about polygamy should not be rewarded with the ability to stay in Canada; they should be removed. It is a no-brainer.

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is or should be aware of the landmark Supreme Court decision of 2013 that says that the courts, and judges in particular, can take note of the immigration status of an individual but cannot use that to condition sentencing in a way that would avoid immigration consequences.

The question is not a serious one. The point is that if we are going to do immigration policy seriously in this country, we have to make sure we allow—

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Markham—Stouffville.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada has what the world needs and wants: the best-educated workforce in the world, free trade agreements with every G7 country, an abundance of natural resources, and world-class innovators, entrepreneurs and exporters. Thanks to budget 2025, Canada will also have the lowest marginal effective tax rate in the G7.

Unlike the members opposite, I am proud to have voted in favour of a budget that will boost productivity and attract investments.

Can the parliamentary secretary remind the House exactly what those—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

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, we know that the Conservatives will talk down our industries and workers every chance they get. That may help generate clicks and fundraising emails, but it will not build Canada strong. While they are in the business of saying no, we are in the business of saying yes: yes to productivity tax deductions for businesses; yes to making it easier for Canadian companies to invest in machinery, equipment and technology to help them grow and thrive; and yes to catalyzing investments to supercharge productivity in Canada.

When we say yes to Canada and to Canadians, Conservatives say no. Maybe that is why Canadians keep saying no every time the Conservatives—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, every time the Prime Minister talks trade, it seems Brookfield comes out ahead and Canadians get left behind. He travels to Washington, and Brookfield gets an \$80-billion nuclear deal. He travels to the U.K., and Brookfield gets money from the European Space Agency. He hosts Swedish royalty in Canada, and Brookfield announces an AI deal even before they land back in Stockholm.

Now the Prime Minister is forcing Alberta to put money into carbon capture programs in exchange for a pipeline, and guess who has a major stake in the sector. It is Brookfield.

When the Prime Minister said he would build at a scale not seen in generations, did he really mean just for Brookfield?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, count us a little perplexed as to the approach of the Conservatives in question period today.

First, there is the news of 2.6% growth in our economy, which leads all published data in the G7. We signed a landmark agreement with the Province of Alberta yesterday that will secure an economic future for families, children, and people looking for jobs, and an economic future across the Prairies and into British Columbia.

It is shameful that the Conservative Party sets up its tinfoil hats—

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

* * *

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, this summer a cargo ship went aground in the Franklin Strait, a rare occurrence. With climate change, the Northwest Passage has become more accessible. Nunavut relies heavily on shipped diesel, and the risk of damaging the pristine waters is increasing. Mapping the sea floor would ensure more predictable navigation.

Will the minister commit to funding Arctic bathymetry as a multi-use project to keep Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with our Arctic foreign policy, we are continually ensuring that the sovereignty and the livelihood of the Arctic are protected. That is why we are putting on the table \$80 billion for defence spending. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, we are going to make sure that we protect the Arctic and defend the Arctic, and we will do so with our international allies.

I will be travelling to NATO next week to have those—

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

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, behind closed doors, without B.C. and first nations at the table, the Prime Minister agreed to lift the tanker ban, put at risk the way of life of coastal communities, bring in a new fossil fuel subsidy at the expense of renewable energy and clean technologies, and move Canada further away from its greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The Prime Minister said they will not proceed without the consent of B.C. and the free, prior and informed consent of first nations, but nowhere is this spelled out in the MOU. Why?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, indigenous treaty rights do not need to be spelled out in MOUs; they are inherent, but I do want to talk a little about the MOU and what it allows. The MOU allows us to have a durable climate plan, one that moves the effective price of carbon in Alberta from \$25 to \$130. It allows us to reduce methane emissions by 75%. It allows us to take carbon out of the air through carbon capture, and it does that in a way that says that there are going to be ongoing reviews to make sure those commitments toward net zero in 2050 are maintained.

This is great news for the climate, and I encourage every member of the House—

• (1205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): This is the end of Oral Questions.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to Bill C-12, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures.

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

[*English*]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled “Proposed Review of the Conflict of Interest Act”.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, Conservatives support the main report from the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, but want to highlight two concerns in our dissenting report.

The first is that Mr. Flatt and Mr. Teskey refused to appear. They stayed outside Canada to avoid testifying, even though the House could still order them to appear when they return.

The second is that we have deep concerns about the Prime Minister's conflicts of interest. He has massive Brookfield holdings with future bonus pay, possibly in the tens of millions of dollars, and they are not properly managed under the current rules. Administrators of the screen were not even aware that the Prime Minister had met with the COO of Brookfield or that 95% of Brookfield companies are not covered by the screen.

The committee should continue examining fixes to the act to restore public trust. That is what we are going to look to do.

* * *

PETITIONS**STRONG BORDERS ACT**

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of petitioners for my riding of Courtenay—Alberni. I am honoured to table this petition today.

The petitioners say that Prime Minister Carney made the “elbows up” promise to defend Canadian sovereignty and democracy, and distinguish Canada from the dangerous politics of the United States. Bill C-2, they highlight, appears as a Trojan Horse for sweeping surveillance policies, expanding police access to personal data without warrants—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows he cannot use the name of a current member in the House. He has been here long enough.

Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I apologize.

It is an honour to table this petition on behalf of petitioners from my riding of Courtenay—Alberni.

Points of Order

They highlight that the Prime Minister made the “elbows up” promise to defend Canadian sovereignty and democracy, and distinguish Canada from the dangerous politics of the United States. They highlight that Bill C-2 appears as a Trojan Horse for sweeping surveillance policies, expanding police access to personal data without warrants, lowering privacy thresholds to reasonable grounds, weakening protections on international data sharing, and allowing Canada Post to open private mail. This legislation, as is, is offensive and undemocratic.

The petitioners also highlight that Bill C-2 tramples on our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and puts Canada on a dangerous path to xenophobia and racism.

They call on the Government of Canada to immediately withdraw Bill C-2 in full, uphold the elbows-up promises to reject Trump-style policies, ensuring that immigration, security and private legislation reflect our nation's commitment to democracy and human rights, honour the responsibility of elected offices and affirm our charter, not trample it.

• (1210)

ZERO-EMISSIONS VEHICLE MANDATE

Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present a petition here today on behalf of concerned residents of Regina and southern Saskatchewan.

The petitioners are concerned about the Liberal government's plan to ban the sale of internal combustion engine vehicles by 2035. They say the plan is unrealistic due to the lack of capacity in this country's electricity grid, and the result will be the price of both new and used vehicles being driven up.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to present this petition here today in the House of Commons.

FALUN GONG

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am presenting this petition, which has 600 signatures, on behalf of Falun Gong practitioners in China. They are suffering severe human rights abuses, including mass arbitrary detentions, torture, killing and forced organ harvesting on a large scale.

The petitioners are calling on the Canadian government to publicly call on the Chinese regime to end its persecution of Falun Gong in China and end transnational oppression abroad, and to continue to impose sanctions on and pursue accountability against CCP officials and proxies responsible for these human rights violations.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition that is very similar to the one my hon. colleague from Edmonton Manning presented.

It is from Canadians who are calling upon the Government of Canada to proactively deploy all possible avenues to publicly call out the Chinese regime to end its persecution of Falun Gong in China and end transnational repression abroad; to continue to impose sanctions on and pursue accountability against the Chinese Communist Party officials and proxies responsible for these human

rights violations; and, finally, to take stronger measures to protect the Falun Gong community targeted by this foreign repression.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

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POINTS OF ORDER

ADMISSIBILITY OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO BILL C-12

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, earlier today, the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security was tabled in the House, respecting the consideration of Bill C-12, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures.

I am rising on a point of order to bring to the Speaker's attention nine amendments adopted by the committee that the chair of the committee ruled inadmissible on the grounds that these amendments violated the parent act rule.

On page 771 of the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, it states, in relation to the rules and precedents that govern the admissibility of amendments proposed in committee:

An amendment to a bill must be relevant in that it must always relate to the subject matter of the bill or to the clause thereof under consideration. In the case of a bill referred to a committee after second reading, an amendment is inadmissible if it proposes to amend a statute that is not before the committee or a section of the parent Act, unless the latter is specifically amended by a clause of the bill.

In the case of the study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Bill C-12, the following nine amendments were ruled inadmissible by the chair because they infringed on the parent act rule. In these nine circumstances, the majority of members on the committee voted to overturn the chair's ruling, and these amendments were subsequently adopted. These amendments are CPC-8, CPC-13, CPC-14, CPC-15, CPC-16 and CPC-17 to change part 6 of the bill, concerning asylum reform; CPC-30 and CPC-33, which would create two new parts of the bill concerning penalties for human trafficking and the location of the position of the chair of the Immigration and Refugee Board; and CPC-2 to change part 4 of the bill, respecting ministerial powers, duties and functions related to the Canadian Coast Guard.

I therefore submit that these nine aforementioned amendments were inadmissible at committee. Should you agree, I would humbly request that the bill be reprinted without the offending amendments for the House to consider at the report stage.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for bringing that to the Chair's attention. It will be taken under advisement.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just heard the remarks of the deputy House leader of the government. I note that she is saying that she is rejecting amendments that were adopted by the majority of committee members.

I would like to reserve our comments for later. We will have arguments to make with respect to that statement.

• (1215)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member for the clarification, but as I said, all of this will be taken into consideration.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMMISSIONER FOR MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act respecting the Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise again in this chamber on behalf of the people of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Today, we are debating Bill C-10, the commissioner for modern treaty implementation act. The bill would create a new officer of Parliament supported by a new federal office, with a mandate to review and audit how federal departments implement modern treaties. The commissioner would examine the performance of government institutions and present findings in Parliament. The stated goal is to improve how Canada lives up to its obligations under modern treaties. The bill is presented as a measure in the federal action plan to implement UNDRIP and respond to a long-standing frustration that Canada often signs agreements and then fails to deliver on them.

Those frustrations are very real. Conservatives recognize that. We support treaty rights and reconciliation. We support self-determination and self-government for first nations, Inuit and Métis. We do not question the sincerity of indigenous partners who see the bill as a way to hold Ottawa accountable. Our concern is that Bill C-10 answers a problem of implementation with more bureaucracy and less accountability. We need accountability in the government to actually meet our treaty obligations.

To understand why that matters, it is worth recalling where modern treaties come from and what they are meant to fix. Treaty rights

Government Orders

in Canada go back to the earliest relationships between the Crown and indigenous nations, through the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the historic peace and friendship treaties, and the numbered treaties that cover much of western and northern Canada. Those treaties, however imperfectly honoured, are recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

In many parts of the country, indigenous title and rights were never resolved by historic treaties. That is why the Supreme Court's decision in 1973 was so important. The court recognized indigenous title in Canadian law and forced the federal government to move from denial to negotiation. That decision opened the modern treaty era and led to the first modern treaty, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975.

Since 1975, Canada has negotiated and signed 26 modern treaties with indigenous groups in Canada, 18 of which contain self-government provisions or associated self-government agreements. Canada has concluded modern treaties with indigenous peoples across the north and in parts of British Columbia and Quebec. These comprehensive land claim agreements define landownership, resource rights, financial compensation and governance authorities. They are constitutionally protected and legally enforceable.

The model has evolved over time. Before 2000, most modern treaties focused on land and resources, with separate or partial agreements for self-government. Since 2000, almost all modern treaties have included explicit self-government provisions. Whether a nation has a modern treaty, a self-government treaty or both, the obligations are legally binding on the Crown. For years, Parliament, indigenous leaders and experts have warned that Canada's record on implementation is inconsistent and often poor.

In 2008, the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples recommended the creation of an independent body, such as a modern treaty commission, to help monitor implementation. Modern treaty partners have repeatedly called for stronger and stronger oversight.

Conservatives take this history very seriously. Our record in government shows that modern treaties can be negotiated and implemented when Ottawa is focused on results. Under former prime minister Harper, five modern treaties were signed in six years. They included a first nation land claims and self-government agreement in 2006, a first nations final agreement in 2009, another first nations final agreement in 2009, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Agreement in 2013 and the Déline Final Self-Government Agreement in 2015.

Under the Liberal government, we have seen many new offices, frameworks and big promises, but at the end of the day, it has negotiated zero modern treaties. This is the context in which we look at Bill C-10.

Government Orders

• (1220)

Parliament needs to ask hard questions. Would the bill fix an underlying problem, or would it give the illusion of action while the same departments continue with business as usual? We already have oversight tools. The Office of the Auditor General has repeatedly studied modern treaty implementation and related issues. Audits in the last decade have highlighted serious gaps in how obligations are tracked, coordinated and met. Those reports set out recommendations and named the departments that needed to act, yet here we are years later, hearing many of the same concerns from treaty partners.

The problem is not a lack of reports; the problem is that ministers and departments are not held to account when they fail to implement the very agreements they sign. In fact, the government has already created new federal offices and initiatives to work on land claim implementation issues: the modern treaty implementation office, the assessment of modern treaty implications office, the performance management framework, the modern treaty management environment, the deputy minister's oversight committee and the reconciliation secretariat. Despite that, progress on implementation remains slow.

No modern treaties have been established by the government. Indigenous governments spend too much time chasing basic compliance from federal partners. If these entities have not solved the problem inside the government, it then raises the question of why we should believe that a new external office will do so. Who has been fired for not delivering in the past? Many modern treaty partners originally proposed that a commissioner be housed within the Office of the Auditor General, similar to the commissioner of the environment. That model would have leveraged an existing institution and reduced duplication. The government instead chose a stand-alone agent of Parliament with a separate office, separate staff and separate budget. The real test should be whether a proposal improves outcomes on the ground, not whether it creates an office in Ottawa.

Reconciliation is measured in results. A commissioner would not build a home, sign an agreement or ensure that a department meets a timeline it has already missed. What would do that is ministerial responsibility and clear consequences for failure. If a modern treaty commitment is not being met, the responsible minister should have to explain that to Parliament. The department should have measurable implementation plans, codeveloped with treaty partners, that are reported publicly and tied to performance evaluations to senior officials. If officials refuse to act, they should not be promoted. If ministers ignore repeated warnings, they should answer for that in the House.

Conservatives support modern treaties and self-determination. We want to see a Canada in which indigenous and non-indigenous communities share in prosperity and in which agreements are honoured in practice, not just in words. Where Conservatives part on the bill is not the goal of accountability but on the tool the government has chosen; of course, that is based on their record. I have tuned into previous questions and answers on this very bill, and I know government members opposite may try to twist our words, so I will make this very clear. At a time when Canadians are struggling with the cost of living and when the federal public service has

grown dramatically in size and cost, the answer to every problem in Ottawa cannot be more and more offices, more and more layers of reporting and more and more costs. Parliament should be careful not to confuse activity with results.

It is tempting to think that if we pass a bill and create a commissioner, we have solved the problem. The record of past reports and offices tells us otherwise. Instead of building a new bureaucracy and what seems to be the easy get-out-of-jail-free card policy solution to the government's past failures, we should strengthen the accountability of the systems we already have. We should insist that departments act on Auditor General recommendations. We should require transparent implementation plans for each treaty. We should empower indigenous governments as true partners, not as clients waiting for Ottawa to police itself.

This is the approach the Conservatives will continue to bring to this debate. We stand up for treaty rights, for the honour of the Crown and for a vision of reconciliation that is grounded in results, not just in rhetoric.

• (1225)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Bill C-10, this is not just a focus being introduced by the government. This is, in essence, being led by indigenous communities and indigenous leaders. When we talk about reconciliation, this could be a part of it in a very positive way.

Based on the Conservative opposition that we continue to see in the filibuster of the legislation and the behaviour of the leader of the Conservative Party, who completely ignores indigenous communities on major projects, would the member not agree that the Conservative Party's approach to indigenous-related issues would appear to be nothing but artificial?

Michael Guglielmin: Mr. Speaker, we understand why indigenous people are pushing for this. It is because they are frustrated. They are frustrated with the government's failure to follow the findings from the reports of the Auditor General and actually implement the solutions that have been highlighted. Where we deviate from the government is that we think we need to follow the reports and enforce the rules already on the books. We do not need more bureaucracy. We do not need more government. That is going to ramp up costs and not achieve the results we are looking for.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague talking about ways the government could be more transparent in the implementation of modern treaties. Could he give us a brief summary of what is not working? He said that we do not need another commissioner. The Bloc Québécois supports the bill, but I would like to know more about what he is actually suggesting.

[English]

Michael Guglielmin: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General, who was deemed an expert on this issue years ago when the reports were done, already highlighted the significant gaps in the implementation of modern treaties. That is why we are questioning the need for a brand new bureaucracy that is going to ramp up costs. If we already have an Auditor General who has highlighted the gaps, all we need now is direct ministerial accountability, responsible to the House, and enforceable measures that are enforced when the government fails to implement the treaties it negotiates.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague would like to take some time to elaborate on what our jobs are here, and specifically the jobs of the government and the ministers. Why do we need an extra layer of bureaucracy when they can simply keep promises?

Michael Guglielmin: Mr. Speaker, ministers need to be accountable for government programs and obligations and the treaties they sign that they choose to implement. We see a theme happening over and over again in the House by the Liberal government. Every time a program introduced by the government, like a treaty in this case, is signed off on and fails to get implemented properly, the solution from the government seems to be that we need more government.

At a time when Canadians all across the country are facing increased costs to their standard of living and are facing more and more pressures, we see from the government the need to spend even more money, creating a new bureaucracy for oversight instead of using the tools we already have.

• (1230)

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I wonder if the member can share with us how the Conservatives were protecting the rights of indigenous peoples when they worked with the Liberals to help expedite the passing of Bill C-5.

Michael Guglielmin: Mr. Speaker, I think the Conservative record on indigenous relationships is clear. When Prime Minister Harper held office, we signed and implemented five modern treaties in six years.

We always stand with indigenous people. We stand with reconciliation and with all first nations people.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Bloc Québécois to speak to Bill C-10, an act respecting the commissioner for modern treaty implementation. This is actually the second time this bill was introduced. It was introduced as Bill C-77 in the previous Parliament. The Bloc Québécois supported the bill then and we still do today.

I would like to acknowledge the first nations who live in my riding and with whom I interact. I am talking about the Naskapi, who have a modern treaty, one of the first reached with Quebec in the 1970s. I would also like to acknowledge the Innu, particularly the Regroupement Petapan, which brings together the Innu first nations in Essipit, Nutashkuan and Mashteuiatsh, which is not located in my riding but in the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean. They have been trying to negotiate a modern treaty for 45 years. I am talking about negotiations, not even about implementation. I acknowledge them because it takes courage, perseverance, patience and even tolerance for them to work toward getting their rights recognized and included in a treaty.

We are obviously in favour of the bill because it is all well and good to say that we have a treaty, a treaty is just a vessel. We are also interested in content. It remains a promise, and it is time for action.

I must humbly say that I have now been the member for the riding of Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, formerly Manicouagan, for 10 years. I witnessed everything that led up to the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a process that was not easy. These rights were already being discussed long before I arrived. Essentially, we managed to enshrine that in law, but the fact remains that, under the banner of truth and reconciliation, emphasis on the word “banner”, actions are largely symbolic. Once again, we are dealing with form, communication, and appearances. However, on the ground, in the communities, in my opinion, there is no real reconciliation, and indigenous communities still do not have full access to the truth. These are therefore still only symbolic gestures.

I have heard the argument put forward by my Conservative colleagues. They say that such a measure is unnecessary, that mechanisms already exist to ensure transparency. They cite the example of the Auditor General and other positions, which, in their view, guarantee government accountability. However, these mechanisms sometimes appear to be deficient, not in terms of the Office of the Auditor General, but rather in terms of the consequences that the government should face when it fails to act as it should or within the prescribed time frame.

Government Orders

I can understand that argument, but at the same time, this is about defending a cause. As a Bloc Québécois member, I do not think that Quebec's voice would be heard if I were not here. I am not speaking about myself alone, of course, but my party colleagues as well. I would never be so arrogant as to say that simply about myself. In short, the Bloc Québécois is there to defend Quebec and Quebec's interests only. The same applies here. If we are not getting the results we want because of a lack of mechanisms ensuring transparent implementation and government accountability, we would obviously support the creation of a commissioner position to fill that void. In fact, indigenous peoples are calling for the creation of just such a position, which sends a clear signal. They do not feel that they are being respected. I therefore believe that we must hear them, listen to them and consult them as part of the truth and reconciliation process, because that is essential to any agreement. I think their request is legitimate.

• (1235)

I have spoken about the form and legitimacy of the first nations' request and about the issue of symbolic gestures, which we want to move past, but I still have some criticisms of the bill and would like to hear my colleagues' opinions afterwards.

The mechanism, of course, includes an annual report that lists, for example, the government's shortcomings in implementing modern treaties. This annual report is first submitted to the minister. Then, the minister has up to 15 sitting days from the time it is submitted to table it in the House so we can consider it. Bloc Québécois members would obviously like to receive the report immediately. We do not see why we should have to wait extra time, since the number of days the minister can wait before tabling the report in the House of Commons is highly variable, highly relative and therefore highly arbitrary. There are in fact two types of reports, and I will explain the distinction between them.

The first type is the annual report. Tabling a report in June right before the House rises obviously does not have the same impact as tabling a report during the fall, when we are sitting all the time, except for two weeks. In the latter case, we would get the report quickly. That is the first criticism. Why not give us the report right away so that we can examine it and take action as opposition members?

Let us now talk about the second type of report. The commissioner can submit a special report when they believe it is of pressing importance and should not be delayed. In my opinion, when the submission of a report cannot be delayed and a limited report is made available quickly, it is because there is an issue that needs to be dealt with urgently. If it is an urgent matter, I question the usefulness of submitting the report to the minister following the exact same rules, that is, a waiting period of 15 working days from the time the report is submitted to the minister to when we receive it. In my opinion, this does not work. If there is an emergency, we really should receive the report right away, so that we can take action.

All that first nations are asking for is transparency, so that modern treaties can be implemented quickly. Indeed, the whole issue of how fast this can be done is a factor. As I said at the outset, I have first nations in my riding that have been negotiating for 45 years. For the time being, they have no treaty. Are we going to make them

wait another 50 years before these treaties are fully implemented? That is unacceptable. We want to speed things up. We also want government accountability. Naturally, the opposition parties require that same accountability. We need to be able to hold the government to account.

For all these reasons, although we accept the bill, we would like to study it in committee so we can improve it. We want the process to be really easy and to go quickly and smoothly, and we want the government to be active, but, as I humbly repeat, I have been here for 10 years and I get the impression that time moves slower in the House. It seems like things that could be done quickly and efficiently if there were some degree of determination always end up taking incredible detours and being seriously delayed. Nothing gets done. That is why, if we need mechanisms or a position like commissioner for modern treaty implementation on a temporary or long-term basis to get the government moving, then we would support that.

• (1240)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate a number of the comments the member put on the record this afternoon. It would appear as if she is supportive, at least in principle, of the legislation.

Part of the issue for us is recognizing that in order for the legislation to advance to committee, we need to get support from, in particular, the Conservative Party, which continues to want to prevent it from going to committee.

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts in regard to that, given the importance of the fact that indigenous community leaders are pushing for the legislation.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, the fact is, it is the government's responsibility to get the Conservative Party to accept the bill. We agree on the principle and want to study the bill. However, perhaps the government has not been able to fully convince everyone. I think it is the government's job to convince the Conservative Party, so I urge the government to have a conversation with the Conservative Party.

[*English*]

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to partly address the comment made by the parliamentary secretary. I do not think anybody is obstructing anything. I just think every member in this House should have the same amount of time to participate in debate and speak to a bill as the member for Winnipeg North, the parliamentary secretary. That is fair to all members of Parliament.

I appreciate the feedback from the Bloc Québécois member on this bill, especially the ideas for improvement when it comes to the reporting timelines. She makes a compelling case for why she thinks this bill and this requirement are needed. However, I would like her to comment, as she has been here for 10 years, on the sad state of affairs that we have a federal Liberal government that refuses to be accountable in the first place and does not just do the right thing.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I would need 10 years just to answer my colleague's question. My answer would also likely be very broad.

Whether we are talking about indigenous affairs or other issues, everything is being dragged out, as I said earlier. I get the impression that there is no will to do anything. I am seeing this with committees in particular right now. I was not planning on bringing this up, but it is clear that the government has no desire to convene committees, no desire to call witnesses, no desire to work and no intention of introducing any bills.

Even though we are told that it is not the same government, it has been the same government for 10 years. I feel that its members have no desire to work.

[*English*]

Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member was a productive member at the indigenous and northern affairs committee during her time there, and I want to thank her for her efforts at that committee.

Next week, we will have the Assembly of First Nations in town for its annual general assembly. We will have hundreds of chiefs and more than 600 first nations community members from all across Canada. They will be asking us what we are doing to improve their legislation and what we are doing to improve their quality of life.

I wonder if the member opposite could talk to us a bit about how we should be collaborating to ensure that while these chiefs, who are an integral part of Canada, are here, we are showing them that we can work collaboratively across party lines to ensure we are doing the best for them.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague.

With all due respect, what I would say to the Assembly of First Nations is that the government must pass laws itself to monitor it and ensure that it is doing the work it is supposed to do.

• (1245)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question for my colleague is about indigenous relations.

I know that there are several indigenous nations in her riding and that, historically, relations have been difficult. This means that it

Government Orders

may have been challenging to build a relationship of trust over the years.

In this context, we see that the government deciding to go back on its word—

The Acting Speaker (Dane Lloyd): The member for Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan has 10 seconds to respond.

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the current government is less interested in indigenous issues. As an elected official, I find it rather appalling to see—

The Acting Speaker (Dane Lloyd): Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

[*English*]

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, Bill C-10 is a reproduction of Bill C-77, which was originally tabled in the last Parliament. As we did at that time, we support this bill in its current form, as it is a reproduction.

I would like to thank, first of all, Aluki Kotierk, who was the former president of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. She worked hard to ensure this bill would be introduced to help make sure that modern treaty obligations are being implemented. I also thank the Liberals for putting it in the calendar so we can inch it forward toward getting it to committee to make any amendments to help make sure the issues posed during debate are addressed.

Bill C-10 has been in the works for more than 20 years. Indigenous modern treaty partners have been working toward this. They have sought the independent oversight and accountability mechanisms of the federal government on modern treaty implementation.

There are some reasons we support this bill. First, it is a safeguard. Second, it would help ensure accountability and would put Canada in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous peoples have been partners in the creation of this bill, and it would advance reconciliation and self-determination. I think helping to realize the full potential of modern treaties is an important foundation of this bill.

Just to briefly explain what I mean by it being a safeguard for indigenous modern treaty partners, it would help implement specific modern treaty obligations. Canada is currently implementing 27 modern treaties. Of these 27 modern treaties, six include only a comprehensive land claim settlement agreement, one includes only self-government provisions and is unrelated to any land claim, and 20 address both comprehensive land claims and self-government in some way.

The first modern treaty was signed in 1975, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The Nunavut Agreement was signed in 1993. I had the pleasure of being there when it was signed. The Whitecap Dakota Nation in 2023 is the latest.

Government Orders

Accountability would be seen if this bill is implemented by ensuring that the federal government meet its treaty obligations. We need to be reminded of the context of why this bill is particularly important. It is because the Liberal government is ignoring the rights and title of indigenous people in resource extraction and economic development in the name of nation building, specifically through Bill C-5.

Modern treaties are a constitutionally entrenched commitment between the Crown and indigenous partners to build true nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown and government-to-government relationships. Establishing the commissioner would bring Canada in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, honouring commitments and advancing reconciliation with indigenous peoples. An independent commissioner with audit and reporting powers could hold government departments to account and overcome long-standing inertia in treaty implementation.

As I said earlier, this bill was created in consultation with indigenous modern treaty partners. Indeed, they asked for this legislation.

When Bill C-77 was originally tabled, there had been engagement with over 130 indigenous groups, including indigenous modern treaty partners, indigenous groups negotiating modern treaties, self-government agreement holders, national indigenous organizations, and provincial and territorial governments. I met with the Land Claims Agreements Coalition previously, as well as others, and there was overwhelming support for the passage of this bill.

● (1250)

Bill C-10 would advance reconciliation and self-determination through oversight and accountability of the federal government. Modern treaties create stability and predictability over rights, lands and interests. For example, the signing of the Nunavut Agreement included the creation of the Nunavut Impact Review Board, a strengthened role for hunters and trappers, and the important signing of a draft Nunavut land use plan. The bill would help realize the full potential of modern treaties and self-government arrangements.

About 1.8 million people self-identified as indigenous in the 2021 census, representing about 5% of the population. There needs to be better and timelier treaty implementation that would reduce legal disputes and uncertainty, enabling indigenous economic participation.

Indigenous gross domestic product has posted positive growth every year since 2012. It grew from \$41.7 billion in 2012 to \$54.1 billion in 2019. Indigenous entrepreneurship is on the rise, with self-employment rates among first nations, Métis and Inuit having increased since 2016. Indigenous entrepreneurs contribute approximately \$48.9 billion to the Canadian economy, a figure that could increase if systemic barriers such as limited access to federal procurement opportunities are addressed.

I would like to take this time to address some of the Conservatives' concerns about what they are calling additional bureaucracy.

The bill would create a new office with costs, but it would include co-operation with the Office of the Auditor General to reduce duplication, possibly allowing for efficiency gains. There would be improved certainty and accountability around treaty obligations,

which could de-risk investment, particularly in northern and resource regions, supporting project finance and partnerships.

As a reminder, Bill C-5 created new bureaucracy, two new offices, yet the Conservatives supported Bill C-5 and to have it expedited. For them to call into question whether the bill before us is appropriate because it would create a commissioner position to ensure that treaty obligations are being met is a serious concern that we must address and that can be addressed at the committee stage.

New Democrats stand in partnership with the indigenous modern treaty partners who have been consulted and are advocating for the creation of this new office of a commissioner for modern treaty implementation.

Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her work at the indigenous and northern affairs committee when she was there.

She talked a lot about why it is important for us to have oversight when we are looking at modern-day treaties and the things that Canada has agreed to. When I was speaking with some of the stakeholders who have been pushing for this, they said we really needed accountability and really needed people to ensure we are moving forward on implementing the treaty promises we make.

The member opposite talked a little about economic outputs and ensuring that indigenous people are part of the growth that is happening in Canada. In budget 2025, there were some significant items for her riding of Nunavut. I am wondering if she could talk about how indigenous people in her riding and across Canada are becoming a big part of the economic growth of this country.

● (1255)

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, Bill C-10 is particularly important, because both Liberals and Conservatives, having been governing parties, have not fully implemented their obligations to treaty implementation. We need someone outside the Auditor General's office for that.

The Auditor General does important work to make sure that operations are being held accountable, yet their work is only focused on what can be seen from an administrative point of view. The commissioner would make sure that implementation and legal obligations are being met. This office would help make sure there is a targeted approach to making sure that obligations are being met so we see economic benefits stemming from modern treaty partners.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, part of what the bill would do, as I understand, is imbue the commissioner with maintaining the honour of the Crown, which is an integral legal principle in indigenous-Crown relations.

Is the member comfortable with having the government delegate to a bureaucrat part of its responsibility to maintain the honour of the Crown? Should that responsibility not stay with the minister and with cabinet?

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, there would be no delegation to the commissioner regarding that.

I do hope the member educates himself in a better way, to make sure that the commissioner and the office of the commissioner would investigate, would analyze, and would look at what is being implemented by the federal government, whose sole responsibility is to ensure that the honour of the Crown is being met by all governments.

[*Translation*]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nunavut, whom I hold in high regard. I used to work with her on the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, and she obviously cares a lot about this issue.

There are several indigenous groups that participated in the consultations on this bill. I would like to know what their concerns are in terms of the possibility that the bill may not be passed.

[*English*]

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I share my sense of friendship with the MP as well.

What we have seen from the Liberal government, for example in working with the Conservatives on expediting Bill C-5, is that there are real concerns that any government will continue to violate the rights of indigenous peoples, including the right to free, prior and informed consent. We saw that most recently with the Prime Minister's signing an MOU with the Premier of Alberta without the free, prior and informed consent.

The treaty commissioner would need to be able to monitor these kinds of situations and make sure UNDRIP is being implemented regarding modern treaties as well as any obligations that any government has towards its fiduciary duties towards first nations, Inuit and Métis.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are discussing a fundamental principle: the relationship between the state and indigenous peoples. This relationship is not an exercise in bureaucracy. It does not call for a new organizational chart to be created or a new position to be established in Ottawa. It is a relationship based on honour, based on commitments made and based on the ability of the government to live up to its word.

However, for the past 10 years, the government has been doing exactly the opposite. It has made more promises, expanded the bureaucracy, hired more public servants, spent more money and achieved fewer results. Even now, with Bill C-10, I get the feeling

Government Orders

that the same mistakes are being repeated. The Liberals want to create a new commissioner, they want more bureaucracy, they want another layer of oversight and they want to increase spending. It is as though every time the bureaucracy fails, the solution is more bureaucracy.

I am a member of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. We had the opportunity to hear from several commissioners who all told us pretty much the same thing: They are underfunded and they do not always have an easy relationship with the government. There is a discrepancy between the facts and perceptions. Here are the facts: A new commissioner would not be able to push the government to take action because, basically, the government rarely listens to commissioners. More oversight and less action is not a real solution.

The government would have us believe that creating a commissioner for modern treaty implementation would be an easy fix, but let us face the facts: Commissioners do not have any binding authority. They cannot compel any department to honour treaties. They cannot impose sanctions, allocate resources or force action. All they can do is observe inaction. In other words, they monitor. When a treaty is not respected, the first nations will still be the ones who have to go to court, even though they have no real resources to do so.

Creating a new commissioner position is tantamount to admitting that we have not been doing our job for years. Yet another report is not suddenly going to change a system that is already failing to meet its obligations. The Liberals are just giving the illusion of taking action, while enjoying the comfort of bureaucracy, which is something they have been doing for the past 10 years.

I will give an example. In the past 10 years, 100,000 public servants have been hired within the government. Every year, more than \$20 billion is spent on external consultants. The public service has never been bigger, yet public services, housing, immigration, finance, infrastructure and indigenous programs have never been more ineffective. In the wake of this colossal failure, the Liberals say that they have the solution. They are going to create a new office, more bureaucracy, another commissioner and yet another structure. It feels like the more obstacles, the better. It is a madhouse full of paper pushers. The goal is to find busy work to keep someone in an office when, instead, resources should be sent onto the ground to provide support to people and try to understand them.

When I do not know everything there is to know about a given issue, which happens regularly because, as a new member, I have a lot to learn, I always call people on the ground. I call people in Montmorency—Charlevoix and I call experts. In this case, I called people in indigenous communities. I want their perspective. I want to hear their opinion and to hear about specific details that may have escaped me. This way, I can improve my personal skill set. I think that, by working on the ground, we can truly improve things the right way and find meaningful solutions.

Government Orders

Yesterday, I called someone I know well, who is on a band council and who took the time to read the bill, the structures it proposes and Ottawa's explanation. He said, "Gabriel, we don't want oversight. What we want is internal capacity. We want to be able to take action right here at home. Give us the tools, not a commissioner. Give us programs to develop expertise within our band councils. We want to be autonomous, not controlled."

I think that makes a lot of sense, but he said something else that I think should resonate here in the House. He said, "The problem is not a lack of oversight, it's that the government is getting in the way. It needs to stop interfering in everything. It needs to stop saying that it knows how to manage our communities better than we do. It should teach us, support us, guide us, but stop trying to control everything."

These are not my words, they are the words of a first nations person who works directly on a band council. This is what communities are saying. This is what chiefs want. This is what the government seems to have trouble hearing.

• (1300)

Modern treaties are powerful tools when they are implemented. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, signed in 1975, was the first modern treaty. Modern treaties have demonstrated that rights can be recognized, local institutions can be created, indigenous education and health systems can be established, and regional governance can exist.

They have also taught us a valuable lesson, namely that even the best treaties in the world are worthless if the government does not implement them. A number of modern treaties have been negotiated over the years. In fact, five modern treaties were negotiated in six years under the Harper government. Over the past 10 years, under the Liberals, there have been none. Conservatives believe in and support modern treaties.

What we do not support is the idea that creating more bureaucracy is going to solve the problem. It was not a lack of oversight that has caused the problems. Rather, it has been a lack of enforcement, a lack of real political will and a lack of accountability within government departments. Now the government is saying that a commissioner could be the answer. Well, that is not the case at all. Quite frankly, given recent history, it is a bit of an insult to people's intelligence to suggest that more bureaucracy is going to be an effective solution.

The real issue is having more internal capacity, not more external oversight. What indigenous communities say they really want are tools, effective programs, resources, training, transfer of jurisdiction, financial stability, predictability and genuine autonomy. In fact, I think what they want is pretty much the same thing that society in general wants: more control over their own lives, more independence and less management by government.

What indigenous communities want is the ability to administer their own affairs and take charge of their own development. They do not want to be managed by Ottawa like public service subcontractors. True autonomy is not about being watched. True autonomy is about being able to act.

Unfortunately, according to the Liberal philosophy, the state always knows better than the individual. The Liberals are incapable of designing a Canada where people make their own decisions, where communities manage themselves, where local governments are responsible and where indigenous institutions are respected.

According to their ideological vision, Liberals believe that Ottawa has to monitor, has to govern, has to dictate, has to comment, has to oversee. They want to teach from above rather than support from the side. They want to control rather than guide. I think they have forgotten that being a government means supporting the people. It is said that the foundation of our democracy lies in our institutions. A foundation is not above the people. A foundation is below them. In fact, if the foundation were put on the roof, the house would be quite rickety indeed. Perhaps the government members should keep in mind that they are here to support, to listen and to bring considerations from people on the ground to the House for discussion.

Bill C-10 ultimately represents more bureaucracy. However, there is a very logical alternative. Ministers should be made accountable. Each minister should report to Parliament on treaty implementation. Treaty obligations should be incorporated into ministerial mandates; no more excuses and vague responsibilities. The government should fund the internal capacity of communities to train, support, transfer and stabilize, not just supervise and control. We should be reducing bureaucracy, not trying to increase it. That is not a solution. Finally, the government should get out of the way.

As my friend from the band council said to me, we need to support them, not take over. Indigenous communities do not need a commissioner. The government needs a mirror. The best solution is simple. The government needs to do its job, keep its promises, meet its obligations and let the communities govern themselves.

• (1305)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it somewhat ironic. Here we are talking about Bill C-10. The Conservatives have made it very clear they do not want it and are going to vote against it, even though indigenous community leaders want the legislation to pass. The Conservatives want to continue the filibuster.

Then we witnessed this week the leader of the Conservative Party's saying outright that we do not need to consult with indigenous people and that if we want a pipeline, it is no problem at all; we should just build the pipeline without caring what the Province of B.C. has to say or what indigenous people have to say in regard to it.

Does the member not agree that the Conservative Party leader seems to be out of tune with what reconciliation is all about?

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Speaker, it is always very interesting to hear my colleague opposite quote his own boss, who says "Who cares?" more often than we do. Yesterday, I spoke to someone who is on a band council. This is what he told me: "Never forget that every nation has its values and every nation has a different culture."

Government Orders

The Liberals tell us that they consulted everyone, but the reality is that this is a complex issue and that we need to work on the ground, not by putting more people in an office, not by having more administration, not by listening less. We have to be on the ground to work because we actually do care.

• (1310)

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to explore this Conservative philosophy with my colleague to make sure I understand. Today, we are being told that we must respect the internal capacity of indigenous peoples, equip them, and allow them to develop.

However, yesterday's announcement was about a pipeline project out west. The Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs says that it does not want the pipeline and was not consulted. The Conservative Party is not only supporting the Liberal government on this pipeline, but it is also saying that it needs to happen faster.

Is that what my colleague meant by respect for the internal capacity of indigenous peoples?

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Speaker, respecting communities means listening to them and ensuring that we work with them. From what I am being told on the ground, for the past 11 years, treaties have not been signed or respected and there has been no accountability. I think the first thing to do when we want to ensure that communities are respected is to take action and keep our word. The Conservatives will always be there to do just that.

[English]

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, other than the concern about increasing bureaucracy, I do not hear any real concerns from the Conservatives about what the problems with Bill C-10 are. Currently, the only way to make sure that the implementation of modern treaties is resolved is through court cases.

I wonder if the member agrees that having a commissioner to monitor the implementation of legal treaties is a much better way than long disputes through the courts.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Speaker, my answer will be very simple.

First, it is up to ministers to make sure that they are doing what they said they were going to do. There is no point in appointing a commissioner who has no power, unlike a minister.

Second, I disagree. I did not just talk about bureaucracy. What I said was that we want to make improvements in terms of program effectiveness, resources, training, transfer of jurisdiction, financial stability, predictability and true autonomy. The Conservatives are proposing to work with people and give them real access to resources, not just to forms and bureaucracy. The idea that something will happen on the ground because there is new state intervention is just smoke and mirrors.

[English]

Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, I do not think the member understood my question, so I will ask it again.

I was asking about how to resolve disputes. Currently, there is no other mechanism to resolve disputes between modern treaties and the federal government. The only system is through the courts.

I wonder if the member agrees that a better way to resolve disputes between the federal government and the first modern treaty holders is to have the commissioner position.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy: Madam Speaker, once again, I will give a very quick answer to the question.

The Ethics Commissioner is having a hard time ensuring that our Prime Minister is not breaking his own ethics rules. I do not think that a new commissioner is going to solve anything for first nations. That is not going to help us move forward. If we want to move forward, we need to work together, keep our word and make ministers responsible for their decisions.

[English]

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House and speak on behalf of my constituents in York—Durham.

While I am from York—Durham, which is a riding in the greater Toronto area, what people may not realize is that I actually represent two first nations communities: the Chippewas of Georgina Island first nation and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. Both were included in my new riding of York—Durham during the last redistribution, so that is part of the great pleasure I have had as the new member for this new riding of York—Durham. Previously, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation was part of another member's riding, and, similarly, the Chippewas of Georgina Island first nation were part of another member's riding. Now I have the pleasure of representing both first nations.

Part of my job and my experience as a new member has been doing some outreach to each first nation, as I do to communities across my riding, to get to know them and their issues. I have had the pleasure of getting to know both bands, their leadership and their communities more generally; in particular, there are Chief Donna Big Canoe of the Chippewas and Chief Kelly LaRocca of the Mississaugas.

I had the pleasure of attending the Mississaugas' powwow this past summer to learn a little bit more about their history and their culture. What I have learned so far is that both first nations in my riding are striving to be modern and effective bands that work toward the good of their residents and the prosperity of not only their communities but also the larger community. For the Mississaugas, that is in Port Perry; for the Chippewas, that is the town of Georgina. I am happy to report that there are strong relationships between both municipalities and the first nations side by side.

Government Orders

I really view my role, in this case, as giving assistance to first nations, as I give to other municipalities, and being a good representative for them in Ottawa. I have learned that they are both entrepreneurial and community-minded. For example, the Mississaugas are the majority owners of the Minogi corporation, a new clean energy investment company, and the Voyager Services Limited company, a provider of nuclear and energy construction solutions. Last year, those companies announced collaboration with the Cameco company, a marquee Canadian company. To me that just shows the entrepreneurship of the first nations in my community, specifically the Mississaugas in that case.

The Chippewas have long operated the Island View Business Centre and then more recently opened a new business venture with the Seven Generations Commercial Centre and GoIn Fuels. I had an opportunity to help cut a ribbon there earlier this summer. They are not free from difficulties, like many communities. In the case of the Chippewas, the band is located on an island. That presents significant challenges for transportation and health care.

Unfortunately, there are great ironies in Liberal green energy policies, carbon taxes, eco-justice or whatever other name it has been called; they have sort of been falling away from that. When the minister was still in cabinet at least, they were pursuing these policies. One of the great ironies of that is that transportation to the Chippewas of Georgina Island is fuelled by a ferry that runs on diesel fuel, which was subject to the carbon tax. There was no ability for members of the band and community to get back and forth to the island other than on a ferry fuelled by diesel fuel. They just had to pay more out of pocket because of that carbon tax. That is an outstanding issue that the government has failed to address and has failed to make proper compensation for, in my opinion.

Now, being in Ontario, these bands have a different history than those that are subject to modern treaties, of course, because both bands were subject to treaties that existed in Ontario. There are two significant treaties: the Coldwater-Narrows treaty and the Williams Treaties. Both are now largely settled. They were largely settled by the previous Conservative government. That is a bit of a trend we have heard about today in the speeches.

• (1315)

It is clear that under the previous Conservative government, there was movement; there was political will to engage in good-faith treaty negotiation and settlements and, at least in my community, that resulted in the Coldwater-Narrows treaty and the completion of most of the Williams treaty settlement.

However, when it comes to Bill C-10, I just have one question: Why can the government not just do its job? It seems that every time there is a problem, the government for the last 10 years, and especially the new old government, seems to create some new bureaucracy. We have a problem in housing, so we need another bureaucracy. We have a problem with modern treaties and enforcing them, so we will create a new bureaucracy. However, another bureaucrat will not tell us anything we do not already know. For all the lip service that the government has paid to indigenous issues for the last 10 years, it remains, in my opinion, as fractured as it has ever been. There are, in fact, dozens of Auditor General reports from the last decade touching on aboriginal people's issues in

Canada. Perhaps we should start with dealing with those before we create a new commissioner to give us more reports.

I want to focus for a bit of time on the supposed mandate of this new bureaucrat. The first mandate in Bill C-10 is "strengthening the relationships between the Government of Canada and Indigenous modern treaty partners". As I said, I do not think this bureaucrat would tell us anything we do not already know. Is it not the minister's job to maintain good relationships with indigenous and aboriginal peoples across Canada? Is that not something she is capable of doing? Is it not the Governor in Council's job, acting through cabinet and the Prime Minister, to maintain those good relationships? Why can they not do that themselves?

The second mandate for this commissioner would be, "fulfilling the Government of Canada's obligations under, and achieving the objectives of, modern treaties, these obligations and objectives being interpreted in a broad and purposive manner". Of course the government should fulfill its obligations under a treaty. Indeed, it should fulfill its obligations and agreements with all Canadians. When the government says it will do something, it should do something. However, what is missing from this objective is any reference to protecting the rights of the Crown contained in any modern treaty. These treaties are two-way streets. They create rights and obligations, and I do not see how this commissioner would do the latter.

The third mandate would be, "upholding the honour of the Crown in respect of the timely and effective implementation of modern treaties." Just a moment ago, I was accused of not having read the bill, but I assure the member for Nunavut that I did read the bill, and it does say that the commissioner's mandate would be to uphold the honour of the Crown. This is a fundamental aspect of aboriginal law that every law student learns about: that the honour of the Crown is always at stake in our discussions and interactions with aboriginal peoples. It can give rise to different duties in different circumstances, but what constitutes honourable conduct will vary in the circumstances. For example, the Crown should not act dishonourably or engage in sharp dealings, and because treaties are not simply contracts, a generous interpretation is necessary. It gives rise to the duty to consult, of course, and requires diligent good-faith implementation of treaties.

Government Orders

There are other aspects of the honour of the Crown, but the ultimate purpose, in my view, is toward the reconciliation of pre-existing aboriginal peoples and the assertion of Canadian sovereignty in the modern era. The honour of the Crown is fundamental in dealings between the federal and provincial governments and aboriginal peoples. In my humble view, at least, this is not something that can or should be delegated to a bureaucrat, a mere functionary. Where is the minister? Where is cabinet? Where is the Prime Minister? The government cannot and should not abdicate its responsibilities to functionaries. This is an important aspect, and it is incumbent on the minister, who is responsible for her department, to maintain the honour of the Crown, not on a commissioner.

Even if we accept that such a position is necessary or desirable, which we do not on this side of the House, in my view, the new bureaucrat would be missing a key power, and that is the power to do anything about new modern treaties. There would be no power to engage in negotiations; there would be no power to do any of the things that the government says should be done with respect to reconciliation. Therefore, we are left to conclude that this new position would, again, be mere window dressing and mere lip service. This is a continuing departure from parliamentary accountability and parliamentary supremacy, and it is a troubling trend of the Liberal government. In my view, the minister must be responsible for these relations, for their successes and their failures. The government must be responsible, not a new bureaucrat.

• (1320)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what has become very clear is that the Conservative Party is going to do what it can to prevent this particular piece of legislation from passing. That is really quite unfortunate, because the legislation is actually indigenous-led. The Conservatives' continued refusal to allow it to go committee is going to make things very difficult, and they know that.

In addition, there are the actions earlier this week of the leader of the Conservative Party, who takes the approach that we do not need to consult with indigenous people and with provinces when it comes to major building projects to build Canada strong.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts as to why the Conservative leader is behaving more like a little dictator than like a leader of an official opposition.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, for those who are offended, I will recall the word “dictator”, but the point is still made.

Some hon. members: That's unparliamentary—

• (1325)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It is not unparliamentary. It is not necessarily nice, but it is not unparliamentary.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes is rising on a point of order.

Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, will it satisfy the Chair for me to call the member for Winnipeg North “a little dictator”?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It goes both ways.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Michael Barrett: I will, and so the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member was not being recognized for a question or for a point of order, and I clarified.

The hon. member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle: Madam Speaker, ad hominem attacks—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. members will allow the hon. member for York—Durham to answer a question.

Jacob Mantle: Madam Speaker, we should all strive to be honourable members in the House. I think that the actions of the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, his ad hominem attacks, simply will reveal more about his character than about the strong character of our leader, the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was really interesting. I just want him to say again quickly why this particular bill is not the right bill to actually get things done, seeing as how there has been so much more bureaucracy already added in the Liberal government.

Why would the bill not work?

Jacob Mantle: Madam Speaker, we know it would not work, because we have the history to prove it. The government has been in power for 10 years, and not one modern treaty has been moved forward. However, the previous Conservative government moved forward five or six modern treaties, not to mention the settlements in my community that I described: the Coldwater-Narrows settlement and the Williams Treaties settlement, both under the Conservative government.

The bill would not work, because the Liberals will not take responsibility for their failure on the file.

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 want to ask the member about his previous comment, in which he said that our government was resorting to ad hominem arguments. This is when someone attacks the person and has no actual logical argument, which is something Conservatives do in the House every day. They talk about the Prime Minister's being disloyal to the country, and they berate immigrants as being the source of our economic troubles.

Can the member opposite mention whether he has ever resorted to an ad hominem argument in the House and whether he actually believes that the Prime Minister of Canada is not working on behalf of this country?

Private Members' Business

Jacob Mantle: Madam Speaker, I of course question the ethics of the Prime Minister, because the facts lead me to do so. The Prime Minister is so conflicted, and there is evidence before us: an \$80-billion nuclear deal to Brookfield; \$500 million to the European Space Agency, which will benefit Brookfield; and undisclosed meetings with Brookfield executives, which is a direct violation of what the Ethics Commissioner told him to do.

If I have those facts, should I not come to the conclusion that the Prime Minister is unethical?

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[English]

RESPECTING FAMILIES OF MURDERED AND BRUTALIZED PERSONS ACT

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC) moved that Bill C-235, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (increasing parole ineligibility), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand in the House to speak today to my private member's bill, an act to amend the Criminal Code, increasing parole ineligibility, also known as the respecting families of murdered and brutalized persons act. This bill was originally championed by my colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, dating back to the 41st Parliament. Most recently, in 2021, the bill made it to committee, and was about to be referred back to the House with all-party support. However, Parliament was prorogued, and that ended the progress.

I want to thank my colleague from Manitoba for all his hard work on this bill, his compassion for victims and families, and for allowing me to bring this forward once again.

I also want to thank my many colleagues who have shown their support by co-seconding my bill, as well as the member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River for being here today to both second and speak to my bill. It is my great honour to pick up the work that was done by colleagues before me, and I am committed to bringing this bill through the process fully so families can have the justice they deserve.

Tori, Holly, Tammy, Leslie, Kristen, Christine, Colleen, Daryn, Sandra, Ada, Simon, Judy, Raymond, Sigrun, Terri, Louise, Sereena, Mona, Andrea, Brenda, Georgina, Marnie and Kimberly are all victims my bill could have provided justice for. This is not an exhaustive list, and people will not recognize most of these names.

Instead, they will recognize the names of their murderers, such as Bernardo, Homolka, Olson, Pickton, Rafferty, McClintic, Briere, Wellwood and Moffat. These are all criminals who have committed the most heinous of crimes, and these are the names that get reported in the news every time they apply for parole, the names that continue to haunt the families of the victims for the rest of their lives.

This is what is at the heart of Bill C-235. It is about protecting the families of victims from having to relive the agony of the horrific crimes inflicted against their loved ones during parole hearings year after year.

This legislation would amend section 745 of the Criminal Code to empower the courts with the ability to increase parole ineligibility from the current 25 years up to a maximum of 40 years when sentencing criminals who have abducted, sexually assaulted and murdered the same victim in the same incident. These victims are often our most innocent and vulnerable Canadians.

Increasing parole ineligibility from a maximum of 25 to 40 years would spare families from having to go through the process of attending unnecessary parole hearings and making victim impact statements, which are traumatic, to say the least, and heart-wrenching for these families. Worse yet, these sadistic murderers often apply for parole every two years once they are eligible for the sole purpose of toying with families, revictimizing them and making them relive the gruesome killings that were committed. There are studies that suggest these heinous killers get off on recounting their crimes in gruesome detail in front of their victims' families at these hearings.

It is worth noting that my bill is not about creating longer sentences for these sadistic murderers. These depraved convicts will likely never qualify for parole. Parole boards have been very consistent in not allowing these types of heinous criminals out on parole.

I know there are some concerns about whether or not this violates section 12 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms regarding cruel and unusual punishment, but I would like to emphasize that increased parole ineligibility is strictly under judicial discretion. The parole ineligibility period could now be set up to 40 years, but it would remain at the discretion of a judge and as advised by a jury.

• (1335)

This bill was modelled after Bill C-48, now the Protecting Canadians by Ending Sentence Discounts for Multiple Murders Act, which also afforded judges the ability to extend the parole ineligibility period for multiple murder convictions. Rather than being concurrent, they are now served consecutively. Bill C-48 has stood up to a charter challenge. As such, my bill is in compliance with section 12 of the Charter of Rights.

The maximum of 40 years was determined by looking at the maximum ineligibility periods for each of these three offences and adding them together to be served consecutively, rather than concurrently. For murder, it is 25 years without parole. For abduction, it is 10 years. For sexual assault, it is 4.6 years. That is a total of 39.6 years, hence 40 years.

Private Members' Business

I want to be clear: Bill C-235 is not about mandatory minimum sentencing. I will state again that this bill is in compliance with section 12 of the Charter of Rights. It is based on the discretion of a presiding judge, through recommendations from a jury, allowing a judge to set parole ineligibility of up to 40 years.

I cannot stress enough that this bill targets the most depraved in our society. It targets those who will likely never see parole, so it will not impact criminals who will likely never be released from prison. This is about sparing families from appearing at unnecessary parole hearings. I will repeat that: My bill is about the families who are dedicated to giving a voice to and representing their lost loved ones, who cannot represent themselves.

I want to speak to a case in my riding from 15 years ago. Kimberly Proctor, who was 18 years old, was abducted, tortured, raped and murdered by two of her classmates. I know her family, whom I have met, is listening closely today. Her killers pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and were sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for only 10 years. Although they were minors, they were charged as adults. The Proctor family has already had to face multiple parole hearings and will continue to do so at least every two years, if not more, for as long as Kimberly's murderers live.

Kimberly's murderers were not convicted of separate charges for abduction and sexual assault, and this is not an isolated incident. Many prosecutors will stay additional charges and only prosecute the highest charge, normally first-degree murder, because it results in the heaviest penalty possible. My bill would encourage prosecutors to prosecute to the fullest extent, thus including all charges. This would allow for a longer period of parole ineligibility should there be a conviction on all three charges of murder, abduction and sexual assault in the same incident. This would not only help serve justice to the families upon conviction; it would also protect them from unnecessary parole hearings and having to relive the trauma every two years.

Again, I want to reiterate that these depraved murderers, these brutal, sadistic members of society, will likely never be released back into society. The Parole Board of Canada will continue to hold them in institutions, knowing they are dangerous offenders who will likely reoffend. Let us ensure that we are not revictimizing families by having them go to all of these unnecessary Parole Board hearings and relive the murder and the brutal details of how their loved ones were killed.

I hope members from all sides of the House who rise to ask questions on this bill will commit to supporting the bill, noting that it has previously received support from across all party lines, including at committee. I look forward to continued support from across the House as we seek to prevent the revictimization of the families of murdered and brutalized persons.

Let us remember the long list of victims I mentioned earlier in my speech: Tori, Holly, Tammy, Leslie, Kristen, Christine, Colleen, Daryn, Sandra, Ada, Simon, Judy, Raymond, Sigrun, Terri, Louise, Serena, Mona, Andrea, Brenda, Georgina, Marina and Kimberly. Let us remember and respect their families.

• (1340)

I would like to conclude with these thoughts: My bill speaks to the most heinous of cases in which a criminal abducts, sexually assaults and murders the same victim in one incident, and as a result, judges would have discretion to set parole ineligibility at up to 40 years.

I would like to state that the bill is fair, as it does not change the outcome; the offenders are unlikely ever to be released. It is just, as the courts and judges retain their discretionary powers based on the circumstances of each case. Most importantly, the bill is compassionate. It is about sparing the victim's families and loved ones from unnecessary parole hearings year after year.

For the Proctor family, and the families of all the victims I mentioned today, I will continue to fight to protect families in my riding on Vancouver Island, and indeed across Canada, from unnecessary parole hearings and the continued trauma that is caused as a result. I hope the bill will bring them some solace.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to what the member said. Looking at the victims is probably the biggest motivation for all of us to give very serious thought to the legislation. I would think every member in the House is sympathetic to the victims and what victims have to go through. I thought he described the situation quite well.

Does the member believe there is a possibility of amendments that might provide more strength to the legislation or even make sure it is charter-compliant? If he wants to provide some thoughts on that, it would be appreciated.

I do value the manner in which we have a focus on victims.

Jeff Kibble: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for his question. I am disappointed he feels I only described it "quite well"; I thought I did very well.

I appreciate his comment about looking at victims. I did focus on looking at the victims. I would also have liked to focus on looking at the heinous offenders, but, to be frank, some of the details just cannot be repeated in the House.

As for amendments, I will note that this did go to committee before and received cross-party support. I hope that it goes to committee and no amendments are required, although I am open to them if there are improvements.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I fully understand the emotional weight he carries. I have some questions for him, and later on I will explain why I think his bill will be difficult, if not impossible, to implement.

I want to hear him on what he said, because he is aware that there are constitutional issues at play. There is a charter article against cruel and unusual punishment, and there have already been Supreme Court rulings on this.

My colleague told us that Bill C-48 had been passed and that this meant that his bill would also pass. Bill C-48 dealt with bail, that is, the provisional release of someone who has not yet been found guilty, whereas Bill C-235 deals with parole for murderers.

First, I would like him to explain how he manages to establish a causal link. Second, if this bill is passed and then struck down, is my colleague and his party prepared to use the notwithstanding clause to keep it in force, if he is serious about his initiative?

[English]

Jeff Kibble: Madam Speaker, yes, I would like to speak to the emotion and the impossible situation that these victims face. The member brings forward a more technical question about cruel and unusual punishment. As I said, Bill C-48, which the current bill is modelled after, dealt with cruel and unusual punishment, which would apply similarly for the bill. I see no change of outcome. We would stand by the bill, with a focus on protecting families.

● (1345)

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, the bill narrowly targets some of the most sadistic murderers; they are murderers who rape, brutalize and abduct their victims. The Library of Parliament looked into how many murderers who fall into this category received parole. The answer is that it could not find a single instance in which the Parole Board granted full parole, and there were very rare circumstances in which temporary absences and day parole were granted.

Does that not underscore the reasonableness of the bill?

Jeff Kibble: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for reiterating that, as per Bill C-48, the bill would withstand a constitutional challenge under the charter.

As my colleague pointed out, the criminals in question are the most heinous of criminals, and none of them have been found to have been released. Therefore we know that the parole boards will keep the heinous offenders in jail, and the bill would not affect the outcome of the punishments for people who frankly deserve to never be released.

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to repeat my question for my colleague. If he is truly serious about his initiative, then he must promise the victims today that if this bill passes and is later struck down, and if the Conservative Party ever forms a government, it will use the notwithstanding clause to uphold the bill.

[English]

Jeff Kibble: Madam Speaker, I will fight to ensure that the bill makes it through and becomes legislation, and that these most heinous crimes are punished accordingly. I will always stand to support victims.

[Translation]

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-235, introduced by the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

This bill addresses an issue that strikes at the very heart of our justice system—the way that our country punishes the most severe, devastating crimes resulting not only in death or serious injury, but also in lasting trauma for family members, survivors and society at large.

The bill before us proposes to allow the courts to impose a parole ineligibility period lasting up to 40 years when the same victim, during the same sequence of events, is murdered, kidnapped or forcibly confined, when a sexual offence is also involved. These crimes of extreme violence destroy lives, families and communities. Society justifiably feels a deep need for justice and protection in response to them.

Before taking our legal analysis any further, I want to acknowledge the immense pain of the victims and family members who have lived through such tragedies. I think that my colleague across the way did a good job, and I thank him for the eloquent way that he rekindled a debate on this subject.

When a family has to relive their trauma at every parole hearing, it is not only difficult, it is inhumane. This is not a theoretical debate. It is about shattered lives, parents and children living with impossible grief, survivors trying to rebuild their lives after an unthinkable incident.

This bill aims to address that suffering. It is intended to offer a form of stability and some degree of healing by reducing the frequency of hearings that reopen the wounds that might still be raw. This intention is profoundly just and deserves to be heard. It deserves serious discussion. We must respond with empathy, but also with rigour.

However, in a country governed by the rule of law, we must balance two imperatives. The first is the moral imperative to protect victims. The second is the legal imperative to respect the Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I am saying that emotion is important, but emotion alone cannot be the basis for a criminal sentence. Passing a law based solely on emotion without a solid legal framework runs the very real risk of that law eventually being struck down, unfortunately. If we pass a law that is later struck down, we would be disappointing victims a second time, as I just said.

Private Members' Business

It is not through weak laws that we protect families. We do so through robust, enforceable and constitutional laws. The current system is strict but well defined. Canada already has a system that allows for adjustments in terms of ineligibility for parole for murderers. The system automatically calls for 25 years of imprisonment for first-degree murder and between 10 and 25 years of imprisonment for second-degree murder. Section 743.6 of the Criminal Code also includes mechanisms for delaying access to parole in certain serious cases.

This system is based on a fundamental principle that has been recognized by the Supreme Court for decades: individualization in sentencing. Sentences must take into account not only the act committed, but also the degree of responsibility of the convicted person, their history and, yes, their rehabilitation potential. This is not an ideological position. It is a constitutional principle.

The Bissonnette decision serves as an essential reminder. Bill C-235 cannot be studied without considering the Bissonnette decision. In that decision, the Supreme Court struck down consecutive ineligibility periods lasting 50, 75 or 100 years. Why were they struck down? They were struck down because a sentence that allows no real prospect of release, even in theory, constitutes cruel and unusual punishment within the meaning of section 12 of the charter. The court did not say that the crimes were not atrocious or that the sentences should not be long. It said that the state can never completely rule out the possibility of reintegration into society, even for offenders guilty of the most heinous crimes. The decision is not political; it is a constitutional requirement.

• (1350)

A 40-year ineligibility period could be considered extreme in some cases, particularly if it were imposed on very young individuals or in specific circumstances. The legal risk is therefore not theoretical, but rather real, serious and predictable. Our responsibility here in the House is to strengthen the bill so that it cannot be successfully challenged. We are not rejecting Bill C-235, on the contrary. We recognize the legitimate intention behind the member's bill. However, for it to become a lasting, effective piece of legislation, respectful of fundamental principles, it needs to be improved. We are therefore proposing three amendments.

The first amendment, which is essential, is about a clear and consistent right of appeal. When imposing an exceptionally severe sentence, there must be a national review mechanism to harmonize the case law. The second amendment is about a requirement to provide grounds for any inadmissibility exceeding 25 years. An exceptional sentence must be accompanied by equally exceptional grounds. This will reinforce the legitimacy of the decision in the eyes of the public and will protect the law from challenges. The third amendment specifies the law can only be applied prospectively. This is essential to avoid the risk of violating section 11 of the charter, which prohibits increasing a sentence retroactively. These amendments in no way diminish the scope of my colleague's bill. On the contrary, they make it stronger, more consistent, more sustainable and more useful for families and survivors.

We want a strong, compassionate and constitutional justice system. Our goal is not just to impose harsh penalties, but to impose harsh penalties that will stand the test of time and hold up in courts

in the future. Victims have already endured the unspeakable. They do not deserve to have a court decision imposed on them a few years later if it will have the effect of striking down the law they had pinned their hopes on. We must therefore offer them real, not symbolic, protection; justice that is firm but legally sound; a law that respects the Constitution but does not falter in the face of challenges.

In conclusion, Bill C-235 is very important. It is guided by a just and compassionate intention to better protect victims of the most serious crimes. However, in order to become a truly effective law, it must be modified by means of the three amendments I have presented. It must reflect our legitimate outrage, but also our deep respect for the rule of law. It is in this spirit that we are participating in this debate, and it is in this spirit that we invite all members of Parliament to improve this text so that it becomes a fair, sustainable, balanced and strong law, but above all, a compassionate one.

• (1355)

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are debating the bill introduced by my Conservative Party colleague, who was elected in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, in British Columbia. I salute him and I would like him to know that I have the utmost respect for him, despite the fact that I strongly disagree with his approach.

His Bill C-235 proposes to amend the Criminal Code so that, in cases of murder preceded by kidnapping or sexual assault, the judge may impose a period of parole ineligibility that exceeds the current 25-year period and can instead go up to 40 years. If my colleague's bill were to pass, a person convicted of the abduction, sexual assault and murder of the same victim in respect of the same event or series of events could receive a life sentence without eligibility for parole for 40 years, if a judge so decided after considering the jury's recommendation.

That raises two questions. What are the motivations behind my colleague's initiative? Is it feasible?

First of all, let me take a moment to explain the current rules regarding parole for murderers. The Criminal Code already states that the minimum sentence for first- and second-degree murder is life in prison, with the possibility of parole after a certain period of time.

Private Members' Business

First-degree murder means a planned, premeditated murder, whereas second-degree murder means an unplanned murder, such as a crime of passion. In the case of a murder preceded by a kidnapping or sexual assault, which is the focus of Bill C-235, the Criminal Code already provides that this type of murder, premeditated or not, constitutes first-degree murder, meaning it is punishable by life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years. What happens after 25 years? Individuals convicted of first-degree murder can apply to the Parole Board for a review of their case and for parole. The Parole Board examines the inmate's file and then conducts a review based on the inmate's reports, risk of reoffending and risk to society, for example. If the conditions are met, the board will allow the inmate to defend their parole application at a hearing before the board. The board then determines whether to grant parole and, if so, what conditions the murderer will be required to meet while on parole, such as reporting regularly to a parole officer, abstaining from alcohol or reporting any relationship with a woman.

It should be noted, as my colleague has already pointed out, that parole applications for criminals are rarely granted. Currently, two-thirds of parole applications are denied, and many criminals throughout Canadian history have repeatedly failed to obtain parole or day parole. My colleague referred to Mr. Bernardo, who has already been denied parole three times, in 2018, 2021 and 2024. This is how our criminal justice system currently works for murderers.

I want to come back to our questions. What are my colleague's motivations? What does he hope to achieve with his bill? He has said a few words about it and gave an interview to a Vancouver Island media outlet in which he explained his approach. My colleague already admits that a murderer who kidnapped and raped his victim beforehand would most likely never be granted parole after 25 years. However, the idea is to prevent the murderer from being able to apply for parole, because if there is an application, there is a hearing. If there is a hearing, the victims' loved ones and family members may have to relive the excruciating pain of being reminded of what happened. My colleague has already explained that the main purpose of his bill is not to delay parole, but rather, and I quote, "to ensure that victims are spared the pain of having to relive their trauma [and] prepare for hearings that may ultimately change nothing".

The goal is therefore to spare the bereaved from having to attend parole board hearings. That is why the short title of the bill is the "Respecting Families of Murdered and Brutalized Persons Act".

• (1400)

What needs to be said in this regard is, first of all, that the presence of loved ones and family members at Parole Board of Canada hearings is not mandatory. From a human perspective, the need and desire of loved ones to attend is entirely understandable. From a legal perspective, however, their testimony is not directly relevant to the issues before the board. I have already suggested in the House that their testimony could be given through written statements or pre-recorded video testimony that could be played at each hearing, without necessarily requiring their physical presence. I think that would be a realistic approach to meeting the member's objective of not adding to the pain of the victims' family members and loved ones, and I think it deserves consideration.

With all due respect, as the Bloc Québécois sees it, the solution proposed by my colleague today seems unrealistic and unconstitutional. I truly believe it is unfortunate to give false hope to families that have already endured a lot of pain. There is no realistic hope of this bill being enforceable. This brings us to answer the second question: Is it feasible?

My colleague from the Liberal Party spoke earlier about the Bissonnette decision. This is a recent decision that was handed down in 2022. The Supreme Court explained the state of the law regarding sentences and the possibility of obtaining parole. To summarize, in 2017, Alexandre Bissonnette entered the Quebec City mosque armed with a semi-automatic weapon. He killed six people and wounded five others. At trial, he pleaded guilty to all charges against him, including six counts of first-degree murder. At the time, there was a section of the Criminal Code that allowed for the periods of parole ineligibility to be combined. The mosque killer faced six consecutive periods of ineligibility for parole of 25 years. He therefore faced 150 years without parole.

This case went all the way to the Supreme Court. In 2022, the Supreme Court struck down this section of the Criminal Code, saying that it violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is important to mention that the Supreme Court also rejected the proposal made by the trial judge not to impose a 150-year sentence without the possibility of parole, but to extend the period of ineligibility for parole to 40 years. The Supreme Court rejected this solution, which is being proposed today.

I would like to briefly quote the Supreme Court:

Section 12 of the Charter guarantees the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment. In essence, the purpose of s. 12 of the Charter is to protect human dignity and ensure respect for the inherent worth of each individual.... the imposition of a sentence of imprisonment for life without a realistic possibility of parole...is, by its very nature, intrinsically incompatible with human dignity. It is degrading in nature in that it presupposes at the time of its imposition that the offender is beyond redemption and lacks the moral autonomy needed for rehabilitation.

It seems highly unlikely that the Supreme Court would find that a parole ineligibility period of 40 years is in keeping with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In light of that, if my colleague is serious, then there are two ways to ensure that, if it is passed, his bill is valid and enforceable.

We could invoke the notwithstanding clause and say that, in this case, we are going to override that section of the charter. I asked my colleague about that, but he did not seem to be committed to that course of action. I do not understand because, if the member is really serious about this, then he needs to do what needs to be done, but that is not what is happening.

The other way to ensure that this bill, if passed, would be valid is to amend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. To do so would require the consent of seven out of 10 provinces, representing more than 50% of the Canadian population. My colleague also did not propose this as a solution.

What this means is that we are considering a bill that, in our view, is likely to violate the Constitution and is not applicable in our legal system. I say this with all due respect. The member is not proposing any solutions to make this possible. I cannot help but feel sad for the families and loved ones of murdered and brutalized victims, to whom my colleague promised to take action by dangling the prospect of a new law that has no chance of ever being enforceable. I can only share their bitterness about politicians who, once again and once too often, raise people's hopes only to let them down. That is why the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this bill.

• (1405)

[English]

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the seconder of the bill, I rise to speak in strong support of Bill C-235, the respecting families of murdered and brutalized persons act, introduced by the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

I want to thank the member for his leadership in bringing the bill forward. It is legislation that would help spare the families of murder victims from being retraumatized with frequent parole hearings brought by some of the worst and most sadistic murderers in our correctional system.

I also want to acknowledge the leadership of the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, who has been a tireless and consistent champion for the rights of victims and has championed the bill in previous Parliaments. In fact, I recall speaking to the bill in a previous iteration in 2019.

The bill would amend section 745 of the Criminal Code to give judges the discretion to increase the parole ineligibility period for first-degree murderers who sexually assault or kidnap their victim in the course of the same criminal event or series of events. As it presently stands in the Criminal Code, all first-degree murderers are eligible to apply for parole after 25 years. All the bill would do is provide that, in the case of the worst of the worst offenders, a judge would have the discretion to increase the parole ineligibility period from anywhere from 25 years all the way up to 40 years. I will make a few observations.

First, as the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford noted, in the Criminal Code, the automatic sentence for murder is life. That reflects the gravity of the offence and the fact that murder is the worst, the most serious, offence in the Criminal Code. I would submit that it follows that a life sentence ought to mean something when considering the length of time a convicted first-degree murderer who rapes and kidnaps their victim should spend behind bars before they have the privilege of applying for parole.

Second, I would note that while murder is horrific and evil, not all murderers are equal, yet the Criminal Code treats them equally in the case of first-degree murderer, insofar as they are eligible to

Private Members' Business

apply for parole after 25 years. I certainly agree that anyone convicted of first-degree murder should not be able to apply any earlier than 25 years. Frankly, however, there are some murderers who are so vile, so sadistic, so evil and so irredeemable that they really fall into their own separate category. The member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford listed some of those murderers with whom, unfortunately, Canadians are familiar.

For those types of sadistic murderers, there is really only one thing that can be done, which is to separate them from society for the rest of their life. That is precisely what the Parole Board has done in cases of murderers who abduct, rape, torture, brutalize and murder their victims. Those murderers are almost never provided with parole. In fact the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman asked the Library of Parliament to undertake research to determine how often murderers who fit into that category receive parole. The Library of Parliament could not find one case where a murderer in that category was granted full parole, and it found very few cases where temporary absences or day parole was granted.

• (1410)

Simply put, our correctional system has deemed murderers who fall into this category, who rape and brutalize their victims in the course of murdering them, to not be releasable. I would submit, therefore, that this underscores the reasonableness of the bill.

While such murderers are not releasable, they can apply for parole after 25 years. In fact, they can apply in year 23. When their application is turned down, as it almost certainly will be, they can apply again and again, year after year. Depending on the age of the offender, the murderer, that could mean dozens of parole applications and parole hearings over the course of the lifetime of the murderer. In the process, the families of victims are punished by the process. They are victimized again and again, retraumatized by having to go through parole hearings in which the application has virtually no chance of success.

Having regard for that, I ask if it is really that unreasonable to give a judge the discretion, in the case of the worst of the worst, to determine that a murderer ought not to be eligible for parole at 25 years, or for a longer period of time, anywhere up to 40 years. It could be 30 years. It could be 35 years. It would be entirely at the discretion of the trial judge having regard for the specific facts, the specific circumstances and the specific offender. I would say that is common sense. That is just. It does right for the families of victims who were murdered.

Private Members' Business

Speaking of frequent parole hearings for convicted murderers, that is why I offered Brian's bill in honour of the late Brian Ilesic, who was brutally murdered along with Michelle Shegelski and Eddie Rejano at the University of Alberta's Hub Mall. Matthew Schuman survived but lives with injuries that are life-altering. Brian's bill would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to provide that murderers who apply for parole and are turned down cannot apply again and again. Their parole would only be considered at the time of the statutory review that occurs every five years rather than every year.

I am grateful to the member for Edmonton Griesbach for introducing Brian's bill in this Parliament, Bill C-243. It is at the second reading stage. I hope it passes. It is common-sense legislation, just as this is common-sense legislation.

This legislation would go a long way toward sparing the families of victims from frequent parole hearings. It would stop convicted murderers from being able to, in many instances, take advantage of hearings to deliberately try to cause trauma to the families of victims, because they sadistically enjoy revictimizing and continuing to revictimize the families of their victims. It would also, of course, address the abuse of the process and all the costs associated with these hearings in respect of murderers who, frankly, have no hope because they are not releasable.

I was pleased to learn, based on the speech from the member for Bourassa, that the government supports the intent of the bill, and therefore, it sounds like the government will be supporting the bill at the second reading stage to go to committee. The member for Bourassa cited three amendments—

● (1415)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is out of time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member did an outstanding job of expressing his thoughts to justify bringing forward the bill and really showing a great deal of sympathy to the victims. That is where I would like to continue, in terms of my question.

I genuinely believe that no matter their political stripe, people can relate to the circumstances surrounding these horrendous crimes and be very sympathetic to them. Where we can act, we should act.

I listened to the Bloc's position on the legislation. They are not supporting the legislation, but I still respect what the Bloc is saying and the concerns they raise. I would like to think that it does not take away from the sympathy they actually have towards victims. We heard the member for Bourassa talk about the government's potential position, with respect to the legislation, that there are some concerns with the legislation. Those concerns need to be addressed.

I put forward my question for the member, and I was encouraged by his response and hope that it is all in good faith. The motivation for the legislation should be focused on the victims. When we talk

about the victims, I would even expand it a little more to talk about our communities. Often when we hear of these parole eligibility hearings taking place, it generates quite a bit of media attention. Through that media attention, all forms of opinions and thoughts are developed in our communities.

For me, I want to make sure there is some justice for our communities and for our victims. I think it is really important for them to not have to relive these horrific incidents that have occurred. Even though, as has been pointed out, and the member is aware, the victim does not necessarily have to attend a parole board hearing. However, I can understand why they would want to attend. I can understand how the media attention generated by the appearance of someone who has committed a horrendous crime filters into the community and then into the homes of the victims. It is very real. It is very tangible.

Based on the assumption that the motivation is right, in terms of bringing forward the legislation, and that the member is genuinely open to amendments, there is an opportunity, in an apolitical fashion, to see the legislation ultimately get to committee. That could be a very healthy situation. We will have to wait and see how that ultimately develops.

Private members, and it does not matter from what side of the House, will often identify an issue that is important to them, and that could be because of a personal experience, because of a constituent in the riding they represent raising a particular issue or because of a stakeholder, in this case, the victim. The types of victims we are talking about in this situation come from all regions of the country.

● (1420)

I can appreciate when a member identifies an issue and then chooses to bring it forward in the form of a private member's bill. What I like about private members' bills is the fact that they are programmed. We know that at most, there will be two hours of debate on this legislation. I would argue that that is a good thing. Otherwise, we might not ever see a vote on the legislation that would enable it to go to committee if it passed.

It is important for me to raise that because I personally believe we need to look at rule changes so that we can apply the same principles and program votes to government legislation, though maybe not two hours. I say that as the member is concerned about the file on crime. We are also concerned about the substantive legislation before the House today. There has been so much work dealing with issues like bail reform.

I know the member is very determined about his legislation that he has brought forward, and I believe he will get apolitical support to ultimately see it continue to proceed. I think we need to look at the crime file in a more apolitical fashion in general, because what the member has proposed is very similar to what we are trying to push in other legislative initiatives, and they are not always treated in the same fashion.

Looking at the legislation, there is a need for some amendments to it. There was a concern about whether or not there should be an ability to appeal, for example. If some form of amendment could be brought forward on that, we would see it being more compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If we do not have some sort of appeal mechanism in there, it might not stand up against the charter and we could see it being ruled on in a superior court, or even at the Supreme Court. That issue has to be dealt with. I am very interested to hear how the member believes we can look at incorporating that into the legislation.

I have a great deal of confidence in our judicial independence and judges being able to use discretion. When we talk about changing the law in the form we are talking about today, where we exceed the 25 years that is currently in place, there should be an obligation for the judge to provide some form of explanation detailing why we need to be able to extend eligible parole past that 25 years. To me, that makes a whole lot of sense.

I am not a lawyer by profession, but I used to be a justice critic in the province of Manitoba many years ago. I can tell members that not only did I learn about joint responsibilities for our justice system; I also learned the importance of being charter-compliant. I would highlight two areas of concern, but there might be some additional concerns out there. That is the reason I look to the member in the hope that we will see amendments to the legislation so that more members of the House will feel comfortable to the degree that we could see it pass.

At the end of the day, if we can do that, the real winners would not be the members of the House, but the public as a whole. Canadians would benefit. That is the reason why, when we talk about legislation in general—

• (1425)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but the hon. member has overrun his time.

The hon. member for York—Durham.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is of course an honour to speak to this very important bill from my colleague.

I want to focus members' attention back on why the bill is important and why the changes should be made. I will reiterate one of the horrific instances of something the bill would seek to address, and that, of course, is the murder of Tori Stafford, from my neck of the woods. I will remind members what happened in the case by reading from a local article at the time, which said:

Private Members' Business

Terri [Terri-Lynne McClintic, one of the murderers] went to a local hardware store and bought a claw hammer and some garbage bags, after which they drove to a remote location near Mount Forest, Ontario. Over there, Terri stated that she got out of the car while Michael sexually assaulted Tori. He then placed a garbage bag over her head and hit her with the hammer. They placed the body in more bags, hit it under a pile of rocks, and then drove away.

These are the types of horrific crimes that the bill seeks to bring justice for. Right now we do not have justice.

One of the key principles of our criminal justice system is proportionality, which means that the punishment should fit the crime. Right now we do not have the appropriate balance for these specific instances: abduction, rape, brutalization and murder. That is why my colleague's bill is important: It would return that balance.

There were concerns raised about discretion. If members read the bill, and I know that all members will before voting on it, they will see that it would maintain that discretion. It would allow a jury to make a recommendation, which would not be binding on the judge, and it would allow the judge the discretion to choose the period of parole ineligibility. It would not require it, but it would maintain that discretion. It is something that I, as a lawyer, support because context matters in these cases.

In these cases, we need more availability of a longer ineligibility period for parole, to ensure that brutal murderers like Michael Rafferty and Terri-Lynne McClintic do not have access to parole. As my hon. colleague mentioned, part of the problem is that once eligibility is reached, a person can seek it again and again, therefore re-victimizing those who went through those terrible experiences and giving the opportunity for the murderers, rapists and abusers to get out again. Frankly, they should never see the light of day. That is why the bill, which would increase the ineligibility period from 25 years to between 25 and 40 years, is important.

Let me remind members that Parliament makes laws. Parliament upholds justice for Canadians. The courts will do what they want, but we should pass the bill.

• (1430)

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.

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Friday, November 28, 2025

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation Act	
Bill C-10. Second reading	4321
Doherty	4321
Lamoureux	4323
Deschênes	4323
Idlout	4323
Konanz	4323
Lamoureux	4325
Ruff	4325
Idlout	4325
Kramp-Neuman	4325
Lamoureux	4327
Lloyd	4327
Idlout	4327
Jansen	4327
Lamoureux	4329
Lloyd	4329

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Tree of Hope	
Naqvi	4329
Sandon Hydroelectric Plant	
Anderson	4330
International Trade	
Lamoureux	4330
Christmas Events in Abbotsford—South Langley	
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	4330
International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	
Al Soud	4330
Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	
Lawrence	4330
Ottawa Salus Supportive Housing Complex	
Vandenbeld	4331
Cost of Food	
Kibble	4331
Employment Insurance	
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	4331
Greener Buildings in Whitby	
Turnbull	4331
Prime Minister of Canada	
Seeback	4331
Gender-Based Violence	
Hepfner	4332

Ethics	
Holman	4332
Bourassa Youth Robotics Team	
Sari	4332
Canada-U.S. Trade Negotiations	
Ho	4332
Conservative Party of Canada	
Battiste	4333

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ethics	
Berthold	4333
MacKinnon	4333
Berthold	4333
MacKinnon	4333
Brassard	4333
Hajdu	4333
Brassard	4334
Hajdu	4334
Cooper	4334
Fraser	4334
Cooper	4334
Fraser	4334
Intergovernmental Relations	
Deschênes	4334
MacKinnon	4334
Deschênes	4335
MacKinnon	4335
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	4335
MacKinnon	4335
Ethics	
Lawrence	4335
Ehsassi	4335
The Economy	
Lawrence	4335
Church	4335
Ethics	
Mantle	4336
Turnbull	4336
Mantle	4336
Turnbull	4336
Hardy	4336
Provost	4336
Hardy	4336
Chatel	4336
Ho	4337
Anand	4337

Climate Change			
DeBellefeuille	4337		
MacKinnon	4337		
DeBellefeuille	4337		
Provost	4337		
Forestry Industry			
Groleau	4337		
Chatel	4337		
Groleau	4338		
MacKinnon	4338		
Doherty	4338		
Hogan	4338		
Doherty	4338		
Hogan	4338		
Automotive Industry			
Kirkland	4338		
Turnbull	4338		
Foreign Affairs			
Auguste	4339		
Anand	4339		
Natural Resources			
Lloyd	4339		
MacKinnon	4339		
Lloyd	4339		
Hogan	4339		
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	4339		
Hogan	4339		
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	4339		
Naqvi	4340		
Konanz	4340		
Battiste	4340		
Konanz	4340		
Fragiskatos	4340		
Anderson	4340		
Hogan	4340		
Jansen	4340		
Fraser	4340		
Jansen	4341		
Fraser	4341		
National Defence			
Fisher	4341		
McGuinty	4341		
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship			
Rempel Garner	4341		
Fragiskatos	4341		
Rempel Garner	4341		
Fragiskatos	4341		
Rempel Garner	4341		
Fragiskatos	4342		
Finance			
Jaczek	4342		
Turnbull	4342		
International Trade			
Guglielmin	4342		
MacKinnon		4342	
Northern Affairs			
Idlout		4342	
Anand		4343	
Natural Resources			
Kwan		4343	
Hogan		4343	
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Committees of the House			
Public Safety and National Security			
Duclos		4343	
Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics			
Brassard		4343	
Barrett		4343	
Petitions			
Strong Borders Act			
Johns		4343	
Zero-Emissions Vehicle Mandate			
Kram		4344	
Falun Gong			
Aboultaif		4344	
Ruff		4344	
Questions on the Order Paper			
Lamoureux		4344	
Points of Order			
Admissibility of Committee Amendments to Bill C-12			
Kayabaga		4344	
Berthold		4345	
GOVERNMENT ORDERS			
Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation Act			
Bill C-10. Second reading		4345	
Guglielmin		4345	
Lamoureux		4346	
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)		4347	
Kirkland		4347	
Idlout		4347	
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)		4347	
Lamoureux		4348	
Ruff		4348	
Battiste		4349	
Barsalou-Duval		4349	
Idlout		4349	
Battiste		4350	
Mantle		4351	
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)		4351	
Hardy		4351	
Lamoureux		4352	
Deschênes		4353	

Idlout	4353
Mantle	4353
Lamoureux	4355
Konanz	4355
Turnbull	4355

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Respecting Families of Murdered and Brutalized
Persons Act**

Kibble	4356
--------------	------

Bill C-235. Second reading	4356
Lamoureux	4357
Deschênes	4358
Cooper	4358
Deschênes	4358
Sari	4358
Deschênes	4359
Cooper	4361
Lamoureux	4362
Mantle	4363

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