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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 8, 2025

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC) moved that Bill C-231, An Act to amend the Youth Criminal Justice Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with a broken heart that I rise in the House today for the second reading of my private member's bill, the friends of David bill, to amend the Youth Criminal Justice Act. I am heartbroken because, as the name suggests, I am doing this for the friends of my son David, who is no longer with us today. This bill is not going to change anything about his own journey, the choices he made or the great void he leaves behind.

Although we continue to mourn his untimely passing, my wife Caro and I decided that, rather than standing idly by, we should try to do our small part to help those who I call David's friends, all the young teenagers who, at some point, gave in to the temptation of drugs. My heart is broken because I do not know whether I should tell David's story. He was a bright young man who was always willing to lend a hand, as well as a protective older brother to his two younger sisters. He was curious and strong, always wanting to try everything for himself, thinking that he would always remain in control of his decisions and that he could try everything without any consequences for himself or others. He was an addict. Despite how confident he seemed, he always needed someone or something to help him get through the day. We will never know his full story because the illness he may have been suffering from was never diagnosed. It was covered up by all the drugs and substances he had to take to remain the David who was not afraid of anything, but who was always anxious when it came time to take action.

Yes, Bill C-231 is very personal for me and my wife. It is not easy for us to talk about David in front of everyone, putting on display our weaknesses and his, our life and what our life might have been. We decided to do it anyway, because if we are silent, there will be other Davids, other parents who will not know what to do,

other children who will grow up without their father, and other wives who must go on without their husband.

The story of David and his friends is the story of young people who, as teenagers, discover in drugs a way to hide their profound unhappiness. Using drugs just for fun becomes the doctor they did not see, the medications they did not take, the solution society was not able to offer them. Let me be clear: A young man using marijuana for fun with his friends once in a while is not a lost cause. Kids will be kids, as the saying goes, and an occasional joint has not prevented the majority of young people from going on to have a good life, build a successful career, and find happiness. I am not some old fogey who thinks that banning everything is the only way to make the world better. Everyone who goes through an ordeal like this agrees that a joint from time to time does not hurt anyone.

However, that is not true for everyone. Some young people have no idea, when they take their first puff, that one day they will not be able to manage without it. It will not be enough, and they will become addicted for the rest of their lives. It is for this handful of young people who will not figure this out until it is too late that we decided to act. Our first action, while we are still mourning David's death, is this bill, which seeks to change things and give those young people a chance to have a future.

Here are some of the questions the parents of David's friends are asking themselves. How can we change things? What went wrong? What did we miss as parents? Are the schools we entrust with educating our children and preparing them to become adults doing a good job? Do we want to help these youth or punish them so as not to "contaminate" others around them? Does the health system have the tools to deal with the reality of these young people? These are questions that keep running through our minds.

That brings me back to Bill C-231. Can minors be compelled to undergo treatment? When students turn 14, schools are not allowed to call the parents to discuss their health issues, but they can call the police to have them arrested. The police can arrest minors and take them before a judge for illegal possession of drugs. If the minors appear before a judge, they will almost always be sent back to school with a slap on the wrist without anyone trying to understand how they got into this situation in the first place. The bottom line is that we treat the wound without looking at the story behind it. We tend to dress the visible wound and neglect the more critical injuries.

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The parents of the David' friends are not blind. They can clearly see that something is off. However, it is not always as obvious as one might think. Many people think it is just a passing phase that kids go through. We choose not to see the small changes taking place in our kids' lives. Over time, the parents of the David's friends get more concerned and they look for help from family physicians, special education teachers at school, social workers, anonymous help lines or friends who have gone through similar situations. I think any of these are good actions. Everyone involved needs to face a difficult reality: If a teen refuses to listen, fails to acknowledge they have a problem or is unable to face reality, those wanting to help are left with no option but to step back and leave them to their own devices.

• (1105)

The police and prosecutors now rarely arrest and charge young people for drug possession. Marijuana is legal, there is a high burden of proof and the justice system is overwhelmed. The parents of David's friends are left to fend for themselves while the friends of David have no idea where they are headed. That is why my wife and I are calling on my colleagues to support Bill C-231 for the friends of David.

This is a straightforward bill. It gives the police and judges additional options when a young person is arrested and taken to court under the Youth Criminal Justice Act. The bill would allow them to refer the youth to an addiction treatment program, delay sentencing until after the end of the addiction treatment and take into account the youth's compliance with the program at final sentencing.

The current law allows a judge to order a young person into an intensive support and supervision program. That is what the law says. However, it does not specifically mention drug treatment programs. After consulting with police officers, I realized that many of them do not want to prosecute young people who are struggling with substance abuse. They feel that a slap on the wrist, the police showing up, that is enough. That slap on the wrist no longer really hurts, however, and police officers often feel that the justice system will not really help these young people anyway. However, in my opinion, the opposite should happen. This bill will encourage young people to recover from their addiction, rather than punishing them for being addicted. Most importantly, we want to prevent minors from turning to crime to support their addiction by becoming drug dealers in order to have the means to afford the remedy that society has been unable to give them.

By passing Bill C-231, MPs will send a clear message to judges that drug treatment should be a priority. By passing Bill C-231, MPs will send a clear message to law enforcement that when a young person is brought before a judge, it is not to punish them, but rather to offer them a way out so they can heal. By passing Bill C-231, MPs will be sending a clear message to people in the educational system that action needs to be taken rather than turning a blind eye and doing nothing in the hopes that it is just a passing phase. By passing Bill C-231, MPs will send a message to David's friends that drug use that leads to addiction is not just another crime, but rather an illness that can be treated with appropriate care.

Bill C-231 for David's friends is not reinventing the wheel. The adult criminal justice system already allows judges to reserve their

sentence after imposing an addiction treatment program. Why not open this possibility to minors, for whom early treatment could change their whole lives, before they turn to crime as a way to afford their damn drugs? The House can send a message to thousands of young Canadians who are still minors that their country cares about them and that they can count on their elected representatives to pave the way toward a happy future free from the clutches of addiction.

I could have filled my speech with statistics on the number of young people who use drugs, drugs of all types. I could have talked about the alarming figures on fentanyl, which is ravaging our major cities. I could have talked about the number of overdoses, which kill thousands of young adults every year. I do not need to provide numbers. I am simply asking people to open their eyes and see what is happening around us, especially with homelessness and drug use in the streets and near schools. Once that image is clear in their minds, I ask them to imagine that it is their child. Would they too hope that society could have intervened on that child's behalf at an age when it was still possible to make a difference? I think the answer to that question alone is worth more than all the statistics I could have spent 10 minutes rattling off to demonstrate the scope of the problem we are facing.

In any event, the statistics do not exist. I tried to find out more about the number of drug users who are minors, the treatments available to them, the number of admissions, the number of relapses following treatment, but it is like the Tower of Babel. Each province has its own program, its own methods for managing addiction. Some provinces perform very well, others not well at all.

Additionally, in preparing my speech for today, I wanted to know whether I was on the wrong track. I am not a doctor, and my wife is not a social worker, so I organized a round table with representatives from the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health. I found this reassuring, but also worrying, given the discussions we had around the table. I can say right off the bat that no one felt I was heading in the wrong direction with Bill C-231 for David's friends.

The World Health Organization defines addiction as “an uncontrollable urge to consume a substance (alcohol or drugs) and a tendency to increase the dose, resulting in a psychological and sometimes physical dependency. The continuation of the abusive use of substances has adverse effects on the physical, emotional, social and economic health of individuals and their families.”

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● (1110)

I find that definition too simplistic, and unfortunately, it is often used to guide health decisions around the world. It defines addiction by its consequences on people with addiction, so it is a definition of the effects of addiction. What is missing is simple. Drug addiction must be recognized for what it is: a mental health problem. Drug addiction is a mental health problem like any other health problem and it can be treated.

I am not saying it can be cured. I am saying that people with addiction, particularly young people, should have access to treatment as early as possible in their addiction journey in order to treat their illness before it takes over their entire lives. It should also be just as easy to access treatment as it is for drug users to get access to drugs. I can personally attest to the fact that this is not the case.

It is hard to get access to health professionals. Sometimes, there are months-long wait times to get an appointment with a psychologist, a psychiatrist or physician. Public treatment programs are not available in all regions. There are waiting lists while private treatment centres are costly and prohibitively expensive for young people and their families. These young people are already ruined financially due to addiction while their parents are burdened with the substantial financial toll of their children's addiction.

There are immense challenges and time is running out. I know full well that Bill C-231 will be but a drop in the ocean in the world of narcotics, but we know we have to start somewhere. A good starting point is recognizing that the Youth Criminal Justice Act should not treat all young addicts as offenders but as people who are sick and cannot take care of themselves. A judge would never send a young person streaked in blood to prison first before sending them to hospital to have their injuries treated. Why then do we send them to youth addiction centres without giving them treatment for their mental injuries?

The consequences of doing nothing are serious. For our family, for my wife and me, Bill C-231 could perhaps have made a big difference for our son, David, who took his own life on February 10, 2025, leaving our grandsons fatherless and his partner a widow far too early. We still miss him terribly. Even though with time, we have come to better understand everything that my son went through, we will never understand the terrible thing he did to himself and to those he loved. We are angry at the system for not helping him. We are angry at society for not facing up to its responsibilities, and we are angry at ourselves for failing to take action. Bill C-231 is also a special tribute to one of David's friends who also took his own life shortly after David did because he was unable to overcome his grief and his demons.

I am asking my esteemed colleagues to make this small change for all the friends of David, all those who suffer in silence, who seek solace and answers in drugs and who may not have access to the care they need. Let us do it so that the justice system can force the hand of all government bodies so that young people finally have access to help. I need my fellow members to talk openly about addiction, to be part of the solution for all the friends of David across the country. On behalf of David, my wife Caro and my entire family, I am asking all members to support Bill C-231.

● (1115)

The Speaker: Once again, on behalf of the House, I want to convey my sincere condolences to the member.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I extend to my friend across the way condolences on the loss of David, as well as a special shout-out to his wife, Caro.

I know that this has been a very difficult time. Prior to having this discussion, we had a very short chat regarding the issue. It is admirable that we have substantive legislation before us that would send a very powerful message of caring and wanting to do what we can as legislators. I appreciate that.

I had the chance to go over the legislation, and the question I have for the member is this. To what degree is he open to having some favourable amendments to provide assurances that we are moving in the right direction if we can get the bill to the committee stage?

Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, everything we can do as a House to improve the lives of our children, everything we can do to improve this bill and make it more effective for our children, I am open to hearing about. I cannot be alone in this fight. I need all of my colleagues to be part of this, to show young people in this country that the House cares about them.

[*Translation*]

Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his moving speech. Of course, our thoughts are with him and his family following the loss of his son.

I recently had an opportunity to speak with a nurse from Rimouski who works in a hospital emergency department. She told me that fentanyl is becoming a serious problem, even in the regions, along with marijuana, of course, since it was legalized. My colleague referred to that. New and increasingly more powerful drugs are finding their way here on a regular basis, which can make it harder for young people to break free from addiction.

Will my colleague's bill give judges the opportunity to expedite the process so that people can get help?

Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-231 is to enable judges to get young people into treatment, but also to remind judges and the entire justice system that treatments are available and that a young drug user is not necessarily a criminal. A young drug user may be someone suffering from an undiagnosed or undetected mental illness. Drugs become the remedy that society has failed to provide to these young people.

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I am convinced that if we can intervene as soon as possible, before young people start using fentanyl or harder drugs, as was the case with David, then we can turn their lives around. That is why we must not wait until young people are in the justice system as repeat offenders before offering them the chance to get treated. We have to intervene as soon as possible.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has shown such courage, but not only that, he is taking concrete action as well. Earlier, my colleague mentioned that this might just be a drop in the ocean. I disagree.

Having worked in addictions treatment and prevention for years, I believe that this bill will make a big difference, and my colleague needs to know that. It is easy enough to see physical or visible suffering, but when someone is suffering from mental health issues, that is invisible. My colleague is taking an important step with this bill.

I wonder if he agrees with me that our organizations will need health transfers in order to have all the resources they need to help our minors.

● (1120)

Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about courage, but I am talking about resilience. I am here, we are here, and we did not ask to be here. We are going through this like many parents are. I can say that many parents have gone through these trials since this happened to us, but they do not have the privilege that I have, as a member of Parliament, to be able to talk about it and raise awareness.

I am not yet ready to talk about specific amounts. I mentioned that in my speech: There are so many disparities between the different provinces that everything will not be solved with a wave of a magic wand. However, we must send a signal that we are going to take care of it.

[English]

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by acknowledging my colleague, the member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, for his courage in bringing forward Bill C-231, the friends of David act. His openness in sharing his family's tragic experience reminds us that every policy discussion in this House must remain centred on real people, real families and, unfortunately, sometimes real loss. I extend my heartfelt condolences to him and his loved ones.

Before entering public life, I spent many years working as an educator and administrator. In that role, I saw children and young people carry in their backpacks burdens that are far heavier than any child should ever have to carry. Addiction, especially in youth, is not an individual struggle. It becomes a family struggle. It reshapes homes, disrupts education and pushes parents into impossible positions where they must become caregivers, counsellors, caseworkers and crisis response teams all at once. Those experiences stay with us. They shape how we see policy and remind us that behind every bill, every motion and every debate in this chamber, there is a young person who simply wants a chance to be well.

In my constituency work in South Shore—St. Margarets, that truth comes up again and again. I have sat with families that are ex-

hausted from navigating fragmented systems. I have spoken with youth whose involvement in the justice system began only after their addiction had gone untreated, sometimes for years. I have heard from parents who are on wait-lists for services that should never have to be wait-listed at all. One mother told me that loving a child with addiction feels like breathing with only half a lung. Another said every day is a mix of hope and fear, hope that their child will finally get the help needed and fear that the window for help might close.

Those stories guide me as I reflect on my colleague's bill, Bill C-231, and the important issue it raises about treatment and rehabilitation for young people involved in the youth justice system. The heart of this bill seeks a deeply human question: How do we make sure that young people struggling with addiction get the right supports at the right time? That is the question I believe this House must focus on.

We know that the Youth Criminal Justice Act already contains pathways for treatment, whether through diversion, integrated case planning, probation conditions or delayed sentencing when appropriate, but the reality in too many parts of this country is that the services themselves are not always there when they are needed. A law can direct a young person to treatment, a judge can recommend it, a family can beg for it, but if the treatment does not exist or the wait-lists are months long or transportation is impossible or aftercare is inconsistent, then we are setting young people up for failure, those who need help the most.

For me, this bill is an opportunity. It is an opportunity to talk about strengthening access, strengthening coordination and ensuring that youth who come into contact with the justice system do so in a way that leads to stability and not toward deeper harm. It is also important that we maintain flexibility, so that every young person's unique needs can be met. Some will require addiction treatment. Others will need trauma-informed therapies, mental health supports or longer-term residential care. Many will need wraparound programs that continue, like family counselling, cultural supports or aftercare that extends beyond the courtroom. We cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to youth, something I have said for years. Their lives, their experiences and their healing journeys are way too diverse.

● (1125)

As this bill continues through the legislative process, I believe our work should focus on ensuring that youth have timely access to services and the laws that direct them toward it, that judges retain the ability to tailor conditions to the needs of each individual youth, that treatment is part of a holistic rehabilitative program rather than a stand-alone obligation, and that, most importantly, aftercare, such as community programs and family supports, is recognized as an essential component of recovery, not just optional ones.

Treatment is not a single event. Treatment is a pathway. For too many young people, that pathway is broken long before they step into a courtroom. I saw it many times in my classroom or in the offices when I was an administrator. As someone who spent time with both educators and families, someone whose community includes youth who are struggling right now, and someone who has walked alongside parents who carry the fear of losing their child every day, I want this to be unequivocal: Young people deserve every possible chance to heal, recover and rebuild their lives.

Our role, for every one of us in this chamber, is to make sure that the systems surrounding them actually make that possible. This is what my colleague is trying to do with his bill. If this bill helps bring us closer to a more compassionate, responsible and supportive youth justice system, then we owe it to our young people across the country to work together and to get this right.

We cannot change the past that brought so many youth into this justice system, but we can change what happens next. We can ensure that, when a young person reaches out for help or when a court directs them to help, that help is truly there. That is the responsibility we hold. It is the work that is ahead of us, and it is what young people in Canada deserve.

I support the work of my colleague.

[*Translation*]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, as Parliament winds down before the break, we are working very hard, and I appreciate your efforts. I also appreciate the outstanding work of my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière. I mentioned to him earlier how valuable it is.

There is a lot of noise, Madam Speaker. This is a very—

• (1130)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I will have someone check to see what is going on in the lobbies.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, this is not an easy subject, but it is important to talk about it. I told my colleague earlier how resilient and courageous he is. He is taking action and wants to make things better. For those who did not hear his speech, I will try to explain what Bill C-231 is all about.

The bill seeks to amend the Youth Criminal Justice Act to clarify the measures governing addiction treatment programs for young persons. This would allow courts to delay sentencing to enable the young person to participate in an addiction treatment program. The bill also provides that failing or refusing to comply with treatment conditions cannot by itself result in detention. My colleague can rest assured that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of a bill that will help save lives. I am thinking of David and David's friends, and I am thinking of Caro and my colleague, because Christmas is right around the corner, and that is always a major milestone. I am glad that we already talking about it in 2025, so we can take action as quickly as possible.

My colleague is right to say that the “war on drugs” approach does not work. I can speak to this because, when I first started out in my career way back in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I was in-

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involved in psychosocial intervention in the areas of drug addiction and suicide prevention. At that time, things were very different than they are today, as frontline workers would go directly to the scene whenever an incident was reported. Today, tighter security is required because there are increased concerns and complications when a mental health issue, including drug and psychotropic use, goes undiagnosed. It became clear to me when I was 20 that people should not be punished; rather, they should be supported and listened to so that they can receive the necessary care.

I would also like to say that for a number of years, I have almost always had a naloxone kit with me. As elected representatives, we are often in contact with crowds at events, and we never know when a situation may arise. I would encourage all my colleagues to get a kit, as naloxone is an extremely valuable antidote that can save a life in the event of an overdose.

This gives me an opportunity to share that in the years that followed, I made sure that the community organizations where I lived had as many tools as possible to help teens and young adults. I commend the work done in Quebec by the organization Mesures alternatives, which has locations throughout the province. The one I am most familiar with is Mesures alternatives des Vallées du Nord. I wish to recognize Marc-André Roy in particular. I do not know how long he has worked there, but I do know that his focus is prevention, and I am sure the statistics reflect some solid results. Although my colleague did not wish to present any statistics, I think it would be a good idea to compile the current data so that once the bill is passed, the impact on prevention efforts can be measured. We can say already that Quebec has an advantage in the form of its 2018-20 national strategy for psychoactive substance overdose prevention, which aligns perfectly with the steps proposed by my colleague in his action plan.

• (1135)

First and foremost, we must educate people and raise their awareness. That is what we are doing today. That is important. Second, we need to prevent overdoses and re-educate people about harmful effects. That means we need to address the underlying causes of drug use. My colleague put it very clearly: People use drugs recreationally, but there are also those who use drugs as a crutch because they are suffering. Obviously, that is what we are dealing with today. We need to produce legislation, along with public policies and regulations. We need to have monitoring and surveillance. This bill will allow us to collect information and to have the tools needed to ensure that our young people receive the support they need. Obviously, we also need research, training and addiction treatment. I spoke about naloxone a few minutes ago, but naloxone is an emergency antidote for use in exceptional circumstances. There are many other treatments that I will not speak to this morning.

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Obviously, there is treatment of pain. Sometimes, people use cannabis to relieve physical pain, while others use it for mental pain. We need to speak about that too, and I have seen that more and more people are willing to do so. Men and women of all ages are increasingly opening up about their pain. Suffering is not something that can be measured; it is something each of us experiences differently.

I would therefore like to commend my colleague for his very moving speech. If he needs a hand at any time to fine-tune this life-saving bill, we are here for him. It is very sad that David will not be here this Christmas, but the action we are taking here will have an impact, and it will not just be a drop in the ocean. On the contrary, it is a small step that will turn into a big step, and it will help all young people, particularly those experiencing major challenges.

With the two minutes I have left, I am going to share some statistics. As my colleague said, the opioid crisis caused 20 deaths a day in Canada in 2024. That adds up to 53,821 opioid-related deaths, according to data from March 2025. Men are more likely than women to die from an opioid overdose. In 2024, Quebec ranked fourth in terms of opioid-related deaths, with 645 deaths. Even one death is too many. I explained the approach being used in Quebec. Considering the reduction it achieved in deaths from opioid overdoses, I hope that all the other provinces and territories will consider using it too.

I thank my colleagues, and I want to take this opportunity to wish them all a happy holiday. I also want to wish my colleague a lot of courage and compassion.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to respond to my colleague's deeply moving remarks about Bill C-231, the friends of David act. First, I commend him for having the courage to share such a personal story in the House. My colleague's words remind us that behind the statistics are families, communities and broken dreams. The story of the member's son David is not only heartbreaking, it is a call to action.

This bill seeks to amend the Youth Criminal Justice Act so that judges and law enforcement can send youths struggling with addiction to treatment programs rather than strictly imposing punitive measures. The aim is not to excuse crimes, but to recognize that addiction is a health issue and that early intervention is needed to turn lives around before it is too late.

• (1140)

[*English*]

In British Columbia, we are living through a public health emergency that shows no sign of slowing down. Since the province declared the overdose crisis in 2016, more than 14,000 British Columbians have died from toxic, unregulated drugs. This year alone, B.C. is on track to surpass 2,000 deaths, the highest ever recorded. That means that six people die every day in one province. That's six lives, six families shattered.

These are not just adults. Youth are increasingly at risk. According to the BC Coroners Service, about 10% of overdose deaths involve individuals under 29, and many start using substances in their early teens. The Canadian Student Alcohol and Drugs Survey shows that the average age of first cannabis use is 14, and nearly

half of students say cannabis is easy to obtain. For some, that first puff is not harmless. It can be the first step toward dependency and, tragically, toward fentanyl-laced substances.

When the member from Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière speaks of David's friends, he is not referring to a small circle of acquaintances. He is speaking about thousands of young Canadians, boys and girls who are walking the same dangerous path. These are teenagers who turn to substances, not out of rebellion but out of pain. For them, drugs become the doctor they never met, the therapy they never accessed and the solution society failed to provide. David's friends are not criminals at heart. They are patients who do not know they are sick, yet under the current system, if they refuse help and deny their problem, we often abandon them to their fate.

Bill C-231 changes that. It gives judges and police the ability to open a door instead of closing one, to offer treatment instead of punishment. Every time we fail to act, another David is lost, another family grieves, and another group of friends wonder what they could have done. Supporting the bill, and I am so encouraged by the remarks so far this morning, means telling David's friends across Canada that we see them, that we care and that we will fight for their future.

Bill C-231 offers a practical solution. It does not reinvent the wheel. It simply extends to youth what already exists for adults, the ability to defer sentencing while a person completes an addiction treatment program. This approach saves lives. It gives young people a chance to heal before they become entrenched in criminal activity or fall victim to the toxic drug supply.

Let us be clear. Addiction is not a complete moral failure. It is a health issue, and when a young person is arrested for a drug-related offence, that moment can be a turning point, a chance to intervene, to connect them with care and to prevent another obituary.

As a society, we have a moral imperative to do more than speak words of compassion. We must turn those words into action. It is not enough to express concern while young lives are lost. We must offer real solutions, and I really do truly believe that we are doing that today.

We must develop those programs that match the urgency of our rhetoric, programs that meet young people where they are and give them a path forward. Bill C-231 is not the final answer, but it is a step in the right direction, a step toward a justice system that heals instead of harms and that recognizes addiction as an illness rather than a crime.

By passing the bill, we will affirm that Canada will not abandon youth in despair. In fact, we will improve our laws for youth. We can affirm that prevention and treatment are not luxuries but a necessity in our public health system. Every day we delay, another family grieves and another David is lost. Another group of friends wonder what they could have done. Supporting the bill means telling David's friends across Canada that we see them, that we care, and that we will make a level step forward to improve the system in our country.

[*Translation*]

For David, his friends and the thousands of young Canadians whose lives are at risk, let us make this change. Every day we delay is a day that more families will experience the pain that the member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière experienced and so courageously shared with us today.

• (1145)

Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I want to offer my condolences to my colleague across the way and to his entire family. An incident like this does not go unnoticed. I was a teacher for at least two decades, and I saw situations deteriorate right before my eyes for certain groups of students. Teachers are still only allowed to speak to parents if the student gives consent. It is extremely difficult for teachers to cope with these conditions.

I rise today because this topic is very important to me. I deeply respect my colleague for having the courage to come share this in the House in the hope of improving the situation. This topic is extremely important not only to me, but to all Canadians, I am sure. Regardless of an individual's family situation, no one is sheltered from issues such as drugs, fentanyl, peer pressure and mental health. During my years as a teacher and as a coach, I saw athletes who could have performed very well at the national and international level get off track because of peer pressure, drugs and other substances that can disrupt the life of a young person, the life of a family, the life of everyone.

Bill C-231 is a bill brought forward by my colleague that pertains to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, or YCJA. I have a daughter who is in the throes of adolescence, so I cannot be indifferent to this. I have had occasion to try to keep a closer eye on her. We know that children will have their own experiences. We have little or no control over that, but I am thankful for what life teaches. We have still been able to keep an extremely close eye on the kids, but it is not because of us, their parents. I would like to tell my colleague opposite that as parents, we do our best, but we cannot control all the experiences our children have to go through in life.

Bill C-231 proposes some changes to the YCJA in order to facilitate access to addiction treatment programs for young persons struggling with addiction who come into contact with the criminal justice system. In particular, this bill would amend the YCJA to clarify the measures governing addiction treatment programs and to authorize youth justice courts to delay sentencing in some scenarios so that young persons are able to participate in an addiction treatment program.

My colleague talked about treatments in his speech. There are many that can be used to prevent this. There are many treatments

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available to help with the illness of drug use. However, we can do better. Our government aims to prioritize permanent approaches for keeping young people away from criminal activities. As my colleague also mentioned, drug use comes with bad habits. It is a vicious circle. If people want to use drugs, they have to get drugs. To get drugs, they have to enter a world that is not exactly legal. It is a vicious circle. Our government seeks to prioritize that approach.

The basic principles of this bill promote accountability through measures that offer positive outlooks as well as rehabilitation for social reintegration. It also promotes the use of diversion measures for less severe crimes in order to cut down on the overuse of detention and save court resources for more severe crimes.

• (1150)

Vocational education teachers often deal with delinquency or the rehabilitation of young teenagers who have left the system. When I was a vocational teacher, the first thing I would tell young people was that I was welcoming them to their second chance, their opportunity to succeed in life, and that we would be there to support them.

It is important for adults to listen, but they may not always be the most suitable confidants for young people. If we had a system designed to help these young people overcome their challenges, many lives could be saved.

With the youth justice fund, the federal government provides an annual contribution of nearly \$4.5 million to support projects that encourage a more effective youth justice system, respond to emerging youth justice issues, and enable greater citizen and community participation in the youth justice system.

This fund provides funding to “improve the youth justice system's ability to help youth rehabilitate and reintegrate; increase the use of out of court measures that are more effective in addressing some types of less serious offending...[and] increase the use of community-based sentences for less serious offending”.

Additionally, the federal government's youth justice services funding program provides all provinces and territories with an annual financial contribution totalling nearly \$185 million for the period from 2021 to 2027 “to assist in the delivery of various programs and services that target youth who come in contact with the criminal justice system”.

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Our government has also committed to providing urgent and immediate support in response to the overdose crisis. The federal government has developed measures to address the overdose crisis as part of the Canadian drugs and substances strategy. The government has committed to a public health and safety approach with a number of objectives, including making it easier to access vital services, reducing stigma around substance use and supporting prevention, treatment and recovery efforts.

The federal government has also committed significant funding to the illegal toxic drug and overdose crisis. For example, the federal government has invested over \$750 million through the substance use and addiction program for more than 460 innovative community-based pilot projects since 2017, including peer support and capacity-building projects.

More specifically, when it comes to youth public health, the federal government has invested \$500 million in the youth mental health fund. We have heard a lot about that from my colleague. These are illnesses that seem harmless, secret illnesses. We do not know what is going on in our kids' heads.

This program finally helps young people in Canada to access the mental health care they need. These investments mainly go toward increasing access to community-based mental health services and improving navigation and referral to mental health services and supports.

The federal government has also invested \$20.2 million in the program to prevent youth substance use and associated harms. This program supports 12 community projects in developing a tailored approach to preventing and delaying substance use in youth.

Thanks to these investments, which are grounded in the realities that communities are facing, young people are getting the support, safety and opportunities they deserve when it comes to the prevention and treatment of substance use. In closing, this program made it possible to reach 198,200 young people through over 1,800 on-line sessions and 1,000 in-person sessions in high schools between April 2018 and March 2025.

In Canada, youth mental and emotional health and well-being is an important health issue that has several implications for the prevention of youth crime and for the youth criminal justice system. In Canada, people with mental illnesses and addictions are overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

• (1155)

Bill C-231 addresses an issue that is a major concern for all of us.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is difficult for me to rise in the House this morning, but I do so with dignity. I think that what we have experienced this morning is one of the finest moments in the House in recent years. I commend my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière for his courage. As a parent of teenagers, I have to say that what he went through is my worst nightmare. I also commend my colleague's wife, because together they made the decision to make this public so that we can remember their son. When he talks about David's friends, I am also thinking of all the parents of people like David who are still here and looking for answers.

The Bloc Québécois will support the member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière in this bill. For the Bloc members, the concept of prevention is certainly important. I commend the Conservatives for taking this step, under their colleague's influence, and bringing a dose of compassion to the debates, which is often sorely lacking.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work of those on the ground, particularly frontline workers, who see people in distress and who are often brought face to face with powerless people whose behaviours are dictated by their addiction, not their will. Those people are often neglected. We must commend those who work on the front lines. In light of that, I invite everyone here to develop a better understanding of what drives people to use substances. For some people, their first experience is in a social setting, but there are also people who are struggling with addictions.

I would also like to highlight the work of a young woman from my riding. Her name is Catherine Jutras. She is a friend and an overdose prevention consultant for an organization known as Arrimage. She conducted a study on drug use that was entitled "La consommation, un monde 'stupéfiant'". During the study, she met with me formally in my capacity as an MP, and the organization made a video to demystify the use of psychoactive substances. She introduced her study with the following sentence: "I don't want to become a statistic. If you die from an overdose, you become a number". Given the current circumstances, I think that is particularly striking. I want my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière to know that his work means that David will always be more than a statistic and that taking action to support prevention will bring significant long-term change.

I would like to talk about some observations concerning the use of psychoactive substances that Ms. Jutras makes in her study. People use substances for different reasons, ranging from mere habit to self-medication, recreational use and physical and mental pain relief. The majority of the people who use psychoactive substances feel or experience stigma. That has to stop in order for interventions to be effective. Stigma arises from multiple sectors of society, including individuals who use psychoactive substances, the general public and social systems, such as political, health care and legal institutions. It is often perpetuated by professionals and individuals within these systems who may sometimes behave dismissively toward people who come to them for help. Stigma poses a significant barrier to recovery for individuals striving to improve their lives. There is some food for thought here. Should we collaborate more with the people who use psychoactive substances? Should they be more involved? Should we listen to them more? That is what our colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière is reminding us today.

I would also like to mention some of the recommendations she put forward, because I believe the bill will go a long way from a legal standpoint, but I would also like us to take this opportunity to go further in terms of the services that are offered. In her study, she recommends that we reevaluate our perceptions and further our understanding of the use of psychoactive substances; consider how current services provided in the regions could be improved and seek more involvement from people who use psychoactive substances; improve the understanding of professionals working with substance users about the overall phenomenon of psychoactive substance use and offer them appropriate training; treat people hoping to improve their living conditions with consideration and dignity, regardless of the means they used to obtain a service; treat the person holistically in order to avoid compartmentalizing support by issue or observable trait; and examine the range of specialized services available to support people experiencing grief associated with an overdose and to understand their specific needs.

There is so much to do. I would like to commend my colleague for his courage in taking such an important step today.

• (1200)

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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 1

The House resumed from December 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to commend the courage of my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière. He gave a very moving speech that took tremendous courage and a lot of guts, and I am very proud of him today. He has been a mentor to me since I first arrived. I want to congratulate him.

Last week, my speech was interrupted while I was talking about the generational budget, which the people in my riding call a credit card budget. I am honoured to pick up my speech where I left off. I spoke about agriculture and labour, and now I would like to talk about SMEs in the regions.

Our small and medium-sized businesses are vital to our communities. They create jobs and keep our communities and regions going. However, SMEs' costs keep going up and up. The government could be doing something about it, but this budget does nothing for them. Take credit card fees, for example. These fees are paid directly by SMEs and can be as much as 2% or 2.5%. In Europe, a law was passed that limits these credit card fees to 0.3%. I see nothing in this budget that supports SMEs.

Entrepreneurs need concrete support, not just fine words and fine speeches. I have been here for eight months, and it is time to put

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forward some real solutions to help SMEs survive, grow and invest. Canadians and the residents of Beauce do not want fine words; they want us to take action. They want us to work for them, not for ourselves. They want us to give them the straight goods.

Our role as members of Parliament is to be there on the ground, in our constituency offices; to be there with the *Fédérations de l'âge d'or du Québec*, in the arenas, and wherever people come together. Last week, we did seven or eight activities with some extraordinary people. The message is very clear: People want a better quality of life, and they want things to cost less. They want the government to take action. Most of all, they want a more affordable life.

On the other side of the House, they tell us that the industrial carbon tax has no impact on the cost of living. The truth, however, is that the tax adds 17¢ to the cost of a litre of diesel, and that amount comes directly out of the pockets of Canadians.

Let us now take action. Let us stop talking and act to support our farmers. Let us create wealth and provide businesses and workers with the right tools. Let us streamline programs and speed up processes that are extremely cumbersome.

One glaring omission in the budget is that it does not include any measures to improve cell coverage in my region of Beauce. This issue directly hinders business productivity. It is impossible to be competitive without access to such an essential service. However, there is nothing in this budget to address that. It is also a matter of public safety. A situation occurred in Saint-Martin, in my riding, during a children's activity. There was an emergency, and no one could get a cell signal. It could have been fatal. It is time to stop talking and start taking action. Our children should never be put at risk because of a lack of investment.

I touched on a number of points in my speech, but before we break for the holidays, I invite all members to use some of our time off to reflect, recharge their batteries and come back with concrete solutions for Canadians, not just to save our jobs and our ridings, but to help all 40 million Canadians. We are not here to pay lip service. We are here to make life better for Canadians.

I want the people of Beauce to know that I will continue to fight for them with all the energy they deserve. I wish them happy holidays.

• (1205)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-15 is a part of the picture of building Canada strong. We talk a great deal about how the Prime Minister and the government are trying to advance the interests of Canadians. We do that every day. Contrast that with the members of the Conservative Party, who want to continue to filibuster legislation and prevent legislation from passing. There are significant changes that could be brought in through the budget implementation legislation, yet the Conservatives continue to not allow the bill to go to committee.

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While the government of the day is focused on serving the interests of Canadians, we see the opposition party is more focused on its own self-serving political interests than on Canadians. When is that going to stop and when are we going to see this legislation be allowed to go to committee?

[*Translation*]

Jason Groleau: Madam Speaker, my colleague just gave me the perfect opening. I learned the term “filibuster” here, over the past eight months. Let us talk about filibustering. The Liberal chair of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities cancelled the last three meetings, and at four meetings, another member spoke for four hours to save his government. He hid behind his minister.

Guess what? We are talking about road safety here. Do not get me started on filibustering. It is a waste of time and money for everyone.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Beauce for his speech, which he ended by saying that he would fight for his constituents. We know that there are statistics that prove this, when we look at his profile on the HockeyDB website. I am very confident that the people of Beauce will be well represented.

My colleague talked about an important issue that is not part of Bill C-15 and barely part of the budget, which is very regrettable: cell coverage in the regions. Why is the federal government ignoring this problem? This affects public safety and regional economic development, not to mention just making our regions feel like they are connected to the rest of the world. Living in the regions is not a sacrifice, it is not a privilege. We are making use of the land. This is where we live.

In his view, why is the federal government failing to invest more in something that should be an essential service?

Jason Groleau: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my Bloc colleague. I am guessing that the statistics were likely inflated back then. There was no Facebook in those days.

I want to come back to cell coverage by sharing an example of the situation in Beauce. It takes 20 minutes to drive from Saint-Georges to Saint-Éphrem-de-Beauce. For 15 minutes between these two places, there is no cell coverage. Nothing works. People also live between Saint-Georges and Saint-Éphrem-de-Beauce. Cell phone service affects more than just work and businesses. It also affects public safety. When there is an emergency, people use their cell phones.

This is an excellent question that I would like to put back to the Liberals: Why not invest? How much is the deficit costing us? It is huge, astronomical, but there is not a penny for the regions, as is customary with the Liberal government.

• (1210)

[*English*]

Rob Morrison (Columbia—Kootenay—Southern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that one of the highest paved roads in Canada, the Kootenay Pass, has no cell service. It is still, today, one of the most dangerous roads in Canada.

However, my question is actually related more to credit cards. So many people are relying on credit cards and the interest payments are becoming unmanageable, so that people cannot even afford to make those payments. That is sort of what the government is doing. When we do not have solid economic growth, we end up having a hard time paying off debt. We have sawmills, for example, that are using a line of credit to pay their staff. That is not sustainable. They will have to shut down those sawmills.

How do we move forward so that we do not have a credit card budget and are actually making some real payments and supporting Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Jason Groleau: Madam Speaker, it is simple. If we want to ensure that people are not dependent on credit cards, we need to make life affordable for Canadians.

[*English*]

Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House to speak on any issue but, in particular, a budget. This budget strikes the balance that Canadians were looking for in the recent election.

When I was campaigning, voters were telling me they wanted to see government get smaller. They wanted to see government reduce its cost and size, but at the same time, they wanted to ensure that government was going to protect those social programs that Canadians cherish and look to so much across this country. I certainly will be supporting this budget because this budget strikes that balance. It is a budget that invests in programs that support our seniors, that support families and that support those who are facing hardships.

It is important for those watching the proceedings of the House of Commons to clearly see the difference between the Conservative ideology and Liberal ideology. Liberals will always support the programs Canadians depend on, and there is nothing more glaring than in the area of seniors' pensions. I have been listening to speeches in the House from the opposition over the past number of months about the cost of living and its impact on those most vulnerable, primarily seniors.

However, if it was not for this government, then a senior aged 65 to 67 today would be living with \$22,140 less, because this was the group of people that a former Conservative government decided did not need the support of the old age pension program or the guaranteed income supplement. If we think for a moment about a person in this age category, how would those costs, which continue to go up, impact them without this particular amount of money? At the time, Conservatives felt it was not important that seniors in this age category be given this public benefit, a benefit they worked so hard for over the years.

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That was just old age pensions. The Canada child benefit is one of the programs that our government, in the early days, brought in that I am most proud of, because it fundamentally changed the lives of many families that were living and struggling financially. I can give case after case of families that tell me how important it is to them and how it allowed them to have their children participate in programs that they could not do before. There is the child care program and the dental program as well. Of course, there is also the employment insurance system, which Canadians, unfortunately, when they lose their jobs, have to depend on from time to time.

However, every time Conservatives could have supported these vulnerable Canadians, they voted against the measures our government was putting in place. It is hard to sit here from time to time and quietly listen to the comments that come from across the floor about their, what I will call, manufactured concern for Canadians in need, because every time they have the opportunity to support those programs, they vote against them, time and time again. I see it in my riding on a daily basis.

With this budget, Canada is confronting a fiscal challenge. A lot of it is being brought on by a world that has become extremely unstable. We have an unpredictable neighbour to the south and that is having negative consequences for some industries here north of the border. However, our government chose to invest long term rather than take a cut-and-slash approach, which is so common with the Conservative ideology. This is why I support this particular budget, and that is why I will continue to advocate for it in these areas.

I look at my province of P.E.I.—

* * *

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to designate Tuesday, December 9, as a day for consideration of the business of supply.

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[*English*]

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, I look at the implications. We have been listening to numbers get tossed around in this chamber by the opposition. They say that the budget should be \$40 billion less of a deficit than it is. Where would we cut? Where would the cutting and slashing occur across government? Maybe it would be in the area of transfer payments to provinces.

A small province like Prince Edward Island, this fiscal year, will receive over \$1.3 billion from Ottawa. These are funds that allow the province to ensure health care for Islanders and ensure a host of

programs across the province. Imagine if that funding was cut. Let us look at a number of maybe 10% or 15%. That would have a significant impact on the ability of the government to deliver services across Prince Edward Island. That is the Conservative approach, and I experienced it before as a provincial politician years ago when the government of the day cut spending to the provinces to get its fiscal house in order. It did not work.

This is an approach that I very much support. It allows us to invest as we build the economy and grow the economy. Canada is doing well. If we look at all the turmoil that exists in the world, Canada is performing quite well. When we measure us against all the key leading indicators in the G7 countries, Canada is either at the top or very close to the top. The doom and gloom that is always put forward by the Conservative opposition simply is not valid.

We are in a position where Canada can afford to invest in itself, where Canada can invest in Canadians and where Canada can continue to support the social programs that Canadians take for granted and expect on a daily basis. Again, every time those line items come up, the Conservative members stand and vote against them. They will vote against increases in OAS. They will vote against increases in the Canada child benefit. They will vote against increases for child care and dental care, and they will continue to vote against programs and increases in the employment insurance program.

However, those key numbers in the delivery of transfers to provinces would have the most impact on all Canadians. As I pointed out, the impact on Prince Edward Island would be significant. As a small province with limited ability to generate revenue, its dependence on the Government of Canada is significant and its ability to deliver programs to Islanders depends on that. That is why I am supporting this budget, and I will be candid. I am quite proud to support the budget because the government could have taken a different approach. As I indicated, some governments may have decided to cut and slash without any regard for the impact on people's lives from day to day. However, we chose not to go that particular route.

In fact, the budget carries significant dollars for investing in infrastructure. One of the areas I have been extremely proud to have delivered on for my riding of Egmont is infrastructure. All across my riding, I can point to significant infrastructure that is building stronger communities and making them better places to live, raise a family and have jobs. This budget continues the government's investments in Canadians from coast to coast and its investments in the small communities in our ridings, particularly my riding of Egmont. Most importantly, it continues the government's investments in those social programs that Canadians depend on and Islanders depend on.

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As was pointed out, it is important that this budget passes through the process so we are able to continue to deliver for Canadians on all the programs that they want from their government. With that, I am looking forward to the vote when it comes on this budget so I can show that I support the people I represent on the priority items that they cherish and want us to deliver on.

• (1220)

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the 10-minute speech of my colleague from P.E.I., and he did not mention one new initiative. A whole new budget was brought in, but not one new initiative was mentioned. He mentioned child care, the lunch program, OAS and dental care, but not one new program.

I find it interesting that the government is creating a \$78.5-billion deficit, which will be about \$10 billion higher, but the member did not mention any new spending. Why we question the government's ability to budget is that the National Post this past weekend said that the PM's "plan to reduce civil service will cost \$1.5 billion to cut payroll by just \$82 million." They are spending \$1.5 billion to cut payroll by \$82 million. How does that make sense?

Robert Morrissey: Madam Speaker, I am quite happy to respond to the question. It is interesting to look back and see that it has been Conservative governments that have brought Canada to the fiscal cliff. While the Conservatives articulate and pontificate on fiscal prudence, when we look at their track record in government, we see that they have brought this country to the edge of the fiscal cliff time and time again.

Yes, the current budget carries significant new investments in infrastructure, which is the very item I was speaking to as I concluded my speech. I am looking forward to delivering in my riding in those areas as well.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague was talking about seniors earlier, but one of the Bloc Québécois's very important requests for seniors is nowhere to be found in Bill C-15. I am talking about the 10% OAS increase for seniors aged 65 to 74. As the House knows, a few years ago, we pressured the government to increase old age pensions, since seniors were losing their purchasing power. There was an increase only for seniors aged 75 and up, which created two classes of seniors.

Why is the government so determined not to increase pensions for seniors aged 65 to 74, who desperately need it?

[English]

Robert Morrissey: Madam Speaker, as I pointed out in my opening comments, philosophically there is a big difference between Conservative ideology and Liberal ideology when it comes to pensions. One of the first steps we took was to restore both the OAS and the GIS for seniors aged 65 and up. That was a significant investment. We also made two 10% increases, in OAS and GIS, for seniors. The seniors pension plan continues to be indexed to inflation and continues to rise on a yearly basis.

If I were a senior, I would prefer to have a Liberal government in Ottawa making decisions on our economic future and well-being.

• (1225)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague is a strong advocate for P.E.I. and Atlantic Canada. When I was raising my family, I would very much have appreciated the government's programs, especially the national child care program, which is a huge support for young families.

I want to draw on the member's experience at the provincial level and ask how important it is to have a federal government that is fully engaged in redefining Canada's economy and investing in provinces, especially smaller provinces like P.E.I.

Robert Morrissey: Madam Speaker, it is extremely important for the Government of Canada to be able to give predictable financing to provinces, especially smaller provinces, so they can plan into the future. They need to have the resources to invest in their communities and to invest in people.

My colleague referenced raising a family. One item that sticks out is that when the Conservative Party was governing years ago, its support for families was \$100 a month, but it also taxed it. The \$100 a month received as a child benefit was taxable and had to be declared on one's income. Compare that to ours, which maxes at over \$700 a month for a child at a young age and is tax-free. This shows again the difference between a Liberal government approach and a Conservative one.

Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise in the House of Commons to speak in opposition to Bill C-15, not because it is a Liberal budget bill but because it is a betrayal bill. The 634-page monster that the Liberals are trying to ram through in unprecedented fashion is hiding some of the most dangerous powers imaginable, powers that would let Liberal ministers pick winners and losers and exempt their corporate buddies from the laws that bind the rest of us, all while Canadian families scrape by with little more than empty promises from the Liberals, and with skyrocketing bills.

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Let me paint a picture for the out-of-touch Liberal government. Right now across the country, moms and dads are staring at grocery receipts that have doubled over the past decade of Liberal inflation. That is not hyperbole; those are the facts. The Canada food price annual report that was released just last week confirmed it. Over the past 10 years of Liberal rule, food prices have surged. The price of beef is up 62% since 2019 alone, and the price of coffee has doubled over the past six years. A family of four is now shelling out over \$17,500 a year just to feed itself. That is up more than \$1,000 last year, and it is going to be up another \$1,000 in the year to come, the report confirmed.

The cost of food has doubled in the past years, but paycheques have not, so Canadians are making sacrifices in order just to eat, and the budget has nothing for those families. Hungry Canadians are expected to fend for themselves under the Liberals. Families are left to choose between putting gas in their car and getting milk for the kids. They are skipping meals, rationing protein and watching their hard-earned paycheques evaporate into the Liberal inflation machine. One in four households is food insecure, and two million Canadians are lined up at food banks.

That is the Liberal legacy: a decade of deficits, taxes and skyrocketing industrial carbon taxes that have hammered the working class while Liberals cater to their wealthy and well-connected friends. Every year since the Liberals took office, Canadians have become poorer and poorer. First, families saw their savings dwindle. Then they gave up extras like a vacation or concert tickets. Before too long, there was no longer any money for the kids' hockey or ballet. Now, however, families cannot afford the essentials anymore, like their mortgage, their rent, heating their home, or food.

While families are tightening their belts, the Prime Minister is preoccupied with his Brookfield bondholder and banker buddies. He has inserted into the omnibus behemoth, the 634-page Bill C-15, a provision that would hand his cabinet ministers a golden key to unlock any federal law for his favourite companies or buddies, with the exception of the Criminal Code. It would not exempt the Criminal Code, because I guess Liberals draw a line at giving a free pass for things like kidnapping, theft or murder, but everything else would be up for a "get out of jail free" card.

Exemptions from environmental protections, transportation safety rules, tax remittances and labour standards, just name it, would be for anyone they decide, and it is all justified with buzzwords like "innovation" and "competitiveness". If they decide that someone or some company should not have to abide by the law, they would not have to.

Who would decide that if the bill is passed? It would be the Prime Minister or one of his ministers, alone in secret, based on their own fuzzy definition of what they call the public interest. There would be no parliamentary debate, no transparency and no oversight. Taxpayers would foot the bill for whatever mess they create or for whatever goes wrong. The Liberals' well-connected friends or companies would be off the hook, and it would be tough luck for average Canadians.

• (1230)

Let us think about it. The average Canadian entrepreneur, the small business owner, has to jump through all the hoops to get their

business started or to expand their enterprise: environmental assessments, CRA audits, safety certifications, the works. However, some Bay Street giant or some buddy of the Prime Minister would just whisper in a minister's ear, and, poof, they would be exempt from taxes everybody else is expected to pay, from consultations everybody else is expected to do, from fishery quotas, from workplace safety regulations and from environmental regulations. They would be exempt, exempt, exempt.

Let me be clear: I agree with the people who legitimately say that the Liberals have made Canada uncompetitive with the rest of the world. It is true. Ask any entrepreneur these days, and they will say they agree that it is nearly impossible to keep a business alive in this country anymore. Liberals have added too much red tape, too much in taxes, too many forms, too many regulations, too many rules, too many reports and too many restrictions. That is why there has been an implosion of the small business sector across this country, with unprecedented closures and bankruptcies from coast to coast.

The solution cannot be that we give a special free pass to Liberal friends by continuing to overburden everybody else. That is truly picking winners and losers, like a Russian oligarch who has special privileges while everybody else pays the price. Canadians know that we all must be equal under the law. Cronyism is dangerous; it violates Canadian values, and it will destroy this country. The Liberals know that this is wrong, and that is why they hid the provision deep in the 634-page omnibus bill. Why did they create an omnibus bill? It is because they know that scrutiny is the enemy of corruption.

Liberals used to proudly herald that omnibus bills were a violation of democracy. They called them Trojan horses. I think members will remember those days. The Liberals promised never to use them, but here we are with a bill that would evade Parliament like a thief in the night. Division 5 of part 5 of Bill C-15 would amend the Red Tape Reduction Act to let ministers grant temporary "get out of jail free" cards for regulatory sandboxes. "Regulatory sandboxes" sounds kind of innocent, until we realize that it is a licence to print favours. Companies are going to line up to ask for them.

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The Liberals talk about its being for innovation, but let us understand that what we would get if the provisions are passed are rent-seeking big players gaming the system and stifling real competition. The same judge and jury who would decide if an exemption is appropriate would also be the same minister deciding the exemption. Common sense says that if a law is bad, if it stifles development or innovation, we should repeal it for everybody. A democracy is no longer a democracy if some citizens or corporations can evade the law without parliamentary say. This is a power grab, not progress, and it stinks.

Now let us talk about the man at the top, the Prime Minister. The golden boy of global finance is now supposed to be Canada's champion, but here is the kicker. He still has skin in the game with Brookfield Asset Management: share options, deferred units and potentially tens of millions of dollars in carried interest from funds he set up, with payments that will mature in 2032 and 2034, maybe even long after he is out of office. He chaired the board and launched its green transition funds, and this is where Brookfield will win big and Carney will cash in.

• (1235)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows we cannot use current members' names in the chamber.

Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, you are right.

The Prime Minister will cash in.

John-Paul Danko: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The member is continuing to make false and defamatory statements against an identifiable member.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is a matter for debate, and I am not going to rule on that.

The hon. member for Grande Prairie.

Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, it is not just me who is calling out this bill for what it is. Democracy Watch called it a "direct and significant financial conflict of interest".

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry. We are way over time.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I found that very distasteful. I listened to what the member said. Quite frankly, he wants to feed into some sort of anger and generate anger.

There is no corruption. There is a lot of transparency. There is a whole lot of accountability. Maybe Conservative Party members need to look in the mirror because, if they really and truly believe half of what they say, this bill would have passed to a committee stage, where it could have been broken down and where it would have numerous standing committees dealing with it. There is nothing being hidden here, other than a Conservative agenda that is purely self-interested. They make character assassinations and allegations they cannot support.

It is disgusting, and the member should be ashamed of himself.

Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, when the Liberals send in the member for Winnipeg North to yell, scream and claim he is hard done by, that is when we know we are hovering over the target.

I have met with families that can no longer afford to pay for the essentials. Heartbreakingly, it is a larger number than ever, and the hon. member will know these same stories. I can say that what families also see is a free pass given again and again, under the Liberals, to their corporate friends, and a massive bail—

An hon. member: Prove it.

Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, the hon. member said, "Prove it." He is heckling. I can tell him to look at the Stellantis contract. Was there a protection for Canadians as the Liberals dished out billions of dollars to their corporate friends? Absolutely not. Look at the Algoma deal. There were 1,000 layoffs this past week, and hundreds of millions of dollars handed over to the company with no guarantee for the 1,000 people who lost their jobs.

What we see under the Liberal Party again—

• (1240)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a little rich to hear Liberal colleagues in this chamber talk about accountability and transparency when they are presenting a budget implementation bill for a budget that was supposed to begin on April 1 of this year. The better part of eight months has already transpired. Now, they want us to vote on a budget after they have already spent eight months' worth of the money.

Does the member think it is normal for Parliament or any organization to budget after it has spent the money?

Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, my colleague points out, exactly, the hypocrisy of the party that claims to believe in transparency. I remember a time when the members talked about sunlight being the best disinfectant, yet what we are seeing is a government clouded by more secrecy than we have ever seen with any government before.

They are not trying to rectify this as they are being called out for being secretive. They are included in this very bill we are debating before the House right now. Division 5 of part 5 clearly articulates the ability of ministers to, in the darkness of night, sign provisions to give out exemptions from federal law to their buddies. This is not democratic, and there will be no oversight for these provisions. There will be no accountability. It will be done. Canadians will have to pay for it.

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[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the fact that Bill C-15 will make the media crisis worse. A few months ago, the government was supposed to impose a 3% tax on foreign digital platforms. That would have generated billions of dollars in tax revenue that could have been used to help private media outlets, which are really struggling right now. Instead, the Prime Minister wanted to pander to Trump and did not impose this tax. This is a simple matter of tax fairness. American digital platforms do not have to pay taxes, but Quebec and Canadian platforms do.

What does my colleague think about that?

[English]

Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, my friend articulated the Prime Minister's failure to get a deal with the Americans. Obviously, the Prime Minister made a promise to get a trade deal with the Americans by July. He has failed to do that. He has done a whole bunch of things to try to now get that deal, but he continues to fail after having promised Canadians he would get it done.

When it comes to the media, one of the greatest injustices to Canadian democracy is not allowing the media to see what these ministers might sign off on. If they employ—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary East.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the colleague who spoke before me on a great speech. I wonder why he does not speak more in the House. Nonetheless, I congratulate him on a great speech.

We thought Justin Trudeau ran things like Fidel Castro, but the current Prime Minister said, "Hold my champagne." When Canadians scream that there is no democracy happening under the Liberals, the Prime Minister says, "Who cares?"

The Liberals are now trying to ram a 630-plus page budget implementation act through the House without the proper scrutiny, without the proper consultations and without any type of accountability or transparency. They want the opposition to give them free rein on this massive spend, putting each Canadian household a further \$5,400 in debt, when Canadians are already struggling. To those 2.2 million Canadians visiting a food bank every single month because of failed Liberal policies, this budget says, "Here is another \$5,400." For struggling families, because of the industrial carbon tax the Liberals want to increase, it means \$1,000 extra for groceries this year and next year. Paycheques are not as strong as they used to be because of the government's failed policies.

That does not help young Canadians get into housing. As the government, the Liberals are spending more on bureaucracy, which means they block housing. In this budget, it is clear to those young Canadians who have given up on the dream of home ownership that it is even more impossible for them to get a home and that they will be stuck in their parents' basements. The Liberals are creating a fourth bureaucracy when the first three cost them \$89 billion, the result of which is doubled housing costs, doubled rents, doubled mortgages and housing starts that are going down year after year. This is the record of the government.

One of the most pressing issues in this country is crime because of soft-on-crime policies under the Liberal government. They have given more rights to criminals than to victims. When they implemented Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, the Liberals made getting bail easier and reduced sentencing. Now Canadians live in fear. I never thought, when I moved to this country, that we would live in a country where people would be scared to be in their house, be in their cars or drop off their kids. There used to be a time in this country when we could leave our doors unlocked. We would know there was a party at someone's house because everyone's bikes would be outside, on the lawn. Now people lock up their bikes, and these still get stolen. They lock their cars, and these still get stolen. Break-ins are up. This country, under the Liberal government, has become lawless, but the Liberals want it that way.

Any time the Liberals introduce any legislation in the House, Canada becomes weaker, more unaffordable and more unsafe. That is why it is hard to support anything the Liberals do. It is simple, and the stats speak for themselves. Violent crime is up 54% in this country; it was down 34% under the Conservative government. Extortion, which has rocked the South Asian community, is up 330%. Gun crime is up 130% in this country. After 10 years of failed soft-on-crime policies, the Liberals want to trick Canadians into believing that they are going to take this issue seriously, when they are the ones who caused the problem in the first place.

Does anyone really believe that the most anti-development, anti-resource government in Canadian history actually wants to get a pipeline built? They do what they always do. They create confusion among Canadians because they know it keeps Canadians divided. That is what they do to try to keep power. They want to keep all Canadians divided as much as possible. The Liberals' own caucus is divided. They signed a piece of paper, an MOU. They made a grandstand out of it. "We got this paper signed." Then they did what they always do. Their "keep it in the ground" caucus was unleashed to tell Canadians and all the eco-radicals that there would be no pipeline. In fact, the member for Victoria admitted in a video that the MOU does not mean there is a project, a proponent or a pipeline. He spoke the truth we already knew from before.

• (1245)

What does that mean? It means more investment is going to flee from here. Under the Liberals, \$600 billion has already left Canada in jobs, equipment and investment. Under the Prime Minister, \$60 billion has already gone to the U.S. The Liberals have created an environment in Canada that is uninvestable, and jobs are fleeing just as fast. That is why Canadians are struggling.

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This budget doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit, believe it or not. No one thought anyone was as expensive as Justin Trudeau. Then the current Prime Minister came along and broke the record. He doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit. This means higher costs on everything Canadians buy. It is why we are hearing stories of people wanting to leave. This country has become unaffordable and unsafe for all. There is no future. Youth are doing everything they are supposed to do. They are working hard, going to school and trying to pick up a job or two, yet they cannot afford a home, leave their parents' basements or even find a job in their field after they graduate, because the government has chased away so much investment from Canada.

I was in the GTA this weekend. It was unbelievable how many stories we heard, at event after event, meeting after meeting and round table after round table, about how Canadians feel this is not Canada anymore. Many people left other countries to come here and were promised the Canadian dream, where one could work hard, get a good paycheque with low taxes on it, get a home and afford housing and groceries. Most of all, this country would be safe for them. When they got here, it turned into the Liberal nightmare this country has become after 10 years of failed Liberal policies. In fact, everyone I talked to said, "Why did we move here? It feels like a third world country."

That is what we are hearing across this country, because that is what the Liberals have turned Canada into. They want to trick Canadians into believing that this budget, their 10th, in fact, will somehow fix all the problems they created over the last 10 years. The last nine budgets put Canadians in this position, and somehow the 10th one is supposed to fix everything. It is nothing but a trick.

What Canadians need is leadership, jobs, hope and homes, which a Conservative leader can provide. The Conservative leader is someone who not only understands that pain but also sees it every single day when he talks to people. Unlike the Prime Minister, who works in the best interest of his Brookfield, banker and bondholder buddies, we will work on behalf of Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Speaker, I am being heckled because the Liberals cannot handle the truth. I would suggest that members from the GTA also talk to their constituents, whom we talk to on a regular basis. They are fed up with failed Liberal policies.

Only a Conservative government will unleash our resource sector and get pipelines built. We will make sure we get green projects built. We will get hydro, nuclear and every single type of project built in the best interest of Canadians so they can finally have, once again, a country where people work hard, get a powerful paycheque, can afford housing and groceries, and live in safe neighbourhoods.

• (1250)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for working Justin Trudeau and Fidel Castro into his speech. I am sure his "freedom convoy" supporters absolutely love that kind of nonsense. I should be shocked, but am not, by the continuing lack of integrity and by the cowardice shown by the Conservative members

opposite. We are inside the House, where they are protected by parliamentary privilege from personal liability, and where they continually spread misinformation and make false and defamatory statements. It is nonsense that is then amplified by their propaganda networks and foreign actors.

Will the member opposite acknowledge that this nonsense is embarrassing, damaging to our democracy and the reason his party was rejected by voters in the last election?

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Speaker, that is a bit rich coming from the member, whose government is the most corrupt government in Canadian history. No one has had more ethics violations than the Liberal Party has had in the history of Canada's government. We will take absolutely no lessons from the member or his party, who over and over again work in the best interests of their rich, elitist buddies and not in the best interest of Canadians.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the part of my colleague's speech when he talked about the member for Battle River—Crowfoot. He spoke in particular about this member's empathy, which I find rather surprising, since that is not necessarily the first thing that we notice about him in the House.

At the same time, my colleague made me realize that the confidence vote in the Conservative leader is a bit of an elephant in the room when it comes to Bill C-15. What impact will that have on his party's work when it comes to the passage of Bill C-15? The bill still has to go through a few stages, including a study in committee and then the study in the House.

Will the Conservatives propose amendments in committee? What impact will the confidence vote have on the Conservatives' position on Bill C-15? Are they prepared to trigger an election for something as important as the implementation of this budget?

• (1255)

[English]

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Speaker, to address some of the things my Bloc colleague is asking about, we are always putting amendments forward because we want what is in the best interest of Canadians. This bill, obviously, in 600 pages, is going to slam \$80 billion onto Canadians, but the interesting thing is that, at the committee it is supposed to go to, the finance committee, the Liberals are filibustering themselves, so nothing can get done. As usual, they put on this big show that the opposition is blocking everything, when it is they who are, especially in the last few weeks, cancelling their own committees and blocking their own committees. They are filibustering themselves because they do not want anything to be done. They know Canadians know that everything they have been doing is a trick, and Canadians have had it with this government.

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Calgary East and I are from neighbouring provinces, and I really appreciate his insight when it comes to the financial picture of our country.

I would ask him this: It is interesting that the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas is clutching his pearls and saying that we are saying such terrible things, but then he did not say anything that we had said that was not correct. They talk about misinformation, yet they never say what we have said that was not correct, and I do think this next election is going to be about a lot of things. One is corporate welfare. This government gave Stellantis \$15 billion, and then Stellantis announced a deal with the United States for \$13 billion. This government gave Algoma Steel \$500 million, and we lost 1,000 jobs.

Can my colleague point to any investment of taxpayers' dollars that this government has spent that has led to success in terms of the average Canadian getting more employment?

Jasraj Hallan: Madam Speaker, I was looking for that, and I found it: all the investments that supposedly have led to major jobs. The fact of the matter is that nothing this government has done has moved any needle forward. The member pointed to Stellantis, whose jobs left. Just today, there was news about a Calgary company that is shutting down altogether.

The Prime Minister, during the election, said he had his elbows up and was the one who was going to deal with Trump. His elbows are missing, and now he is down on his knees begging for a deal, because he was not able to deliver on all the promises that he broke. That is just the same old Liberal government: It promises a lot but breaks every promise, and at the end of the day, it costs Canadians, costs Canadian jobs and costs our economy.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the great constituents of Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations.

Budgets are not just balance sheets. They have consequences, and the consequences of the budget are already visible: higher food prices, fewer full-time jobs, rising debt and record food bank use. This is not theory. It is the lived, sad reality of families who can no longer afford groceries, seniors forced to return to work to cover basic costs, and workers who cannot find full-time hours. The budget did not fix that reality. It locked it in.

When the Prime Minister told Canadians how to judge his government, he said to judge him by “their experience at the grocery store”. Canadians have done exactly that, and what they see is sticker shock where supper used to be.

Today, Canada has one of the weakest growth performances in the G7. Food inflation is double the Bank of Canada's target, with food prices rising nearly 40% faster than in the U.S. and homebuilding predicted to fall by as much as 13%. This is not recovery. This is the cost of the Prime Minister, the costliest the country has ever seen.

Who would have imagined that we would have a hunger crisis in a G7 country? Last week, Feed Ontario released a hunger report that should shock the conscience of every member in the House, reporting 8.7 million food bank visits in Ontario alone and 24,000 visits every single day. One in 16 Ontarians now relies on food bank usage.

Here is the statistic that breaks the Liberal illusion that everything is fine: Nearly one in four food bank users actually has a job.

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Food Banks Canada puts it bluntly: “Employment is no longer a reliable buffer against poverty.”

That means that people are working but still going hungry. In my community of Brantford, in the past three years, the number of people relying on the food bank in a single year has doubled, from 5,000 to more than 10,000 people. The situation was so bad that the city council had to declare a food insecurity emergency. As the Brantford Food Bank director put it, “In 20 years on this job, I wasn't sure we'd ever get here, where food security is being taken as an emergency in our community.”

When a Canadian city is forced to declare a food emergency, that is not a trend. It is a warning and a direct indictment of the failures of leadership in the country. More than half of food bank users now cite food prices as a reason they are there. More than a quarter cite housing. This is Canada in 2025, with parents skipping meals for their children, seniors choosing between prescriptions and groceries, and workers lining up at food banks after full-time shifts.

“Canada's Food Price Report” for 2026 confirms the worst: Families will pay nearly \$1,000 more per year for food; 86% of Canadians are eating less meat, and beef, chicken and pork are all increasing at once, a devastating trifecta. Canadians are being forced to abandon healthy food because they simply cannot afford it.

Why is this happening? The Prime Minister keeps saying that inflation is global but government costs are very local. Fuel, fertilizer, transport and packaging: Every cost that hits a Canadian farmer now hits a family at the checkout. When Conservatives demanded that the government scrap the hidden taxes on food, namely the industrial carbon tax, the food packaging tax and the fuel standard tax still adding 17¢ per litre, the Liberals voted no. The results speak for themselves.

Under the Prime Minister, Canada now has one of the weakest growth performances in the G7. Productivity is collapsing, and business investment is falling quarter after quarter. Nearly one in five part-time workers wants full-time hours but cannot find them, because the jobs simply are not there. Last month alone, Canada lost 9,400 full-time jobs. At the same time, nearly 30,000 Canadians over the age of 55 were forced into part-time work over the past year, 10,000 of them just in the last month, as rising grocery bills pushed seniors back into the workforce.

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This is what an affordability crisis looks like on a pay stub. Canadians do not need accounting tricks. They need paycheques they can live on.

Let us talk about the day care failure. For young families trying to raise children in Canada, the problem gets even worse. The government loves to point out the \$10-a-day child care as a flagship success, but for families who cannot find a space or are still paying double that, the branding means nothing. Half of parents now report difficulty finding child care. Nearly one-third of families are on wait lists. Over three-quarters of centres have wait-lists, and 86% cannot find staff. Even the Auditor General confirmed that the \$10-a-day promise is not the reality many families experience. Once again, this government announces a photo op and fails to deliver.

• (1300)

The Prime Minister also promised to negotiate a win with the United States, elbows up. Since that promise, tariffs have doubled, negotiations have stalled and foundational industries face collapse. At Algoma Steel, 1,000 workers lost their jobs after \$400 million in Liberal subsidies with no job guarantees. At Crofton, 375 workers lost their livelihoods.

Last week, Canadians were also getting a stunning glimpse of how casually this government handles billions of taxpayer dollars, when it was revealed that the Minister of Industry never even read the contract that handed \$15 billion in subsidies to Stellantis, a deal she later defended after the company announced 3,000 job cuts. Think about that: There were \$15 billion committed and thousands of workers laid off, and the minister responsible never reviewed the agreement. It is complete and utter incompetence. That single moment says everything about this government's approach: no diligence before the cheque is written, no accountability after workers lose their jobs, and no consequences for those who sign away billions without even reading the fine print.

When the government claimed that it was separating operating and capital spending, Canadians were warned that the books were being cooked. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed exactly that. Capital investment was inflated by \$94 billion. True capital spending is 30% lower than claimed. Corporate subsidies were falsely counted as investment. The operating budget will not balance itself for at least five years. The debt-to-GDP ratio is rising again. The new fiscal anchor has only a 7.5% chance of being met. Even with claimed savings, total new spending still rises to \$90 billion, which translates to \$5,400 per family. Even Fitch Ratings warned that this budget erodes Canada's fiscal credibility.

The Prime Minister also promised 500,000 new homes per year. The PBO exposed the real truth: Only 5,200 homes per year will be added. Build Canada Homes will construct just over 1,600 units annually. Rents will rise to over \$2,000 per month for a two-bedroom unit. Instead of restoring the dream of home ownership, the Liberals are forcing Canadians into permanent renting status.

Before this budget, Conservatives offered a clear, responsible plan and solution: Bring down the deficit to the level the Liberals promised, scrap the hidden taxes on food, end the inflation tax by cutting government waste, and restore housing supply by cutting red tape and development charges. Every single one was rejected.

This is the most expensive Prime Minister this country has ever had, and Canadians are paying the bill at the grocery store, at the rent counter and on their credit cards. Every dollar the Liberals spend comes from Canadian pockets. The more the Liberals spend, the higher food costs rise, the higher rent rises and the higher the interest payment rises. Canadians now spend more on debt interest than on health care transfers.

Conservatives will not and cannot support this costly budget. We will continue to fight for an affordable budget, paycheques that beat inflation, homes that people can buy, food that families can afford and an economy that rewards hard work again. Canadians have simply sacrificed enough after 10 years of failed leadership. It is time to end the Liberals' out-of-control spending and bring home an affordable budget for all Canadians.

• (1305)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as members know, just a number of months ago, Canada elected a new Prime Minister and a new government. When I reflect on what the member actually said, he raised concerns about jobs, but we have seen in excess of 50,000 jobs created in each of the last three months. That is the reality of it.

When we talk about productivity, and the Conservatives have been talking a lot about productivity, one of the greatest gains in productivity is in our manufacturing industry. Of course, the Conservatives do not reference those sorts of things.

However, my real beef with the Conservative Party of Canada today is how self-serving its members are in regard to their own political best interest. We just had another member who stood up and spoke about the bail reform legislation and somehow tried to imply that it was the Liberals who were preventing it.

Whether it is the budget bill or the bail reform bill, Canadians understand and need to know that it is the Conservative Party of Canada that is preventing its passage. Would—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations.

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, the level of hypocrisy coming from that member is absolutely through the roof. I am a proud member of the justice committee. I am the vice-chair of the justice committee.

Every member of the Liberal government, including that member, should be ashamed of what has been happening at the justice committee. They have been stalling, filibustering, cancelling meetings without notice at the very last minute, not scheduling any meetings this week, the very last week of our sitting. They do not have the audacity to put together a meeting.

The member needs to look at himself in the mirror. They have failed Canadians. They are not delivering on the promise of bail reform, because they are dragging their heels.

• (1310)

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think it is time we all took a break. I want to take this opportunity to share something positive.

This past weekend, the PwC Tremblant World Cup was held in Mont-Tremblant. Franco-Ontarian athlete Valérie Grenier, who lives in Laurentides—Labelle, made it to the podium, winning the bronze medal.

It is good to talk about positive things. I think we all need to take a little break, eat some turkey and rest before coming back to deliberate on the 634 pages of the budget.

In the meantime, I am hoping my colleague can tell me, with Carney's major shift in oil—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that she cannot name members in the House.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to tell me whether he will still vote against the next budget, since we now know that the Prime Minister has made a major shift in favour of the oil industry.

[English]

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, I offer my congratulations to the member and her riding for that stellar performance and win.

On the issue of the Prime Minister flip-flopping, the Prime Minister wrote a book called *Values*. He was absolutely against everything that he is promising now to Canadians. With all due respect to my friend, I have some deep reservations as to his true motive.

Is this ultimately going to benefit Brookfield in the end? Whenever the Prime Minister goes, four times around the world, meeting with world leaders and stakeholders in Canada and stakeholders in the U.S., Brookfield is not too far behind. He is always at the ready to take a phone call. I really question his sincerity in everything he has announced so far.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier in the chamber, we had a member accuse one of our members of misinformation. This is a continuing trend we are seeing from the Liberals.

Conservatives bring facts to the debate. If the Liberals do not believe us, all they need to do is open a newspaper, read the news on their phone or watch TV, because that is how we get a lot of our facts and information, as well as from all the research, and the hours we spend doing the research. We work very hard on doing this. They get up here and try to gaslight Canadians by saying we

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deliberately spread misinformation, yet they never say what we said was wrong.

I wonder if the member could provide some insight as to why he thinks the Liberals would want to do that.

Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, that is their formula. They love to mislead Canadians and paint a rosy picture that we have never had it so good. They can tell that to the people in my riding who are lining up in record numbers at food banks. They can tell that to a struggling—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Larry Brock: They can stop the heckling, and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake.

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, we know that Canadians want a budget that makes life more affordable, but the Liberal government has not delivered on that. The Liberal government's long-awaited budget is costly and also irresponsible. It is, in fact, the most expensive budget in our history outside of the pandemic years. It is what some call a "credit card budget", and it is Canadians, today and tomorrow, who will be footing this bill.

The Prime Minister promised to keep the deficit at \$62 billion, and that deficit was already too high. However, the Prime Minister did not even keep that promise. Instead, the budget has a deficit of \$78 billion, which is \$16 billion more than what was promised and double what former prime minister Justin Trudeau left behind.

The increased deficit in the budget is part of a series of broken promises. The Prime Minister promised to lower the debt-to-GDP ratio, but the debt-to-GDP ratio is going up. The Prime Minister promised his government would spend less, but the Liberals would spend \$80 billion more. That equates to \$5,400 more in inflationary spending per Canadian household. The Prime Minister promised to help municipalities cut homebuilding taxes in half. Instead, the cost of building homes continues to rise. He also promised more investment, but it is clear that investment is actually collapsing in Canada.

Rising uncertainty, taxes, regulations and debt are all contributing to the loss of investment. Unfortunately, it gets worse. In an attempt to appear fiscally disciplined, the Prime Minister worked out a scheme to split operational spending and capital spending, except not everything the Prime Minister deemed an investment is actually an investment. The independent Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed this.

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The Liberals cooked the books. They made up their own definition of capital spending, one that according to the PBO is overly expansive and expands well beyond the accepted international practice. When the PBO did the real math, capital investment spending was 30% lower. That is a \$94-billion difference. That means the Prime Minister's claim that he will balance operational spending over the next five years is also inaccurate. There is no path to balance operational spending in five years, never mind a path to balance the budget overall.

This matters to Canadians in a very real way. The spending is not abstract. Debt is not free, and it has real consequences. The more the Liberals spend, the more it costs Canadians. Canadians pay for this spending through inflation and through higher taxes. The cost to service Canada's debt is not insignificant. Canada is now paying more to service the national debt than it pays in health care transfers to the provinces. Every dollar used to service the debt is a dollar that cannot go to services that Canadians rely on. It is a dollar that is taken out of the pockets of Canadians and passed on to bankers and bondholders.

The Liberal budget would continue to raise the cost of living for every single Canadian. It would pour fuel on the inflationary fire that the Liberal government has been burning for 10 years. It would make homes more expensive. It would make food more expensive. It would make everything more expensive. Canadians are already facing inflated food prices. Food should be affordable and within reach for every single Canadian. Unfortunately, that is not the reality here in Canada.

• (1315)

Food insecurity is on the rise in record-breaking numbers. Food banks and organizations across the country have been sounding the alarm, but the Liberal government is failing to take food affordability seriously. "Canada's Food Price Report", published just last week, reported that Canadian families will spend nearly \$1,000 more on food next year. It forecast that overall food prices will increase by another 4% to 6%. Those increases are on top of year-over-year increases that have made food unaffordable. Nearly 2.2 million people visited food banks in Canada on a monthly basis this year, and one-quarter of Canadian households are already food insecure. That is 25%.

While the Liberals in this House claim their policies are working, Canadians know they are not. Four out of five Canadians say food is their top expense pressure. Food inflation has outpaced overall inflation for nine straight months. It took decades in Canada to reach one million monthly food bank visits, and under the Liberal government, it took only half a decade to more than double that number. Canadians are turning to food banks more often, more regularly and for longer periods of time. Nearly one in five Canadians visiting a food bank is employed but still cannot make ends meet. One-third of those visiting food banks are children. Parents are skipping meals just to feed their children. Seniors are forced to choose between groceries and their medication. Some parents are watering down baby formula or even buying opened containers wherever they can find it.

This is a clear sign that Canadians are being failed by the Liberal government. These are basic necessities, and for many, they are out

of reach. It is no wonder when we look at the prices. Statistics Canada has reported that the cost of baby formula has skyrocketed by nearly 84% since 2017, with a 30% increase in just the last two years. Something is deeply wrong when baby formula is one of the most stolen food items in Canada, yet the Liberal budget would do nothing to make food more affordable. Not a single measure would deal with the root causes of high food prices, and not one serious step would be taken to reduce the cost of producing food in Canada.

Instead, the Liberal government is increasing the cost of food. Its industrial carbon tax would be going up, and this would increase the cost of fertilizer and farm equipment. It would increase the cost of grain drying, trucking and food processing. Every step of the food supply chain is becoming more expensive, and these costs do not simply disappear. Our farmers are absorbing significant costs. Compounded by increased market uncertainty, many are struggling to keep their operations viable. This is a growing threat to our food security that cannot be ignored.

As these costs increase across the supply chain, it ultimately means significant costs to Canadians at the grocery checkout. This is not the only hidden tax hitting Canadians at the grocery store. The Liberal food packaging tax is a tax on food, the Liberal fuel standard that adds 17¢ per litre is a tax on food, and the Liberals' inflation tax is yet another hidden tax on food. Conservatives have already put forward a motion in the House to cut these hidden taxes on food, and the Liberals rejected that motion. Their budget would double down on their decision.

Canadians deserve better than this credit card budget. This budget is not an affordable budget. This budget would mean more debt, more taxes, more inflation and more broken promises. This budget would be a burden on Canadians who are already struggling to pay for basic necessities. Conservatives are focused on restoring fiscal responsibility and making life more affordable for Canadians; removing the Liberal-made barriers that block major projects and slow down growth; cancelling the job-killing industrial carbon tax; and creating the conditions for real, sustainable investments. The Canadian promise that hard work will earn people a roof over their head, food on their table and a safe neighbourhood to live in should be—

• (1320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We are over time.

With questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister has the floor.

Government Orders

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is from Saskatchewan. She mentioned farmers, and I am glad she is raising the needs of farmers in the House, but there was nothing in the Conservative platform in April for farmers. I would invite her to point to any substantial program the Conservatives have had on offer for business risk management programs, or any programs, to help support farmers at the farm gate level. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, in the platform.

I am surprised the member did not mention the \$1.6-billion child care agreement between Canada and Saskatchewan that was signed in her province and is helping support early education. Perhaps she could talk about the fact that Canada is spending around eight cents of every dollar in the federal budget on debt management. In 1990, under a Conservative government, that was 35¢.

I like and support that there is a member talking about fiscal management, but the government is already doing that with a plan to balance the operational budget in three years and to make sure that we are investing in the capital projects that matter, such as defence. Whether it has to do with farmers, or why she is voting against child care and debt management, maybe the member could address that.

Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, the member highlighted a huge difference between Liberals and Conservatives. Liberals want a program for everything. They want to regulate everything and want to be in everybody's lives, but we see this in every single aspect of every single bill that the Liberal government brings forward.

The member refers to farmers, but I would say we have been the only party, and still are the only party, that has been advocating for the removal of the carbon tax at all levels, whether that is for consumers paying, hidden in their bills, or the industrial carbon tax.

If the member would have listened to what I said, the industrial carbon tax is going up. His government doubled down on that position by increasing it in their latest budget. Honestly, the government needs to do better—

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to know what my colleague thinks about the fact that this budget will perpetuate a deeply unfair tax situation by refusing to reinstate the digital services tax.

Foreign platforms from the U.S. do not pay taxes, while Quebec and Canadian platforms like illico+, ICI TOU.TV and others are required to pay taxes and royalties.

What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, it is not surprising. The government will do whatever it needs to do to get money, whether it is from businesses or people paying income tax, to pay for its out-of-control inflationary spending and debt. Most of it is going to consultants and make-work projects.

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked a lot about food affordability. Food affordability is a major issue across our home province of Saskatchewan, but nowhere more so than in northern Saskatchewan. In northern Saskatchewan, people pay the highest food prices in our province because it costs so much more to truck and transport the food there.

We talked for years about how much the carbon tax affected food prices because of transportation, which the Liberals finally bent on, came around on and scrapped the consumer carbon tax. However, they continue with the industrial carbon tax, the carbon tax on food packaging, fertilizer and front-of-package labelling.

I am wondering if the member has heard anything from the lone Liberal member in Saskatchewan about how he is combatting the higher food prices in northern Saskatchewan?

Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, this is really interesting, because we have seen the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River get up a lot in the House to say that he is the only advocate at the cabinet table for those in Saskatchewan. There have been 27 cases of scurvy identified in that member's riding. What is he doing to advocate for food affordability so people in his riding can afford to eat?

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to get up on behalf of the hard-working constituents of Leduc—Wetaskiwin to weigh in on debates, particularly debates about fiscal issues.

When listening to the debate today, and ultimately after listening to the debate over the last 10 years, it seems that there is an increasing number of Liberals who are standing up to praise their own government, to pat their own government on the back, about ever-increasing, new amounts of spending. That seems to be increasing exponentially as this government gets longer in the tooth. When I say “this government”, I mean the 10-year Liberal government, because I cannot see that anything has changed since the last election. If anything, the spending is getting higher and less responsible.

Watching what is happening in the House is kind of like watching a Liberal minister go to someone's house, maybe a member's house or some other Canadian voter's house. They take \$1,000 from that voter and put together a little parade with a little marching band, party hats, kazoos and whatever the case might be, and then they walk next door with video cameras all fully operating to capture every moment while they hand over \$800 to the neighbour. That is out of the \$1,000 that they collected from the person in the first place. They give the neighbours \$800 and then they broadcast this and post it on social media. The \$200 goes into a pot to pay consultants and new public servants.

Government Orders

We have added over 100,000 public servants over the last decade. The Liberals just do this again and again, and then they come to the House for question period, and when we ask them questions about this strategy of taking \$1,000 and giving back \$800 over and over again to people, they wag their fingers at us, as if to say, "Shame on Conservatives for wanting to take away that \$800." What the Liberals do not say is that we are advocating for them to not take the \$1,000, every single time this process happens, over and over again. Of course, this adds up. It adds up to the tune of, this year, \$78 billion. This year, we are seeing that our government debt now is more than twice what it was when we were in power.

Back in 2015, when Conservatives were in power, we had a balanced budget. We had the richest middle class in the world. In fact, it was not us who said that. The New York Times reported that, for every person in the world who was in the 30th percentile of best off, the 40th percentile of best off or the 50th percentile of best off, of every country in the world, Canadians were the richest. Canadians were the best off, compared to every single country in the world in 2015. Then, we had a change in government. We had a balanced budget in 2015, and now we have rattled off 10 straight years of ever-increasing deficit budgets.

The last Liberal member who got up to speak talked about the interest payments paid by a Conservative government in the late eighties and early nineties. What that Liberal member did not point out was that the interest was run up during 14 out of 15 straight Trudeau government deficits, or 14 deficits in 15 years under the Pierre Trudeau government. It wound up running into a situation, or not "running into" because it was not externally driven, but internally, the government wound up creating a situation where we had an energy crisis, a housing crisis, an economic crisis broadly and an interest-rate crisis. To be fair to the Mulroney government of the late eighties and early nineties, it ran a balanced budget, if we were to take interest payments out of the equation. However, the interest on the Trudeau-era debt wound up being the highest deficits in Canadian history, made up exclusively of Trudeau-era interest payments.

Today, we find ourselves in a situation where we have had another decade of Liberal government and another decade of continuous deficits running up that debt. Today, we are in a situation, not unlike where we were before, where we are now paying more in interest than we are paying in the Canada health transfers. It is insane, quite frankly, that we would be paying more in interest than we are in the Canada health transfers, and that is entirely because of decisions undertaken by this Liberal government.

• (1330)

I will point to one of those decisions, and it is very topical this week. One of those specific decisions was the decision to kill the northern gateway pipeline a decade ago. The Liberal government, when it first came in, made a decision on the northern gateway pipeline, which had been approved, and it was going through its last stages before it would be operational. That pipeline would have shipped 525,000 barrels of oil a day to Asian markets. However, the Liberal government killed that pipeline. It would have meant billions of dollars coming in annually to the Canadian government. It would have had a huge impact on the economy.

Instead of that economic supercharge, which we would have had from that pipeline, the Liberals exacted crushing economic policies that had, by the way, no environmental benefit, while they doubled Canada's debt. We know who did benefit from those Liberal policies. Obviously, it was anybody who had invested in some of the environmental schemes that they had come up with. I would say the current Prime Minister definitely benefited from many of those Liberal policies. As well, the governments, or the people, of Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Venezuela benefited. Maybe it was not the people. Maybe it was the governments, elected or non-elected, depending on what country we are talking about, although in most of those cases they were not elected, that wound up getting very rich, because we decided we were not going to sell our oil. That just left the market open for them to sell more of their oil.

What did Canadians get for that sacrifice, other than a mountain of Liberal debt? We have not heard from anybody in the House of Commons on that. We have not heard any Liberal mention that. During the election campaign, the Prime Minister promised only \$62 billion in debt in Canada. It is astonishing that that phrase would be the restriction, that somehow the promise was made that we would be restricted to \$62 billion in deficit.

If we look back to the early Trudeau days, when there was just going to be tiny deficits, just for a couple of years. Now we are sitting here, 10 years later, and we have gone from a promise of a \$62-billion deficit, and a promise that the new guy was going to be fiscally and economically responsible, and that things were going to be different, to having largely the same front bench that we had back then and, magically, somehow, we have increased the deficit from \$62 billion to \$78 billion, with no explanation.

If we go back to those days of 2015, we had a balanced budget and the richest middle class in the world, which was under the Stephen Harper government, after coming out of a global economic meltdown.

It is interesting that the Liberal member for Winnipeg is giggling over there as he is contemplating maybe how good life was for his constituents at that point in time, because they had jobs. We had the flexibility, as a government, to come to this place and really contemplate what a hopeful future would look like. We had flexibility in our budgets, and we were in control of spending.

We have all of that new spending, and all of those new public servants who have been added in the government, but when we talk to any constituents, and I cannot imagine this is any different for Liberal members of Parliament than it is for Conservative members of Parliament, and ask them to name one area of their life that is better in 2025 than it was in 2015, they cannot do it.

Government Orders

Our health care system, clearly, when we talk to anyone who has experienced the health care system, is struggling and suffering. Housing is incredibly more expensive than it was. It is way more difficult to get a house than it was. We can look at criminal justice measures, and serious violent crime has increased drastically over that time. Any Canadian, any constituent, will tell us those things.

With virtually any measure that we look at, things are worse today than they were 10 years ago. They are worse today than they were one year ago, when this new Prime Minister was touting his new government and his world-leading expertise economically. This has proven not to be the case. I look forward to any Liberal member who actually wants to weigh in on this conversation asking me questions.

• (1335)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are many aspects of the member's comments that I would challenge him on. The issue for me is the ongoing belief that the Conservatives do not want things to pass in the House. They have convinced themselves that it is the government that does not want things passed, whether it is the budget implementation bill we are talking about today, on which the Conservatives continue to talk and talk as opposed to allowing it to go to a committee, or whether it is the bail reform legislation.

There is one reason the bail reform legislation is not going to become law: the Conservative Party of Canada. That is the reason Canadians are being denied bail reform laws, yet the Conservatives are acting as though they were in some wonderland, believing they have nothing to do with it. They need to give their heads a collective shake, wake up and start putting the interests of Canadians ahead of their own party.

Would the member not agree that it is about time?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, there is quite a bit of irony in the question, because if anybody who spends any time watching CPAC were to put a face to the words “talk, and talk, and talk”, it would be the member's face. Nobody takes up more time in the House than that particular member, talking, talking and talking.

People can trust that, as the government spends billions and billions more, and takes billions and billions more from Canadian taxpayers, Conservatives will oppose that every step of the way.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are being criticized for delaying the passage of bills. However, in the case of Bill C-15, most of our requests were denied.

Does my colleague agree that the government, which is a minority government, is behaving like a majority government? It consults very little with the opposition parties and makes very few compromises.

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I would say that the obstruction from the government is at a level we have not seen before in the House.

The member and I have both been members for a long time. There are a lot of things we would not agree on, including some of the most topical issues today. However, the government has tools to move things through the House. It has all the control when it comes to moving things through the House, and it likes to do that without any debate. I do not think that either of us, and we are going to be in agreement on this, is going to allow the government, a minority government, to just pass its entire agenda through the House of Commons with no debate. That is not going to happen.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, time and time again we have heard the member for Winnipeg North referring in the House to committees. In previous sessions he has gotten up and asked us to bring any recommendations we have to committee for the committee to discuss. When we do that, even though they pass through committee, they come into the House and the Liberal Party, along with its friends in the NDP, votes down our recommendations and our amendments.

Today the member for Winnipeg North is standing in his place and saying we should pass the budget implementation bill, which is not an implementation bill, and pass it on to committee, yet the Liberals have shut down committees; they cannot meet. No committees are meeting this week, because the Liberals have shut them all down.

Quite simply, what does the hon. member think the Liberals are hiding? Why are they not being transparent and honest with Canadians when they stand in their place to speak in the House?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. We would like committees to be doing the work they do. When we do see footage from committees, we see why the Liberal members are trying to shut them down. It is because ministers are having a really hard time at committee explaining what it is they are actually doing.

There is another thing: The “just trust us” mentality the Liberals have was sort of the theme of the election campaign. The result of that is that we are going from a \$62-billion deficit to a \$78-billion deficit. That absolutely demands scrutiny from Parliament. We are not going to just trust the government; we are going to hold it to account as Canadians elected us to do.

Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC): Madam Speaker, the budget continues a regimen of massive borrowing that would burden our generations to come. Canada is experiencing an economic structural problem that will need severe action to mitigate further decline of its status among the G7 nations. The severity of our situation is evident by realizing that Canadians' debt-to-disposable-income ratio is now at \$1.75 to \$1; for every dollar of disposable income, Canadians have \$1.75 of debt. This is not good by any measure. This, by the way, is the highest ratio in the entire G7.

Government Orders

Canada has over-leveraged itself, and the budget unfortunately continues the path in the hope of an economic miracle. The severity of the situation will become more acute in 2026, when 60% of mortgages will face renewal, which will create pressure on the entire ballooned real estate market. The Liberals have successfully transformed our once-great nation into a credit card nation and high mortgage leverage nation by borrowing from the future, by printing money, by devaluing the dollar and by ignoring investment in innovation and productive resources.

In the last 10 years, Canada has chosen asset inflation over productivity growth. Is this what our kids and our kids' kids want or deserve? The Liberals have had 10 years to fix our declining international competitiveness and to increase our real GDP, but what we received is fake GDP growth based on non-productive real estate inflation. As this has happened, the Liberals have successfully chased away international investment by imposing cost-prohibitive carbon taxes and unreasonable regulations.

The Prime Minister is chasing other markets while distancing and alienating Canada from the biggest and strongest market in the world: the United States. Yes, we need to make deals with the United States and not disengage, although we need to pursue new markets and trade deals such as the eurozone, South America and Mexico as a necessary diplomatic objective.

The growing national debt and associated interest costs negatively impact productivity and business investment. A perceived lack of sufficient action on core issues like affordability and health care has placed Canadians in a vulnerable state.

The increase in the capital gains inclusion rate from 50 to 66% for corporations, and individual gains over \$250,000, is a major point of contention. Business groups and economists have warned this would discourage private sector investment, potentially drive capital and talent out of Canada and worsen the country's existing productivity problem. There is also criticism that the budget overlooks crucial areas like domestic skills development for major infrastructure projects, relying instead on international talent recruitment.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has raised concerns that the government's fiscal targets may not be met, noting there is a low chance the deficit-to-GDP ratio will decline as projected. The PBO also questioned the government's use of a new capital budgeting framework, which critics see as a deceptive budgeting technique to separate operating and capital expenditures.

A primary criticism is the significant deficit, projected to be around \$78.3 billion for the current fiscal year, which is beyond reckless. The cumulative national debt is projected to climb significantly, leading to high public debt charges that are expected to exceed health transfers to provinces. I guess the waiting lines at the ER and hospitals will continue to get longer. I have experienced this myself recently.

The budget is not going far enough with spending cuts. It is relying too much on new taxes and higher-than-expected revenue to fund its initiatives, rather than on fiscal discipline. It is in essence a continuation of backdoor taxes on the average worker and members of the middle class, who are having great difficulty obtaining a

wage that can keep up with a reasonable living standard. The evidence is glaring as we go to the grocery store to buy essential goods or to a restaurant to enjoy a simple meal.

● (1345)

Budget 2025 leaves millions of people behind. It comes at a time when millions are being forced to choose between rent, heat and food. What is missing from the budget is a plan to ensure that everyone in Canada can eat properly. The budget offers no national target to reduce food insecurity. It offers no meaningful increase to income support for low-wage workers or for people with disabilities.

Food insecurity is not simply a symptom of rising costs; it is a predictable result of inadequate incomes and policy changes. By favouring productivity and fiscal restraint over people's basic needs, and by offering tax breaks that would disproportionately benefit higher earners, budget 2025 risks deepening inequality and entrenching hunger in one of the world's wealthiest countries.

The promised tax cut would provide lower- and middle-class income earners savings of up to \$840 for a family, but according to Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab, the average family will pay nearly \$1,000 more for groceries in 2026. That leaves everyone impacted, even the people who get the maximum tax rebate. The tax break would not even cover the increased cost of food.

The budget lacks meaningful measures to reduce food insecurity for seniors, children who live in poverty, and persons with disabilities. In my community, seniors represent 19% of the population. Children living in poverty in Windsor represent 23.2% of all children in the city, which is the highest in Ontario, and 10.8% of Windsor's population lives in poverty; this means that over 25,000 people in my community are "unable to afford a set list of basic [needs]." Stats Canada has named Windsor the province's southwestern "poverty capital".

Government Orders

Again, people affected, our seniors on fixed income, cannot make ends meet. Many seniors are deciding to cut food use in order to pay rent and utilities. Some seniors are giving up and are now counted amongst the homeless. Families with young children that are living in poverty are watering down formula and milk. They are opting to feed their children food that is less nutritious and is lacking in protein, healthy fats and vitamins. There is a lot of pasta, meatless meals and Kraft Dinner going on. People living with disabilities and who must live on a fixed income as well are having difficulty coping and with accessing the basic needs of food and shelter.

The long-term effects of food insecurity and poor nutrition are characterized by eventual heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, obesity, hypertension and vision loss. Poor nutrition impacts one's physical and mental health. It causes inflammation and insulin resistance, and early-life malnutrition affects poor growth of organ development. These total effects reduce economic productivity and quality of life, and they make managing other health concerns harder. Poor nutrition decreases physical and cognitive capacity for work and shortens life spans.

This weekend I was in the Santa Claus parade. I looked at the faces of my constituents and could tell they were looking to me to provide them with some hope for the future. I can tell the House that I do not see the hope Windsorites need in the budget.

• (1350)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it was heartening to hear the hon. member talk about youth nutrition in Canada, but it is disappointing that the member has been voting against the national school food program, which is contained in this budget, in Bill C-15.

I want to talk about local issues. I know there are challenges in southwestern Ontario, particularly in the auto sector, but the government and the country has added 181,000 jobs in the last three months. There has been 2.6% growth in GDP in the last quarter. In a news article, the CEO of Workforce WindsorEssex said, "We're now at an all-time high when it comes to the number of people working in Windsor-Essex.... We set a new record, not just for all occupations or all sectors working. But even in manufacturing it's a new all-time high".

Will the hon. member recognize that our government's plan, notwithstanding that we have more work to do, is actually adding jobs in Windsor-Essex?

Kathy Borrelli: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but I do not agree with the member opposite. Windsor—Tecumseh has not seen benefits from anything that the government has done recently. There is definite uncertainty when it comes to auto jobs. We do not know what is going to happen with tariffs. We do not know what is going to happen with our automotive plants. When we talk about this new budget, we have a lot of small and medium-sized enterprises that support the auto workers' industry. Guess what. They cannot get any benefits from this new budget. They cannot get write-offs like the great big corporations can.

If there have been added jobs, and I agree with the member that our employment numbers have improved slightly recently, they are

all part-time jobs and they are all temporary. There is no significant increase in productive, full-time jobs in my community at this time.

• (1355)

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Windsor for an excellent speech, albeit with some very sobering facts.

The member talked a lot about nutrition. The Prime Minister has said that Canadians should judge him by the prices in the grocery aisle. However, we know, of course, that food inflation is running rampant. What is she hearing from her constituents about grocery affordability in Canada?

Kathy Borrelli: Mr. Speaker, I have heard from many residents. I have talked to a lot of residents, especially in the past several days and over the weekend. So many are complaining that, even more than a few months ago in the summertime, prices have increased. They have had to cut more of the foods they want and need from their grocery budget. This is totally unacceptable. We need our communities and we need our people to have quality foods and to be able to access them at a reasonable price.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that, as a government, whether it is the budget implementation bill or the agenda of expanding trade opportunities for Canada with other trading partners, this is a government, this is a Prime Minister, solely focused on building a strong Canada and making Canada the strongest of the G7 countries. What we need is more of a buy-in from the Conservative Party by allowing substantive legislation to pass, whether it is Bill C-15, the budget implementation act, or the bail reform legislation, which is being denied for one reason and one reason alone: the Conservative Party and its self-interest.

Does the member not agree that the Conservative Party needs to start putting Canadians ahead of its own political party?

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member opposite made a speech. It was not a question. When it is questions and answers, members are supposed to ask questions and not give a speech. If he wants to speak on the subject, he is welcome to go on the order—

The Speaker: It is questions and comments, and I do not have control over the content of individual members' interventions.

The member for Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore.

Statements by Members

Kathy Borrelli: Mr. Speaker, plain and simple, this budget would do absolutely nothing for people who live on fixed incomes. These people are starving. They are worried about the roofs over their heads. Some are leaning toward homelessness and might end up being homeless. This is unreasonable. This is not sustainable. We need better supports for people on limited incomes.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on the amendment.

Shall I dispense?

An hon. member: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to House*]

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

• (1400)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, we call for a recorded vote.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until later this day at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

of Lake Erie, I know how vital the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence waterways are to the economy, culture and identity of Canada and North America. My communities see every day how these waters sustain jobs, transportation, fisheries and recreation. The stewardship of this shared ecosystem is also a remarkable example of the quiet, effective co-operation between Canada and the United States that has strengthened both countries for decades. We are all better off when we work together.

Later today, a delegation of organizations dedicated to protecting and sustaining these waterways will host a special event for members of Parliament, senators, officials and staff. These conservation, research and governance representatives will be available to discuss their work to keep these waters healthy, resilient and economically strong.

Great Lakes hospitality based along Canada's fourth coast is second to none, and I encourage all members and staff to attend to see for themselves and to learn more about this amazing natural resource.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Jake Sawatzky (New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2025 proposes a measure that businesses across the country have been asking for: the productivity super-education. It gives companies the ability to grow, drive investment and stay competitive in a rapidly changing global market. Manufacturers want it. Clean-tech firms want it. Small and medium-sized businesses want it. They are ready to invest, but they need Conservatives to get to work instead of blocking these investments from flowing to Canadian businesses.

Conservatives have been refusing to study Bill C-15 in committee for weeks, delaying the very tools that businesses need and the economic growth that communities across Canada are counting on. If the opposition were half as serious as its question period theatrics, it would send Bill C-15 to committee.

Are the Conservatives prepared to do the job their constituents sent them here to do, or is their annual holiday party more important than standing up for Canadian businesses?

* * *

GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE WATERWAYS

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the MP for Chatham-Kent—Leamington, a riding on the shores

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CLEAN TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives in the House have long claimed that any sort of climate action is unnecessary and that clean technology alone will help lower emissions. What do they do when we introduce investment tax credits to help bolster Canada's world-class clean-tech sector and the growing clean energy companies creating good, middle-class jobs in communities like my riding of Oakville West? They vote against them. They put petty partisan politics ahead of Canadian industries and Canadian workers. They obstruct and they delay.

The BIA will strengthen and grow the Canadian economy while driving our historic transformation toward a lower-carbon future, work that companies in my riding of Oakville West and across Canada are already leading with innovation, manufacturing and clean energy supply-chain jobs that Conservatives refuse to support. If Conservatives cannot get on board, can they at least get out of the way and stop blocking this legislation?

• (1405)

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach the joyous Christmas season and the promise of a new year, I rise to extend warm holiday greetings to all Canadians. This is a time of celebration, reflection and gratitude, a time to cherish family, friends and the many blessings we share in this great country.

First, I thank my wonderful wife and children for their unwavering love, patience and support throughout another busy year. They are my greatest joy and inspiration. The hard work and commitment of my dedicated staff in Ottawa and back home in Niagara West make everything possible, and I am truly grateful for each of them. I also thank the incredible constituents of Niagara West, which includes Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln, Pelham, Wainfleet and St. Catharines, for their trust, their kindness and the privilege of serving them. It is an honour to call this beautiful part of Canada home.

From my family to everyone, merry Christmas and may we never forget the real reason for the season: the birth of Christ. Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

* * *

[Translation]

THE BUDGET

Carlos Leitão (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear from what is happening at the Standing Committee on Finance that the opposition parties do not want to study the budget or the budget implementation bill. That is unfortunate, because Canadians are counting on us here in the House to get things right.

This budget contains major measures that will shape our economic future, such as the clean electricity investment tax credit. It also advances Canada's consumer-driven banking framework and promotes real competition in our financial sector.

Even if the opposition parties prefer to avoid committing to the budget, we will continue to fulfill our responsibilities and deliver the results that Canadians expect and deserve.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today young people realize they cannot afford rent, let alone a home of their own. This is not normal. Across our cities and towns, tent encampments replace parks, as needles and crack pipes fill our streets and streetcars. Canadians are told to accept chaos as compassion. Small businesses board up. Even full-time workers are using food banks. This is not normal. Violent crime climbs, repeat offenders walk the streets and communities live in fear. Churches are burned, synagogues are vandalized and people of faith wonder when it became too dangerous to open their doors or speak their minds.

None of this is normal. Canadians are being told to lower their expectations and accept this decay as the new normal. A country this rich and this capable should not feel this hopeless. We can restore safety, make homes attainable, reward work and fix what fam-

Statements by Members

ilies depend on, instead of creating dependence on Ottawa. What Canadians are living through should not be and is not normal.

* * *

NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the national school food program is helping out over 400,000 children by providing them with healthy meals and snacks, yet Conservatives called this program “garbage” and voted against it.

Let us talk about what some of the largest advocates for children in Canada have to say. The Breakfast Club of Canada said that “children's well-being must remain a national priority”. Pediatric health experts across the country state that research shows children learn better and have better health outcomes when they have access to nutritious meals. UNICEF said to enshrine it in law. The Canadian Teachers' Federation said to make it permanent. That is exactly what budget 2025 would do.

On Prince Edward Island, meals are made by local restaurants and program hubs using locally sourced food from our producers and processors. Our national school food program is a collaborative approach that supports our children, our food producers and our small businesses, and it strengthens our communities, our provinces and our territories, and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

* * *

COST OF FOOD

Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are hungry. According to a Harvest Manitoba report, over 60,000 Manitobans are turning to food banks just to make ends meet. For many Canadians, there is just not enough paycheque at the end of each month to cover the basics.

This is heartbreaking, and Parliament can do something about it. In the last election, the Prime Minister told Canadians to judge him based on “their experience at the grocery store”. When I speak to folks in my community about the cost of living crisis, what I hear are horror stories. Grocery prices have doubled over the last decade, and the reality is that “Canada's Food Price Report” for 2026 warns that things are only expected to get worse.

This news should be a wake-up call for each and every member in the House. I call on the government to remove hidden taxes on food so Canadians can finally afford to bring home nutritious and affordable meals for their families.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

[Translation]

QUEBEC SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to acknowledge the induction of Jennifer Abel, Laurent Duvernay-Tardif, Diane Roy, Henri Sassine and the legendary Paul Houde and Michel Bergeron into the Quebec sports hall of fame. I am especially delighted to note the induction of two people from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, weightlifter Christine Girard and cyclist Marc Lemay.

Christine Girard, a gold medallist from Rouyn-Noranda, is a powerful symbol of clean sport thanks to her determination in London. She first won a bronze medal, already an incredible feat, and then won gold a few years later.

There is also the former Bloc Québécois member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, my mentor and friend Marc Lemay. This cyclist from Amos and recognized community builder is known for his past commitments to the Tour de l'Abitibi and to Cycling Canada. He remains active as president of the arbitral board of the Union Cycliste Internationale. We also have him to thank for making mountain biking an Olympic sport.

I offer my congratulations to both athletes, with a special shout out to Marc Lemay on this major milestone. Abitibi—Témiscamingue will forever be very proud of them.

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HIGH-SPEED RAIL

Karim Bardeesy (Tatiaiako'n—Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our history is filled with examples of projects that connect our two largest provinces. Today, we have another opportunity to continue this proud tradition. One of our major national projects is the Toronto-Quebec City high-speed rail project.

The next step to get there is to pass Bill C-15, which enacts the high-speed rail network act. What is the holdup? It is the opposition, which is playing games to delay the passage of this bill.

[English]

This is why we cannot have nice things.

[Translation]

Quebeckers and Ontarians have waited long enough. Every major country in the world except Canada has high-speed rail connecting their two biggest cities. It is time to stop playing games. It is time to move Canada forward.

* * *

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently told young Canadians that they would need to make more sacrifices while he and his associates at Brookfield shield themselves from paying Canadian taxes. We all know Brookfield is Canada's number one tax-dodger. As chair of Brookfield,

the Prime Minister helped the company avoid \$6.5 billion in taxes through offshore tax havens.

The Prime Minister, we all know, tabled the most expensive budget in Canadian history outside of COVID, ballooning the budget to unprecedented highs. We are left with higher taxes, slower growth and generational debt. Canadians are lining up at the food banks in record numbers, including 23,000 in my city.

The Prime Minister needs to come clean. Is he here to serve Canadians, or Brookfield and his friends?

* * *

THE BUDGET

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, residents in Whitby, like communities across Canada, expect Parliament to pass the budget implementation act. Why? It will deliver the generational investments they have been asking for. That means parties opposite need to stop the procedural delays and stop blocking the affordable housing, health care and housing infrastructure Canadians rely on.

This budget bill would advance the top priorities in my riding: affordable housing, waterfront redevelopment and long-overdue improvements to health care. It would help build the health care infrastructure families need so they can get care closer to home and shorter wait times. In Durham, that would mean real progress on the Whitby Hospital and our hospice in Whitby. Members opposite have already voted against \$5 billion in health care infrastructure funding.

The build communities strong fund and Build Canada Homes would help municipalities rapidly increase housing supply. For Whitby, that would unlock over 11,000 new units at our waterfront. I will keep—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Gateway.

* * *

INTERPROVINCIAL PIPELINES

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a pipeline to the Pacific is absolutely necessary to unlock Canada's energy potential, moving a million barrels a day to Asia at world prices, creating good-paying Canadian jobs, boosting take-home pay and strengthening a truly self-reliant economy. That is why Conservatives introduced a motion that uses the same language as the Liberals' own MOU with Alberta. However, the Liberal caucus is divided, with the Prime Minister himself claiming the pipeline must have B.C.'s consent. The Prime Minister is saying one thing to Alberta and another thing to British Columbia.

Let us be clear: Under the Constitution, only the federal government has authority over interprovincial pipelines. The only thing standing in the way is Liberal delay.

Will the government vote for our motion to approve a pipeline to the Pacific, just like the Prime Minister promised in that MOU?

* * *

• (1415)

DISABILITY TAX CREDIT

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives love to ask the same questions over and over again about supporting Canadians with disabilities. They hold press conferences, repeat the same slogans and pretend to care, but when it is time to actually remove barriers and deliver the supports Canadians need, what do they do? They delay.

Budget 2025 delivers actions. We are breaking down the red tape that blocks access to the Canada disability benefit. We are investing \$115 million to lower barriers and provide a one-time supplemental payment for every disability tax credit certification or recertification that opens the door to the benefit. That is for the more than six million Canadians with disabilities who should not need a lawyer to access support. That is why we are simplifying the disability tax credit process. As promised in the fall economic statement, the benefit will be exempt from taxable income, because support should actually mean support.

Conservatives cannot claim to stand with Canadians with disabilities while they are voting to keep these barriers exactly where they are. The question is simple: Will they pass Bill C-15 or keep hiding behind slogans?

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COST OF FOOD

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians to judge him by “their experience at the grocery store”. Well, what Canadians see on the shelves now is Liberal failure. The food price report confirms what Canadians already know: Food prices are out of control and are going to get worse.

In 2015, when the Liberals took office, the average weekly food bill was about \$160. In a decade, it has doubled to \$360. That is \$17,500 to feed a family of four in Canada. That is unbelievable. The food price report told Canadians that it is going to get worse with the largest increase ever, another \$1,000 a year for a family of four.

Instead of lowering prices, the Liberals are piling on taxes that make it more expensive to grow food, transport food and buy food. Food inflation in Canada is 50% higher than the Liberals' own target. It is rising 48% faster in Canada than it is in the United States. It is time to end the misery.

Will the Liberals not end the hidden taxes on food so Canadians can afford Christmas dinner?

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party of Canada, in particular the leader of the Conservative Party, just does not get it. It is about building Canada strong. The support for Canadians is there in the budget. While ev-

Oral Questions

ery Liberal member of Parliament and the Prime Minister are focused on building Canada strong, Conservative Party members are solely focused on the party's best interest. It is time they put Canadians' interests first.

That means allowing legislation such as bail reform legislation and budget legislation to pass. There is only one thing standing in the way of their passage: the Conservative Party of Canada and the leader of the Conservative Party. They should get off their back ends and get to work.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Christmastime is here and the Liberals are already acting like grinch, but Canadians are the ones who should be unhappy given grocery prices. Canadians deserve delicious, affordable meals, and yet Dalhousie University estimates that they will have to pay an extra \$1,000 for groceries next year, for a total of \$17,600.

This is all because of the Liberals' inflationary taxes and deficits. Why are the Liberals forcing Canadians to feed a big government instead of feeding their families?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell that it is Monday. I see that my colleagues are happy, but the Leader of the Opposition is dreaming. I know that Christmastime is here, but he is talking about some imaginary tax.

Canadians know better. Our budget contains good news. The most significant measure that we introduced was a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. The budget lays out a series of measures that will grow Canada, create jobs and grow our economy.

I hope the Conservatives will wake up before Christmas and vote in favour of the budget.

• (1420)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Christmas, the Prime Minister is the Grinch of the grocery store. According to Dalhousie University, the cost of groceries will be up \$1,000 in 2026, for a total of \$17,600 just to feed a family of four.

Oral Questions

It is the Liberal Grinch, who brings in an industrial carbon tax on farm equipment, fertilizer and food processors; the Liberal Grinch with a food packaging tax; and the Liberal Grinch with a \$78-billion inflationary deficit. Will he get rid of all of these hidden grocery taxes so Canadians can feed themselves at Christmas?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is Monday and we have good news. Canadians know it. It is all in the budget. There is a lot of good news—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The minister cannot display the budget book like that. If he wants to read something, that is one thing, but he cannot hold it up to show the whole House and those watching at home. The minister can continue.

[*English*]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I understand. I think the budget would be a great Christmas gift for all Canadians.

I just hope the Conservatives will wake up and make sure that they vote for the budget before Christmas. We are going to build our nation. We are going to create jobs. We are going to build housing. We are going to create infrastructure. This is the best gift they could give to Canadians. I just hope they will do the right thing.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if they want to combat their own cost of living crisis, the Liberals would focus on approving pipelines that would sell more oil and boost our Canadian dollar so Canadians could buy affordable food and homes.

In fact, there was such a pipeline, the northern gateway. The Liberals killed it in a 2016 cabinet decision, a decision the Prime Minister supported. They further blocked it with a Liberal ban on tanker traffic off the northwest B.C. coast.

The Prime Minister claims to have changed his mind in a recent MOU. Will he be able to change the minds of fellow Liberals to vote for his own MOU and allow a pipeline to the Pacific?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day because the Conservatives are divided.

The Conservative premiers across this country support this MOU in its entirety. The Leader of the Opposition is seeking to divide this country, and we can see through that cynical tactic. The MOU is about building a strong country. It is about doing it in an environmentally responsible way, in partnership with indigenous peoples. It would be great if the opposition joined all the other Conservatives and all of us in building this country strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are trying to do.

In the spirit of Christmas, I decided to take a great act of generosity and lift the words right out of the Prime Minister's MOU in order to support a pipeline to the Pacific and a repeal or an overriding of the Liberal tanker ban.

Now, of course, it would mean Liberals would have to admit they were wrong, admit they were wrong to block that pipeline and wrong about the tanker ban. Will, in the spirit of Christmas, Liberals admit they were wrong, vote for their own wording, approve a pipeline and get rid of the tanker ban?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of Christmas, I would invite the Leader of the Opposition not to cherry-pick parts of the MOU but to support the entire MOU, which is what all of the Conservative premiers across this country are doing, which is what this side is doing. It is how we will build.

Stop being cynical, and build this country with us.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the only division here is that the Prime Minister is divided against himself. The Prime Minister opposed the pipeline to the Pacific. Now he claims he supports it. He supported the tanker ban. Now he claims he opposed it. This is the Prime Minister who said he wanted to keep half of our oil in the ground, and now he pretends to have changed his mind. He signed an MOU. He says one thing in B.C., the opposite in Alberta, and here in the House of Commons, he hides under his desk.

Why will the Prime Minister not stand up, take a position and announce he is voting in favour of his MOU language to build a pipeline?

● (1425)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Alberta supports the entire MOU. The Premier of Saskatchewan supports the entire MOU. The Premier of Ontario supports the entire MOU. It would be great if the Conservatives would join us in supporting the entire MOU and building this country strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is suggesting there are parts of his own MOU he does not support. The MOU says there would be a pipeline to the Pacific. I took the wording right out of the agreement. There would be an overriding of the tanker ban. I took the wording for that right out of the MOU. Now the Prime Minister is hiding under his desk. Liberal members on one side of the country are saying they are against, while they are pretending in Alberta that they are in favour.

Why do they not stand up in the House of Commons, look Canadians in the eye, take one position, vote for a pipe to the Pacific and override the tanker ban?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and all of us and all Conservative premiers and most people in this country support every part of that MOU. What is more, the Leader of the Opposition stands in this place and says to the people of Alberta that that little thing they said was progress for their province, that made them a leader in renewable technologies, made them a leader in nuclear energy, made them a leader in interties, made them a leader in conventional electricity, is all off. He just wants this one thing. Alberta is—

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

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for weeks, the Conservatives have been trying to sabotage Bill C-9 and the Bloc Québécois's amendment to put an end to the religious exemption for hate speech in the Criminal Code.

We have learned that the Prime Minister's Office has also been quietly sabotaging the work of the Bloc Québécois and the Minister of Justice. If we want to know where the Prime Minister stands on any issue, we just need to look at the Conservatives' position.

Why would the Prime Minister rather sabotage his own bill than put an end to the religious exemption?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we propose measures to combat hatred across the country. It is very important that the House pass Bill C-9 to ensure that the Criminal Code protects communities.

When it comes to the religious exemption, we need to work with the various parties to understand their perspectives, but the decision will be made by the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I look forward to hearing what they have decided after the next committee meeting.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has been promising a bill to combat hate speech for six years. That is six years of making promises to groups that feel threatened and six years of saying that it is important to take action against hate.

Their bill actually had a chance of passing for once, provided that the religious exemption was abolished, as unanimously called for by the Quebec National Assembly, but the Liberals blew it. They are backtracking once again.

Why is the Prime Minister choosing to side with the Conservatives and the religious right rather than Quebec and concerned groups?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly we have a responsibility to combat crime in general, including hate crimes, all across the country. The government needs to introduce legislation

to implement measures that will combat hate and improve the bail system.

[English]

It is essential that we continue to do what we can to fight crime in this country. We have seen delay and obstruction come from the Conservative Party. I look forward to collaborating with all parties in a minority Parliament, and I will very much look forward to the recommendations from the justice committee as it considers potential amendments to the current bill.

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights were set to vote on repealing the religious exemption. However, the Liberals cancelled the committee meeting, and it looks like they are going to cancel it again tomorrow and Thursday.

The Liberals are walking away from their agreement with the Bloc Québécois and turning their backs on Quebeckers. They are giving up on Bill C-9. The Prime Minister rebuked his justice minister for siding with Quebec over the religious right. The Liberals' chief concern is combating hate, but that is falling by the wayside.

How can the Liberals justify this about-face after so many broken promises?

• (1430)

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this particular bill, since inception, was designed to combat hate in this country and to offer protections for minorities, including religious minorities, who are facing hate. My priority is to see the bill adopted so we can offer protections for communities who, frankly, do not deserve to be faced with the hate crimes that they have been subjected to.

That is going to require that we collaborate with different parties that have different points of view. I thank my colleague for the conversations we have been able to share. I look forward to seeing the decision that is going to be taken, not by an individual minister but by the justice committee, as it considers potential amendments going forward. I very much look forward to seeing the results of those deliberations, and I hope we can see the swift adoption of the bill.

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TAXATION

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said he should be judged by the price of food at the grocery store. The food price report gave the Liberals a failing grade. It confirmed that food prices are going to increase by \$1,000 a family next year, a cost they simply cannot afford. Canadians did not need a report to tell them that. They are experiencing it every single day. Canadian food banks are on the brink.

Oral Questions

In Foothills, the Okotoks Food Bank served more than 21,000 families last year. That is unbelievable.

Why is the Prime Minister forcing Canadians to food banks instead of reducing taxes on farmers, fuel and food?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition party likes to talk about farmers, but let us talk about what farmers were going through last year, when 66% of agricultural land in Canada was experiencing drought, extreme drought, which drove up the price of beef. Not only that, but all across the world, prices for imports like coffee and tea and cocoa and strawberries and oranges went up as a result of climate change.

We focus on the things we can control. Do members know what we can control? We can control putting more money in the pockets of Canadians. Why will they not get on board?

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this did not happen yesterday. A decade ago, when the Liberals took office, the average weekly food bill was about \$160 a week. A decade later, it has doubled to \$340 a week. That is \$17,500 to feed a family of four. That is unbelievable in a country like Canada.

Canadian food banks cannot manage the load. These are not just strangers. These are friends, families, co-workers and neighbours, all relying on food banks.

Why is the Prime Minister sticking to his ideology, increasing taxes to grow the food, transport the food and buy the food, instead of lowering those taxes so Canadians can afford a meal?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not focused on imaginary taxes. We are focused on what actually helps Canadians. Do members know what helps Canadians? More money in their pockets helps Canadians.

A decade ago, the Canada child benefit was worth up to \$6,000. It is now worth up to \$7,200. It has kept pace with inflation. It has made sure that families have what they need to buy those children the food they need. We have not stopped there. Everything we do is focused on making sure Canadians can weather the tides, no matter if they are good times or bad.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians he should be judged by prices at the grocery store. The results are in, and the Liberals have failed.

In my community of Brantford, the city council declared a food insecurity emergency. Liberal inflationary spending is causing a run at food banks. Grocery bills have doubled, and the outlook for 2026 is even worse.

After all of this damage, will the Liberals finally admit that their taxes and reckless spending caused this crisis and scrap them now before even more Canadians go hungry?

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us drill down into the report everybody seems to be talking about. Let us quote it: “Food prices are

influenced by a variety of global factors, including climate change, geopolitical conflicts, input and energy costs...food distribution, food processing...and regulations”.

It is not the Liberal Party. It is what is happening around the world, everywhere around the world. Let us get serious about this and help Canadians.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are tired of excuses. They want groceries they can afford. The food price report put it bluntly: If 2025 was difficult for Canadian households, 2026 will not be easier. After the most expensive Prime Minister in Canadian history has already shattered household budgets and forced families into desperation, Canadians are now being told the pain will only deepen.

Will the Prime Minister commit today, yes or no, to scrapping the industrial carbon tax and the fuel tax on food production, or will he keep choosing ideology over empty stomachs?

● (1435)

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already gone down this path. The Canadian Climate Institute has said there is a negligible impact on the price of food; the industrial carbon tax has a 0.08% impact, so we know that is not the case. There are other factors in the world like a geopolitical trade war, climate change, and drought in the prairie provinces. These are all adding to the rising cost of food. The Conservatives know that, so let us get on board and treat Canadians fairly.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one expected the verdict to be this tragic when judging the Prime Minister by prices at the grocery store. I heard from an 82-year-old woman who was forced to leave her hometown of Cambridge and her family just to afford groceries and rent. Lacy, a single mom from Cambridge, told local media she spends her days asking where the sale is, clipping coupons and skipping meals, just to feed her son. This is the reality for thousands of Canadians. Families are forced to buy whatever they can afford, not what is healthy or good for them, if they eat at all.

When so many families, seniors and working adults are going hungry, how can the government possibly justify any more inflationary—

*Oral Questions***TRANSPORTATION**

The Speaker: The hon. Secretary of State for Financial Institutions.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader's heart is two sizes too small when it comes to delivering affordability for Canadians. We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We cut the tax for first-time homebuyers. We are continuing to deliver on affordability, on the school food program and on the personal support workers tax credit.

On this side of the House we are focused on affordability. It is time for the Conservative leader to let the light in, let his heart grow and join us in delivering affordability for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister told Canadians that he should be judged by the cost of groceries. That is perfect. I hope he has a good lawyer because the verdict is brutal. According to *Le Journal de Montréal*, 36% of Quebecers are experiencing food insecurity. The most tragic thing about all this is that 41% of them have a job. Hunger is hitting so hard that Quebec's food banks received a record 3.1 million requests in one month.

When will these Liberals finally stop their inflationary spending so that Canadians can afford to feed themselves?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our investments are helping families. Budget 2025 includes a lot of investments for families and children. This includes Canada's national school food program, which will help families keep up to \$800 a year in their pockets. There is also the Canada child benefit, which represents up to \$8,000 per child under six. That benefit is indexed to inflation.

On this side of the House, we are there for Canadian families and children.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is very unfortunate, because it is not working. This is the nightmare facing a family of two parents and three children in my riding. Because they are struggling with inflation, they are spending the winter in a trailer. They were so ashamed that they did not dare ask for food. It was a frontline worker who stepped in and requested food assistance for them.

Now a report confirms that next year, it will cost \$1,000 more to feed a family. When will the Prime Minister stop his inflationary spending and give Quebecers back their dignity? It is as simple as that.

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take these issues very seriously on this side of the House. We are not fixated on imaginary taxes. We are here to help Canadian families. One of the first measures we implemented as a government was a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. That is how we help families, and that is how we help children. We are here to do the work.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Washington is asking the federal government to do more to fight the scourge of Driver Inc. truckers. Even the Americans are fed up with the public menace these drivers pose on roads on both sides of the border. Yes, the Liberals have echoed our call to force companies to report the income of independent drivers, but the U.S. embassy is saying that, while this is a step in the right direction, it is not a magic bullet. The Bloc Québécois proposed 10 measures, and the Liberals adopted only one of them. That is not good enough. As for the rest, they are shirking their responsibilities.

When will they take this issue seriously?

• (1440)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite. We are the ones taking this issue seriously. That is why we are proposing concrete measures, including tax measures, information sharing measures and corrective measures under the Canada Labour Code.

We are taking all of these measures. Then, to everyone's surprise, the Bloc Québécois voted against the budget, the same budget that will solve the federal Driver Inc. problem and ensure that we make significant progress on this issue. I hope the Bloc Québécois will come to its senses.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals had done enough on the Driver Inc. issue, the Americans would not be demanding that they do their job now. Washington is getting impatient. We need a formal inquiry to get to the bottom of the exploitation of drivers in the trucking industry, particularly foreign drivers. It is spreading like a cancer. We need to stop temporary immigrants from incorporating in the trucking industry. We need a public registry of non-compliant businesses that includes penalties imposed. Not only are the Liberals not taking action, but they are blocking work in committee.

How many accidents will it take before they wake up?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): That really takes the cake, Mr. Speaker. The member is well aware that it is the provinces that certify truck drivers, inspect trucks and hire traffic controllers. Similarly, U.S. states issue driver's licences and send drivers to Canada as well.

For the first time in its history, the Bloc Québécois is asking the federal government to interfere in an area of provincial jurisdiction. They should own up to it.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians he should be judged by the prices at the grocery store.

Oral Questions

Most people ask Santa Sarah from GoCleanCo for something they would not normally buy for themselves, such as a new winter coat or a fancy new vacuum, but this year there were more asks for needs than for wants. One mom from Kelowna asked for groceries. She shared that after rent was paid and she had put 10 dollars' worth of gas into her car, she was left with \$3 for the next two weeks. She has a baby in diapers.

Does the Prime Minister think that people's asking Santa for groceries is okay in this country?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking real action on affordability, on protecting women's economic security and on empowering women across the country.

We are introducing a middle-class tax cut that is going to benefit 22 million Canadians across the country, and we are making the national school food program permanent. This is going to feed kids at school, while putting more money back into Canadians' pockets. We are also making housing more affordable through Build Canada Homes; this is going to help give single mothers, as well as families, a safe place to live. We are also making tax filing automatic for 5.5 million Canadians.

This is real impact for Canadians, and that includes women and families across the country.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal food inflation is crippling Canadian families. The Prime Minister told Canadians to judge him by the prices at the grocery store, and he is failing.

More and more Canadians are relying on charity, simply to make ends meet. Thirty-three per cent of food bank users are children, and infant formula is in high demand at food banks, which is no surprise; a container now costs nearly \$50, up 84% in the last eight years.

Does the Prime Minister care that feeding babies has become a daily struggle for Canadian families, yes or no?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my heart goes out to parents facing challenges, and we care about families.

While Conservatives amplify panic instead of offering a single solution, the evidence is clear. Research from the C.D. Howe Institute confirms that the Canada child benefit is one of the most effective tools we have to reduce child poverty and help families afford essentials.

Let us be honest: Conservatives voted against it. They voted against it then, and they vote against supports now for families and children. Their actions speak louder for themselves.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister once said that the grocery aisle would be his report card. Well, today in that aisle is a mother standing still, staring at the price of baby formula, which has gone up 84%. She does the math in her head and wonders what she is going to cut next, because feeding her baby is not optional. Under the Liberals, even

that has become a source of fear and anxiety. Their policies have driven up the cost of growing, shipping and selling food.

When will the Liberal government stop piling on taxes, stop its inflationary spending and let mothers afford the formula their babies need to thrive?

• (1445)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the opposition focuses on imaginary taxes, we are focusing on real supports for Canadians, and that includes the Canada child benefit that keeps up with inflation, seniors benefits that keeps up with inflation, and a dental care plan that allows Canadians to get their teeth fixed, for God's sake, which is something the Conservatives vote against time and again. I ask myself what support for Canadians the Conservatives would actually vote for, because for them it is sink or swim.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians he would be judged by the cost of groceries. Well, the 60,000 Manitobans who are lined up at food banks each month have judged him. They judged him based on grocery prices, which have not come down. They judged him because even though they are working multiple jobs, they are not able to put food on their own table. They have done everything right, but the Prime Minister has failed them.

The question is very simple: When will the Liberals end their inflationary spending and taxes so Canadians can afford to put food on their own kitchen table again?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party is a party that voted against targeting the Canada child benefit to the people who needed it the most. It is a party that voted against dental care for seniors. It is a party that voted against the school food program. Time and time again the Conservative Party has voted against affordability programs.

Canadians can judge. Canadians know that on this side of the House we are focused on delivering affordability for Canadians.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know the truth about the other side of the House, which is that under the Liberals, their grocery bills are still going up. What the Liberals have done has made life more expensive, not less.

Oral Questions

How much worse does it have to get before the Liberals realize that there are disastrous tax hikes, packaging standards and out-of-control spending that are responsible for 60,000 Manitobans' now having to rely on food banks each month just to eat? How can the Liberals live with themselves? Will they take ownership, cut the red tape and the spending, and bring affordable grocery prices back for hungry Canadians?

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to take the member and the Conservative Party seriously, frankly, because the budget actually contains a tax cut for 22 million Canadians. They stand in the way of progress of the bill's being advanced to help support Canadians. They vote against the national school food program.

Talking about food, there was not one single thing in the Conservative platform for farmers in this country in April 2025. That is why we are on this side of the House. We are working for agriculture producers. We are working to help reduce taxes and to help support Canadians across this country.

* * *

FINANCE

Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, residents of Carleton have made it clear that they want leadership and an economic vision for the country. Budget 2025 would reduce taxes for 22 million Canadians, make a national food program for children—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I think we all got off on the wrong foot on that one. We will have to take it from the top.

Bruce Fanjoy: Mr. Speaker, residents of Carleton have made it very clear that they want real leadership and an economic vision for this country. Budget 2025 cuts taxes for 22 million Canadians, makes permanent the national school food program and invests tens of billions of dollars in infrastructure and major projects across the country. These are actions that will improve the lives of Canadians.

Can the Minister of Finance update the House on how the budget implementation act would help strengthen our economy and on why it is being stalled?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even the Conservatives can feel the passion in that question.

The people of Carleton will know that there is only one reason alone why these key pieces of legislation have not yet been passed: It is the opposition partisan game. Even ahead of Christmas, the Conservatives are stopping legislation for first-time homebuyers. They are stopping the creation of tens of thousands of jobs. They are stopping the national school food program.

On this side of the House, we are going to build Canada strong.

* * *

• (1450)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants us to believe he disagrees with everything that he

wrote about pipelines over the last 10 years. He supported the Liberals' cancelling a west-coast pipeline in 2016, in his 2021 committee testimony. The Liberals' tanker ban off the west coast makes a pipeline impossible.

Will the Liberals admit they were wrong about pipelines and wrong about the tanker ban and vote for our motion to approve a pipe to the Pacific and remove the tanker ban, just like the Prime Minister promised Alberta in the MOU?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really sad that the Conservatives are divided, because the Premier of Alberta supports the entire MOU, the Premier of Saskatchewan supports the entire MOU and the Premier of Ontario supports the entire MOU. Canadians can see through the Conservatives' cynical ploy to pick and choose. Why do the Conservatives not come on board with all of us and all the provinces, and vote for building Canada?

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are talking out both sides of their mouths.

The Prime Minister tells his “keep it in the ground” caucus there will be no pipeline. He tells Alberta that there will be one. He says he supports a tanker ban, but then promises to override it. He is going to flip-flop regarding the pipeline until after the election, pretending he wants to build one without ever offending his loony left Liberals.

Will he stand up to his “keep it in the ground” caucus, get out of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member was not targeting a specific MP on this side, but it still was maybe not the nicest language.

He may continue.

Jasraj Hallan: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talks out of both sides of his mouth. He tells the “keep it in the ground” caucus there will be no pipeline, while promising Albertans that there will be. He says that he supports a tanker ban, and then promises to override it. He is going to flip-flop on the pipeline until after the election, pretending he wants to build—

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member opposite to read the entire MOU. Then maybe he could join the premier of his province and support the MOU like all of us and all of the other premiers. Why does he not get on board and build Canada strong?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a decade ago, the Liberal government killed the northern gateway pipeline, which would have shipped 525,000 barrels of Canadian oil per day to Asian markets. The value of that oil would have been billions of dollars coming annually into the Canadian economy. Instead of that economic supercharge, the Liberals enacted crushing policies with no environmental benefit, while doubling Canada's debt. That Liberal political decision greatly benefited the economies of other oil-producing countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Venezuela and Russia.

What did Canadians get from that sacrifice other than a mountain of new Liberal debt?

Hon. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has answered that question a number of times already today. What is clear to me is that the Conservative Party members do not see the need to be investing in our economy.

We put forward a plan in the form of a budget, and that budget would see over \$50 billion going straight into the community of each and every member of Parliament in this room. It would create community centres and recreational centres. It would create local infrastructure that would benefit Canadian families from coast to coast to coast, and the Conservatives seem to be against everything that is good for Canadians.

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, back to the actual topic, the Liberal MP for Victoria defiantly stated that he is “decisively not in support.” The Liberal member of Parliament for Vancouver Granville has said that it must have B.C.'s consent. The Liberal MP for Fleetwood—Port Kells went further, saying that any pipeline must have the consent of the Premier of British Columbia. Without support from that one Canadian, he said emphatically that “there will be no pipeline”.

Will the Prime Minister stand up to his “keep it in the ground” caucus, or is his real plan simply to delay any pipeline until after the next election when he can kill it?

• (1455)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that member is saying that we should be building a pipeline without having partnerships with first nations and over the objections of the democratic and duly elected provincial Government of British Columbia. I do not know whether that is what that member is saying; it seems to be what he is saying. If he could perhaps clarify for the House and for the people of Alberta and British Columbia, that would be very helpful.

For our part, we are going to work with British Columbia, we are going to work with first nations and we are going to execute this MOU, every part of it.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised Canadians he would build now and move at unimaginable speeds, but eight months later, all we have is a questionable MOU that punts the pipeline proposal down the road. It does not create jobs and it does not boost the economy. All it does is give Premier Eby another excuse to keep saying, “over

my dead body”. The Constitution is clear that B.C. has no veto, so why are the Liberals stalling?

Will the Liberals admit they were wrong and vote for our motion to approve a pipeline like the Prime Minister said he would?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this time the question is from a member of Parliament from British Columbia. The member of Parliament from British Columbia wishes to now let it be known that he would stomp all over the duly elected government of the Province of British Columbia and stomp all over indigenous and first nations' involvement in any such advances. The member wants it to be made very clear that there is only one part of that entire MOU that appeals to him.

For our part, we like it all. We are working on it all, and we are going to work with others to get it done.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are hemorrhaging jobs at a staggering rate in B.C. Over the last two weeks, thousands of British Columbians have lost their jobs because of the Prime Minister. The pipeline will create jobs and make our economy self-reliant. We need this. Our nation needs this, but the Liberals cannot get their story straight. One MP says no pipeline without B.C.'s consent, and the member for Victoria says he is “decisively not in support.” They say one thing to one group and another to another group.

How can Canadians take the government seriously when it cannot get its story straight and cannot get its caucus in line?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk a bit about British Columbia, the single province with the most projects of national significance and the largest capital investment in the history of this country, as announced by my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources. If that is not enough, how about three straight months of job growth? How about inflation being down? How about wages being up over the rate of inflation? How about celebrating the economic progress and successes of this country instead of sitting over there and talking Canada down?

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians he would be judged by the prices at the grocery store. In British Columbia, food bank use is entrenched, with about one-quarter of families food-insecure. A family of four will pay about \$1,000 more for food next year. We know this out-of-touch Prime Minister does not do his own shopping, but Canadians still have to pay at the till.

Will he admit to B.C. families that he does not know a thing about grocery prices and that, under the Liberals, higher bills are the new normal, or will he adopt Conservative ideas to make life more affordable, like cutting inflationary spending and ending the industrial carbon tax?

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, it is hard to take the member and that party seriously on questions. The member has a lot of farmers in his riding. They are the ones who contribute in this country. In the platform of April 2025, there was not a single platform commitment from the Conservative Party for farmers in this country. It is hard to take the member opposite seriously when he votes against the national school food program, which benefits 400,000 young children in this country. He votes against it. How about tax cuts? That used to be the party that stood for that.

They are standing in the way of the House passing budget 2025, which is good for Canadians.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians he should be judged by prices at the grocery store. I heard from Amy in Cloverdale. She lives in a household of two, does not have children of her own and still cannot keep up with groceries. When she heard more increases are coming, she wondered if the ultimate goal is to force people to crawl on their hands and knees begging and pleading for relief. For Amy, meat is a luxury, and she is terrified for the future of her five nephews. Amy asked me when it will stop.

When will the Prime Minister finally stop driving up food costs so Canadians can afford to feed themselves?

• (1500)

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the people in British Columbia are concerned about prices, and we are too. We are taking care of them. They want a government that is going to stand with them. That is why we are investing in the national school food program to support 400,000 families. That is why we are investing in supports for seniors, and it is why we are investing in supports for families to take care of their children.

We are going to stand with British Columbians. We are going to stand with all Canadians and take care of them.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians he should be judged by prices at the grocery store. Food bank visits have increased up to 80% in B.C. The Kamloops Food Bank had almost 74,000 visits last year, and the number keeps growing. Now donations are dropping and food banks are reducing service areas to remain sustainable, cutting off rural areas from support.

When will the Liberals cut their inflationary spending, their industrial carbon tax and their new fuel tax so Canadians can afford to eat?

Hon. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that Conservative member talks about food prices, yet he voted against making the national school food program permanent. That is a program that helps

young people, that helps school-aged children eat food in order to learn better.

This morning I made an announcement at a women's shelter in Montreal that our government has funded in order to help women find a secure and safe place to call home. The Conservatives are against supporting our frontline workers, whether it is in the food industry or whether it is our shelters—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

* * *

[Translation]

SENIORS

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, strengthening economic security also means protecting seniors' dignity and financial peace of mind. That includes protecting them from fraud, which is a major political issue. Who said that? It was the member for Shefford.

We agree. That is why it is disappointing to see the Bloc Québécois delaying the passage of Bill C-15. Could the Minister of Finance remind those who are intentionally delaying this bill's passage about the very real impact that their partisan games are having on seniors?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, financial fraud is a serious problem that disproportionately affects seniors, newcomers and other vulnerable populations. That is why we are taking decisive action through budget 2025 and Bill C-15 to strengthen law enforcement and to protect seniors from the scourge of financial fraud.

Surprise, surprise, the Bloc Québécois does not support that. While it may hard to understand why the Bloc Québécois would oppose measures to protect seniors, what is abundantly clear is that the 44 members from Quebec on this side of the House will always be there to defend seniors.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians to judge him by the prices at the grocery store. Eight months have passed, and now "Canada's Food Price Report" says that Canadian families should expect to pay an extra \$1,000 for groceries in 2026. In total, grocery bills have doubled under the Liberals to \$340 per week.

When will the Liberals cut their inflationary spending, their industrial carbon tax and their new fuel tax so Canadians can afford to eat?

Oral Questions

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski (Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We are building affordable homes. We are making it easier for young people to buy homes. We are creating thousands of jobs by investing in our economy. The easiest way for Conservatives to make life more affordable for Canadians is to support our plan in budget 2025.

[Translation]

G rard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's economic policies are not working. Take the weekly cost of groceries, for example. The cost has doubled in 10 years from \$159 to \$338 under the Liberal government. It is going to cost an extra \$1,000 next year.

Food bank demand is way, way up. Back home in Saint-Andr  de Neufch tel, 200 Christmas food hampers will be handed out. That is 70 more than last year. Accueil Saint-Ambroise is handing out a record 325 hampers. There is even a food bank that cannot hand out any more because it has reached its quota. Some people who are expecting a hamper will not get one.

Do the Liberals realize that their policies are not working?

• (1505)

Hon. Jo l Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what sets us apart from the Conservative Party is that on this side of the House, we believe that we need to build a strong economy to protect the most vulnerable. When it comes to the first part, a strong economy, 54,000 jobs were created in November, 67,000 in October, and 60,000 in September. The unemployment rate is falling and inflation is within the Bank of Canada's target range. That is what a strong economy looks like.

As for protecting the most vulnerable, that is something that would never cross the Conservatives' minds. Not only that, but they are determined to vote against the Canadian dental care plan, Canada's national school food program, the Canada child benefit, and tax cuts for 22 million Canadians. Frankly, the hypocrisy of the Conservative Party is shocking.

Jo l Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of hypocrisy, the Liberals have been putting programs in place for 10 years, but nothing is working.

In my riding, I toured 17 food banks, 17 organizations that do things like prepare Christmas hampers. Everyone involved with these organizations talked to me about the rising demand. What the government is doing is unacceptable.

The Prime Minister needs to come down from his ivory tower, get out there and stop imposing inflationary taxes.

Hon. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we have said a number of times that the Conservatives are talking about imaginary taxes. Inflation is actually dropping here in Canada.

We are here to meet the needs of Canadians, yet the Conservative Party has voted against all the measures in the budget that are going

to help people make ends meet, including our school food program, which is going to help kids. It seems unbelievable.

* * *

[English]

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2025 contains many comprehensive measures to help make life more affordable for Canadians while helping grow the economy. Open banking promotes competition and affordability by letting Canadian consumers and businesses take advantage of cutting-edge technologies and share their financial data with approved and regulated service providers.

Can the Secretary of State for the Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions please outline why open banking is so important to the Canadian economy and how stalling progress on this file is harming Canadian consumers and businesses?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, open banking will give Canadians more control over their own financial data, allowing them to securely choose the services that work best for their needs. It will increase competition, lower costs and help families get better budgeting tools, faster access to credit and tailored financial products. These are common-sense measures that the opposition is obstructing by delaying our budget bill.

I urge the Conservative leader to let his heart grow over Christmas, put the partisan games aside and join us in building a strong and resilient Canadian economy.

* * *

[Translation]

LIBERAL PARTY OF QUEBEC

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's Conflict of Interest Act states that a "public office holder" such as a "member of ministerial staff" has no right to "accept any gift or other advantage".

This morning, the Journal de Montr al's investigative desk reported that 10 people with ties to the Liberal Party of Canada had each received \$1,000 for services rendered during the last leadership race to select the current leader of the Liberal Party of Quebec.

Can the Prime Minister explain to Quebeckers what all this Liberal funny business is about?

The Speaker: I do not believe that Canada's Conflict of Interest Act applies to the provinces.

Does anyone want to answer the question?

The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member and all Canadians know very well, the political parties in the National Assembly and in the House of Commons are completely independent of one another.

Of course, all Canadians are free to get involved in provincial politics, and doing so is a personal choice. We obviously expect all current and former government employees to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner and obey all laws.

* * *

• (1510)

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, Nunavut's fishery is an underdeveloped economic engine, as QIA keeps saying. As a result of Liberal decisions, B.C. and Newfoundland hold more than an 80% interest in their coastal fisheries, but Nunavut gets only half. Fisheries infrastructure, like the deep-sea port in Qikiqtarjuaq, is left unfinished.

Will the Liberals finally treat Inuit like a full economic partner, so they can benefit from local resources?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my colleague across the aisle that the conversations are still happening. No decision has been made, and I encourage their participation as we move forward toward making a decision.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:11 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-15.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: The amendment is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to House*]

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

Government Orders

(Division No. 53)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Block	Bonk
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Deltell	DeRidder
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Groleau	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Hardy	Ho
Hoback	Holman
Jackson	Jansen
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmieć
Konanz	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
Kuruc	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lawton
Lefebvre	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Ma	Mahal
Majumdar	Malette (Kapusasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Mantle	Martel
Mazier	McCauley
McKenzie	McLean (Calgary Centre)
Melillo	Menegakis
Moore	Morin
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Patzer	Poillievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Reynolds
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ross
Rowe	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shipley
Small	Steinley
Stevenson	Strahl
Strauss	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vien	Viersen

Routine Proceedings

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NAYS

Members

Acan
Ali
Anand
Auguste
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill Riv-
er)
Bittle
Blanchet
Blois
Boulerice
Brunelle-Duceppe
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Chagger
Champoux
Chartrand
Chen
Chi
Clark
Cormier
Dabrusin
Danko
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DeBellefeuille
Deschênes
Desrochers
Dhillon
Duclos
Earle
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Fuhr
Gainey
Gasparro
Gazan
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Guay
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Hanley
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Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
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Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
McGuinty

McKelvie
McKnight
McPherson
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
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Olszewski
Osborne
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Solomon
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Thériault
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Weiler
Yip
Zerucelli

McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanic—Sooke)
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Normandin
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Perron
Plamondon
Provost
Rana
Rochefort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Schieffe
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sodhi
Sousa
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Thompson
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Watchorn
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 196

PAIRED

Members

Dzerowicz
Paul-Hus— 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded division, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the “2024 Annual Report on the RCMP's Use of the Law Enforcement Justification Provisions”.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and in accordance with the enhanced transparency requirement set out in the amended policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I am pleased to present to the House of Commons the Government of Canada's objectives for negotiations for a Canada-Philippines free trade agreement.

The Government of Canada intends to commence negotiations with the Philippines as soon as it is practical, but, in accordance with the policy, the commencement of negotiations will take place no earlier than 30 days from today.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present, on behalf of the Standing Committee on International Trade, the fourth report, "Addressing Unjustified United States Tariffs on Certain Goods in the Canadian Steel, Aluminum, Automotive and Softwood Lumber Sectors".

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, November 27, the committee has agreed to report the following:

that the committee report to the House that it condemns the unjustified American tariffs on the Canadian steel, aluminum, automotive, and softwood lumber industries, and that it calls upon the government to live up to the promise it made in the election

• (1530)

[Translation]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

John Williamson (Saint John—St. Croix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two reports from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

[English]

The third report is entitled "Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas", and the fourth report is entitled "Forests and Climate Change".

Mr. Speaker, I believe, with your consent, we will hear next from the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore, who will table a dissenting report from the Conservative Party of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these two reports.

[Translation]

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the dissenting opinion on behalf of the members of the Conservative Party.

[English]

Conservative members on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agree with the Auditor General's finding that a serious digital divide continues to exist in Canada. This divide is prevalent de-

Routine Proceedings

spite years of promises on universal connectivity from successive Liberal governments. The government has failed to connect hundreds of thousands of rural, remote and indigenous households with essential broadband and mobile coverage, which is critical not only to rural Canadians for full participation in Canada's modern and connected economy, but also for the safety and security of all Canadians.

Our Conservative dissenting report provides five recommendations that stand up for rural Canadians and will ensure action is taken to keep them connected. The Government of Canada must act to provide broadband and mobile connectivity to all Canadians, regardless of their postal code. Our common-sense recommendations will ensure that this is the case.

LIAISON

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to seek concurrence on the first report of the Liaison Committee, which details the work of the standing committees of the House. I am doing so to sound the alarm over the systematic obstruction we are witnessing on multiple committee fronts, perpetrated by the Liberal government.

I will split my time, as well, with the member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

In addition to my work as chair of the ethics committee, I serve as the Conservative caucus committee coordinator. As part of my responsibilities, I make a point of observing a wide cross-section of standing committees and can report that Liberal obstruction tactics include purposely not scheduling meetings, intentionally withholding ministers from facing accountability at committee, preventing witnesses from testifying, lengthy filibusters and breaking procedural rules to their advantage.

In a phrase, the Prime Minister treats Parliament like a corporate boardroom meant only to rubber-stamp his agenda. I have news for him and his government: This is a G7 democracy, not a meeting of shareholders.

[Translation]

This is a minority Parliament. Committees are composed in such a way that the Liberals must work with at least one opposition party to advance the government's agenda. It also means that when opposition parties unite to hold the government to account, the government must comply with the will of the committee. However, rather than working constructively with opposition parties, the Liberals prefer to take their ball and go home.

[English]

Allow me to cite some examples of Liberal obstruction.

Routine Proceedings

At the justice committee, after Conservatives worked productively to receive witness testimony on Bill C-9, the Liberal law on hate speech, the committee got bogged down by a Liberal filibuster on a Conservative motion that called for the strongest legislative response possible to the Supreme Court ruling that struck down mandatory prison time for those convicted of possession of child sexual abuse and exploitation material.

That is right. Rather than prioritize legislation on hate crimes or bail, the Liberals ran cover for an egregious court decision that eases sentences for perverts in possession of child pornography. They filibustered three meetings: November 6, November 18 and November 20.

Following a filibuster on December 2, after it became clear that the Liberals were not serious about their hate crime bill, Conservatives moved that the committee prioritize the bail bill, Bill C-14. Given the daily news reports of violent crimes being committed by repeat offenders, I would think the Liberals might have wanted to work with us to pass that bail law. Conservatives are of the view that, while the bill does not go nearly far enough to fix the broken bail system, a partial measure is better than nothing.

What did the Liberals do with our offer to work quickly on Bill C-14? They voted to adjourn debate. Instead, the Minister of Justice went rogue and made a deal with the Bloc to remove religious protections built into the Criminal Code as part of the hate speech bill, leading to division in their own caucus and a stalled agenda at the committee.

Nevertheless, Conservatives agreed to work constructively through the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. The Liberals secured committee resources through to midnight on December 2, but after passing just one clause that day, they quickly adjourned the meeting, preventing the committee from dealing with the amendment on the religious exemption.

Since then, the chair refused to schedule a meeting on December 4 and has yet to put out a meeting notice for this week. While the Liberals obstruct their own agenda, the victims of crime are the ones who suffer.

I will reiterate our offer: Conservatives would be pleased to set aside other work before the committee to see that Bill C-14 becomes law.

Liberal obstruction goes far beyond just the justice committee. At the transport committee, the Conservative Party worked constructively and efficiently on Bill C-5, the so-called Building Canada Act. I note that, since its passage, not one project has been listed in the national interest, and the promise the Liberals made to approve projects and build Canada remains unfulfilled.

Conservatives secured several amendments to that bill, which included protections for indigenous people, as well as ethics and oversight provisions. One might think this would have created some goodwill among parties at the committee table. It did not.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

The committee conducted a study on the Driver Inc. issue and examined ways to improve highway safety. Opposition members

proposed extending the study by two sessions in order to hear from victims of trucking accidents and obtain related documents from the government. The Liberals are determined not to show Canadians that the government is unable to keep them safe, so they have launched a procedural war against this motion.

[*English*]

To prevent debate, the Liberal chair cancelled meetings scheduled for November 18 and 20. The members of the opposition used an extraordinary tool to force an emergency meeting through Standing Order 106(4), which began on November 25. If members consult the parliamentary website, they will see that the meeting that began on November 25 is still ongoing.

As of now, this is a 13-day meeting. The Liberals began by filibustering for hours, which was followed by a multi-day suspension, another Standing Order 106(4) letter to force the recall of the committee, another four-hour filibuster by the Liberals and another multi-day suspension. At one point, the chair attempted to mislead committee members that a suspension would last 30 minutes, but then he exited out the back door and allowed the suspension to last for days.

Rather than get answers for victims or prepare recommendations for expanded road safety, the Liberals are obstructing the work of the transport committee. We are seeing similar obstruction tactics by chairs at other committees, such as at the finance, science and research, health, and human resources committees, and more. I am pleased to begin this important debate to allow members of the House to air the grievances they have with the conduct of the chairs of these committees. It is a committee Festivus, if one will.

Unfortunately, Liberal chairs are not the only ones obstructing committee work. Ministers of the Crown are also direct participants in this obstruction. We have seen multiple absent ministers. The justice committee invited the Minister of Justice to appear in relation to his mandate and priorities on September 23. He has yet to appear. The Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety were also invited to participate as witnesses in the justice committee study on the bail system. Both ministers declined to participate.

This dynamic duo was repeatedly invited to the status of women committee to participate in its study of section 810 of the Criminal Code and women's safety. Again, they have ignored that invitation. The Minister of Justice was also invited to the national defence committee as part of its study on Bill C-11, the military justice system modernization act, given that he would be responsible for the civilian process to deal with sexual harassment in the military. Again, he obstructed the work of the committee and refused to appear.

The finance minister refused the request of the industry committee to appear with respect to the Stellantis contract, despite the fact that he was the minister who signed the deal and the contract in the first place, which has yet to demonstrate any form of job guarantee for Canadian workers. The public safety minister refused to appear at the transport committee as part of its investigation into security concerns around the decision of the Infrastructure Bank to fund the purchase of new vessels from China for BC Ferries.

The Liberals have run interference to prevent the Minister of Industry from appearing at the public safety committee on Bill C-8, even though their proposed law would give her sweeping powers to remove the Internet from citizens. The Minister of Artificial Intelligence has failed to appear at the ethics committee, despite 11 requests to do so, or the status of women committee as it conducts studies on the various impacts of AI on Canadian life.

The Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature has ignored three invitations from the environment committee related to the industrial carbon tax, the global carbon tax on marine transport and the EV mandate. The Minister of Indigenous Services has failed to appear at the indigenous affairs committee to respond to the Auditor General's report on progress for indigenous communities.

The Minister of Jobs and Families, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, the Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement, the Minister of Public Safety, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Industry, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Finance have all failed to appear before committees on the supplementary estimates.

Billions of tax dollars are going unscrutinized before they go out the door. The list goes on. There is a lot more to say on the Liberal attack on and decline in our democracy, and the attack on committees, but I am short on time. In conclusion, we demand, on behalf of Canadians, that the Liberals end their obstruction and start being accountable for every dollar they spend, law they propose and incursion of freedom they attempt to do.

• (1540)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is truly amazing to hear Conservative members use a filibuster to try to justify their disappointing actions, which I have witnessed for weeks now. I cannot believe that they are accusing the government of not wanting to see its own legislation pass. Today is a good example of it.

When will the Conservatives stop filibustering the budget implementation bill? They have been on it for days and days. They have zero credibility on the interests of serving Canadians, quite frankly.

John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member spends all of his time in the House. He should be out watching the committees, as I am, to see the level of obstruction that is going on by the Liberal Party in almost every committee. The challenge right now is that the Liberals know they do not have the majority on every committee, so their only process in not allowing the opposition members, whether they are the Conservatives or the Bloc Québécois, to deal with important committee business is to take

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their ball, go home, and have their Liberal chairs cancel the meetings, or worse yet, call for a suspension and then never come back, as they did in one of the committees, despite the fact that they had seven hours of additional resources available to them.

The Liberals are obstructing democracy in this place, not the opposition parties.

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is frustrating to speak on this subject because both sides are right.

With respect to the substance of the issue raised by the Conservatives, it is true that the waste of resources and the limited work completed this fall is appalling. My colleague is absolutely right. However, the last question asked by the Liberals is just as relevant.

I want to ask the Conservative member, whom I appreciate greatly, the following question: Does he remember last fall? The Conservatives blocked the work of Parliament for an endless period of time. Does he or does he not remember? I agree with him that this should not happen again. He is absolutely right, that should not happen anymore.

I want to hear his thoughts about the witnesses. When there is a filibuster and witnesses are seated at the end of the table, they sometimes wait for two hours. Does my colleague understand why they might no longer want to testify at the next committee meeting?

[*English*]

John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I do have the utmost respect for the hon. member as his party's whip. If the member recalls, last fall this place was seized because the government refused to provide the documents regarding the sustainable development technology fund to a committee of Parliament. It refused. There were 11,000 documents counted last fall that were not being given to a parliamentary committee, despite the fact that the parliamentary committee had demanded that those documents be turned over. I think it is a pattern of these Liberals.

I once heard a very smart person say that the Liberals want an audience. They do not want an opposition. They do not want us to fulfill our constitutional obligation to hold them to account, and that is precisely what is happening in our committees right now.

• (1545)

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the member for moving this motion. If he had not done so, we would not have had this opportunity to debate the deplorable conduct of the Liberals in committee.

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In his first intervention here, it was as though the member for Winnipeg North was unaware that his own colleagues are filibustering their own bills at committee. At the finance committee, not once, but twice, in two different meetings, Liberal members filibustered the clause-by-clause review of Bill C-4.

Could the member talk about the Liberal filibusters at committee?

John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, it is absurd that we are seeing the government filibuster its own bills, and there is a reason they are doing this. It is because, on every committee, not just the oversight committees, they do not hold the majority. The majority has been held by the opposition parties. After the committees were formed, between the Conservatives and the Bloc, we hold the majority, which means that no vote ever gets to a Liberal chair. What they do instead is cancel the meetings, or take their ball and go home, only to regroup and come back.

What we are seeing is a pattern across all committees, and no member in this place should be surprised, including—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour, as always, to rise on behalf of the people of Elgin—St. Thomas—London South.

My colleague from Barrie South—Innisfil did a tremendous job explaining the breadth of Liberal obstruction right now. There is a logical inconsistency here that I do not believe should be all that surprising coming from the Liberal Party, but they are obstructing their own agenda. The Liberals are obstructing their own legislation.

I can speak specifically to what has been happening on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, a committee I was honoured to be named to shortly after I was sworn in as a member of Parliament, and a committee that is very relevant to the people in my riding, for whom crime has been a top issue. I sent out a household mailer to the people in my riding a couple of months back, and it was about crime, justice and the revolving-door bail crisis. The police chiefs in St. Thomas, Aylmer and London, and officers with the Ontario Provincial Police, have all said the same thing, which is that they are tired of arresting people in the morning only to find them on the streets again, sometimes that afternoon.

We demanded action. Canadians demanded action on bail. We were told that the Liberal government would make bail a top priority. On the justice committee, we were expecting to be able to do incredibly important, timely work on this. We actually initiated a study on bail, and extended invitations, as part of that study, to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety. Shockingly, months later, neither has appeared on this.

Now, it is possible that the Minister of Public Safety is still hard at work getting his RPAL, and that is why he has not had time to come before the committee. The Minister of Justice said he would only come before committee to talk about Bill C-9, the Liberal government's anti-hate bill. The very first justice bill that the Liberal government put forward was not on revolving-door bail and it was not on mandatory minimums for child predators; it was on cracking

down on freedom of expression, cracking down on what people post online. That was the very first priority of the Minister of Justice. I will get to how that is going for the Liberal government in a moment.

It was interesting that the Minister of Justice did not want to speak about bail. He did not want to come to committee, and has not yet responded to our invitation for him to speak to his mandate and priorities. We are seeing now that the Minister of Justice is providing the same level of excellence he delivered as the Minister of Housing and Minister of Immigration. He is bringing that to the justice file, and Canadians are suffering.

Let us talk about what has been happening in the last few weeks alone. There was a meeting at the end of November that the Liberals simply did not call. There was another meeting that the Liberals did not call, and another meeting that the Liberals cancelled. As of today, we do not know if the justice committee will be meeting tomorrow at a regularly scheduled time. No notice of meeting has been issued. The notice of meeting for our Tuesday meetings almost always comes on the Friday before, so I suspect we are not going to be meeting tomorrow, although I would love to be proven wrong.

It was interesting, just a couple of hours ago in question period, that the Minister of Justice stood up, facing questions from our colleagues in the Bloc Québécois about the government's bungling of Bill C-9. He would not give a clear answer as to what the Liberal government's view is of the amendment that we understand is forthcoming from the Bloc to remove long-standing religious free speech protections from criminal law. What the Minister of Justice said was, "Whoa, the committee will decide this." How is the committee going to decide anything when the Liberals are either not calling meetings or are cancelling meetings on their bill?

Now, what we learned in the last couple of days is rather interesting. In fact, just this morning, there was an article in which we learned that the Minister of Justice initiated a secret deal with the Bloc Québécois, where the Bloc would support Bill C-9 in exchange for the Liberals supporting the Bloc amendment removing religious freedom protections, making it so that someone could be criminally prosecuted for expressing good faith religious beliefs or even quoting scripture.

This is the government that promoted the previous chair of the justice committee to the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture after he said that prosecutors should be able to, "press charges" for people who quote verses of scripture that he deems to be hateful. It is good to know that falling upwards, the long-standing Liberal pastime and career trajectory, is still available.

• (1550)

This is so interesting because the Liberals, when they are faced with questions about where they stand on this, hide behind the committee process, yet members of the committee are saying, "Let us do our jobs." Conservatives have stood ready at the last two meetings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to work until midnight, and resources have been available. On this issue that the government says is such a priority, to get through clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-9, we have stood ready to do that even though, as I said at the justice committee and as I said in the House of Commons, we do not believe that Bill C-9 should have been prioritized above bail reform.

However, when the Liberals obstruct Bill C-9, which they are doing right now, when they obstruct their own bill, they are also obstructing every other justice priority they said they have. They have obstructed the committee's work on Bill C-14, a bail bill, which is very welcome in that it acknowledges how bad the bail system has gotten. Although, I believe there are a number of amendments that need to be put forward on Bill C-14 so that it does what we need it to do to fix Liberal bail in this country, we cannot do any of that, because the Liberals cannot figure out where they stand on Bill C-9.

When I mentioned the Minister of Justice's secret deal with the Bloc Québécois, the interesting tidbit that came out in the media today is that he forgot to tell the Prime Minister that he was making that deal. Now, the Liberals are in turmoil while they figure out where they stand on their own legislation and amendments to it, and Canadians expecting the justice committee to work on fixing the criminal justice system have to wait while the Liberals get their act together.

Similarly, earlier this fall, we passed a very critical report before the justice committee calling on the government to send a strong message that it will not tolerate judicial leniency for people convicted of peddling in and viewing child sexual exploitation and abuse material. What should have been a very quick, unanimous decision by the committee after the Supreme Court made an absolutely egregious ruling that a one-year sentence for those offences was "cruel and unusual punishment", instead took two meetings. The Liberals filibustered this, preventing us from working on anything. We finally adopted that motion, and it came before the House. I am grateful for it, but we lost critical time to do everything else, again, because of Liberal obstruction and Liberal filibustering.

The Liberals do not know how to govern in a minority Parliament, evidently. They do not know that they have to work with other parties. I guess the Minister of Justice tried to do this, although his way of working with other parties was to launch a full-out assault on religious freedom. That is not what bipartisanship is supposed to look like.

We are still ready and eager to do the work. The reason I put forward a motion at the justice committee a couple of weeks ago to re-set the committee's priorities was that it was clear that we were headed towards exactly the situation we find ourselves in: a bill where, in the words of the chair of the justice committee before this very House the other day, there is no path forward right now.

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We still believe we should prioritize bail, and I would welcome the justice committee to actually call a meeting. We have two designated spots before the House rises for the winter break. I would certainly hope that Liberal members of Parliament do not want to face their constituents and say that they did not deliver on any of their justice priorities, because that is what is going to be happening now.

All the Canadians who are concerned about revolving-door bail and all of the frontline police officers, police chiefs and first responders who have been crying out for years for action have gotten nothing from the Liberal government. They have gotten a commitment from the public safety minister that they are going to go full steam ahead on the gun confiscation scheme, but nothing to put repeat offenders behind bars where they belong. Legislation, we understand, is forthcoming from the government to perhaps deal with the issue of mandatory minimum sentences for child sexual predators. However, again, no action is possible on that, because of Liberal obstruction on committee.

I am a new member of Parliament. I came here with a mandate, and I came here to get to work. The Liberal government, if it does not want to co-operate, needs to get out of the way. Right now, the Liberals are getting in their own way and the way of Canadians, and we will not stand for it.

• (1555)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite might be a new member, but he has been schooled well by the Conservative Party in the sense that I understand he participated in that very filibuster with regard to the hate legislation. I think he brought up something about his dog and that his wife likes cats, or he likes dogs and his wife likes cats. I do not know all the details of it, but the point is that he is a quick learner and he knows how to filibuster, apparently.

At the end of the day, when we talk about what Canadians and the constituents the member represents want, they want bail reform legislation. It is important. This is the question: Why will the Conservative Party not allow the bail reform legislation to become law?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, as a new member, I do not know how I am supposed to allow it to become law when that member's party is not calling the meeting. Again, I am new here, but I do not believe it is possible to let any justice bills become law when the Liberals keep cancelling meetings.

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear. I agree with him that the adjournment of last week's meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights was deplorable.

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Am I to understand that if the committee meets tomorrow evening or Thursday evening, my Conservative colleagues will not filibuster? Is that a promise?

[English]

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to work with my colleague. We have very different ideas on some of the things that are coming before the committee, but I always know where my colleague stands. I and my colleagues on the justice committee remain ready to deal with clause-by-clause consideration on Bill C-9. We are 100% opposed to the assault on religious freedom that has been proposed and discussed, and it is shameful that the Liberals will not, in the House, state what their intention is on that.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the transport committee, we had the chair suspend for 30 minutes, get up and then leave out the back door.

While I did hear about the justice committee's cancelling of numerous meetings, the gavelling of meetings and the filibustering, was there anything as bad as that, or was the transportation committee the worst for Liberal conduct?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I have not had the opportunity yet to sit in on a transport committee meeting, so I cannot speak for what is happening there except to say that there does seem to be a pattern here spanning multiple committees. I understand the citizenship and immigration committee has no meetings scheduled for this week. At the environment and sustainable development committee, the minister has not appeared. I mentioned the lack of appearance by the justice minister at the justice committee on his mandate and priorities. The minister has not appeared for fisheries and oceans.

There does seem to be a trend here. I think it is very important that we are discussing the motion we are right now before the House, because the Liberal government cannot point fingers regarding its agenda not being passed when it holds the keys and the decision-making authority on when to schedule committee meetings.

• (1600)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member would concede the irony we are witnessing today in the House of Commons. Right now, we were supposed to be debating the budget implementation bill, but the Conservatives have made the decision once again to prevent MPs from being able to carry forward on Bill C-15 by bringing forward this concurrence motion. That in itself is another filibuster preventing the Canadian legislation that we are proposing.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, when I first came here, I understood that committees were to be masters of their domains, but committees are also a product of the House of Commons. When committees fail to do their work, it must be raised in the House of Commons because there is no way to raise it on a non-existing committee meeting's agenda. I would love nothing more than for all of us to be able to have these discussions in our respective committees, but that is not possible because that member's colleagues will not have the darned meetings.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of irony here. To those individuals who might be following this debate or listening to what has been taking place in Ottawa today, I will say that it is not as pathetic as it was last fall, when we saw the Conservatives virtually shut down the House of Commons with their behaviour. It is not quite as bad as that, but it is getting closer and closer to that point.

It is important that we reflect by looking in the mirror and question why it is the Conservative Party continues, day in and day out, to want to serve the interests of its own political party and the leadership of the Conservative Party, rather than actually serving the interests of Canadians. Let there be absolutely no doubt whatsoever that the reason Conservatives are doing this is purely self-serving. They are preventing legislation from passing.

How many hours of debate have we had on their motion to amend the budget implementation bill? Take a look at how many days we have spent on that. We just had a vote on it and, once again, the Conservatives do not want to debate it. They even had concurrence motions on their amendment to the budget. It is ridiculous in terms of the attitude and the way in which Conservative Party members, day in and day out, try to deny Canadians what they expect from both the government and the opposition.

I will remind members opposite that last April, a minority government was elected. The Government of Canada and the Prime Minister committed to working for Canadians every day. On the other hand, we see the Conservative Party flip-flopping and most of the time not working for the best interests of Canadians. However, in the election, it was very clear that Canadians wanted a higher sense of co-operation among the political parties. That is why we saw the Prime Minister commit to meeting with all the different premiers, the territories, indigenous leaders and so forth. Why? In that election, we made a couple of really solid commitments, one of which was to build a strong Canada.

That is the big commitment that we made to Canadians. We said that we were going to make Canada the strongest nation in the G7 on a per capita basis. The Prime Minister and every single Liberal member of our caucus is striving to do just that. Time and time again, what we witness is the Conservative Party of Canada standing in the way, being a roadblock and preventing legislation from passing, whether it is budget or bail reform legislation.

I believe that if there was an election today, the Conservatives would be taught a lesson in terms of how completely unacceptable their behaviour is. A good example of that, the best example I could give offhand before I get back to building strong, is the bail reform legislation. Shame on the Conservative Party. At the end of the day, we have provinces, territories, law enforcement officers and numerous other stakeholders out there who got behind the bail reform legislation. It should have been a no-brainer. I remember standing up weeks ago asking for the opposition to see this legislation through.

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On many occasions, I asked members of Parliament from the Conservative caucus to make a simple commitment. The Prime Minister said we were going to bring in bail reform legislation. The commitment I asked from a whole spectrum of Conservatives, back just a few weeks ago, was whether they would allow bail reform legislation to become law before the end of the year. That has been met with a huge roadblock. Virtually from the time I first mentioned it weeks ago, there has been no goodwill coming from Conservative Party members to say they want to pass this legislation and are prepared to see it pass before the end of the year. Instead, Conservatives continue to filibuster and come up with excuses. Now they are saying it is because of actions at the committee.

● (1605)

Let us take a look at one of the stupid motions, I would suggest, the Conservative Party is bringing forward and expects the government of the day to support. Conservatives talk about the hate legislation, which is what we are being criticized on. They say the Liberals are filibustering in committee. Let us read the amendment. Here is what the Conservatives want the committee to do. The amendment says, in part, “the committee be granted the power to travel throughout Canada to hear testimony from interested parties and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.”

They want the Government of Canada to pay millions of dollars to accommodate the disinformation they continuously feed Canadians. That is what that committee is all about, and they want the taxpayer to pay for it. Why should the Government of Canada allow the Conservative Party to go on a free, taxpayer-funded, road trip so they can spread nothing but misinformation to Canadians? That is the motion they are proposing. If I were sitting on that committee I would not accept it either, and I would want to make sure it is defeated.

I respect Canadians far more than the Conservatives do. If we look at the budget implementation bill, we will see it is a reflection of what Canadians expect the Government of Canada to deliver. It is a true reflection of what Canadians want, yet the Conservative Party continues to filibuster the legislation. Within the legislation there are some very wonderful things, such as, for example, expanding military expenditures.

When the Conservative leader sat in caucus and was in cabinet, the Conservatives financed military expenditures to less than 1% of Canada's GDP. We were the laughingstock of the G7 because of our lack of commitment to properly and adequately support our Canadian Forces. In the current budget, there are substantial increases that would enable industries to grow, whether it is the aerospace industry in Winnipeg or Quebec, or military operations, and to become a world leader. We can do that. That is included in the budget.

Another thing included in the budget is the national school food program. It is a wonderful program. I really and truly do not think the Conservatives understand it. Some members say it is nothing but garbage and that they are going to get rid of that particular program. They have no concept of what is taking place in our classrooms. For 30 years we heard from schools in different areas of the country, saying there are children who cannot learn because they have not had proper nutrition before coming to school.

We now have a Prime Minister who sees the value of supporting children in every region of the country, and we have made the program permanent to ensure nutritious food in schools. That is going to help Canadians. Every child will benefit from that particular program. It has been an issue that for decades, well over 30 years, schools, trustees and others have been advocating for.

What do the Conservatives say? They do not like it. Why? They say that there is no such thing as children learning on an empty stomach. How naive is that? The Conservatives are going to vote against the program. One of their members literally called it “garbage”, and others reinforced that.

There are substantial things within the legislation. We debated a Conservative amendment to the bill for days, hours and hours. We just finished voting on it. We were just about to go to debate on the legislation itself, when the Conservatives brought up a concurrence motion in order to once again prevent the debate from taking place. How things have changed. It is the leader of the Conservative Party, I would argue, who is leading the way.

I would hate to be a red Tory sitting in the Conservative caucus; that has to be very depressing, because there are so many things that can and should be happening. However, because of the direction of the Conservative House leadership team, particularly the leader of the Conservative Party, they are doing more damage rather than helping the system.

● (1610)

They do not even see that, because they refuse to recognize the value of at least allowing things to get through the House in some sort of orderly fashion. Whether there is a minority government or a majority, it should not matter; members should be supportive. Even when I was sitting in opposition, I recognized that at times the government needed to use time allocation because it is an effective tool in order to get legislation through.

The federal government needs to have legislative programming much like, but expanded more than, Private Members' Business, but that is what we need. We need rule changes. We need to modernize the House of Commons because we have to protect what is in the interest of Canadians, and I do not see that coming from the opposition. Sure, it is easy for opposition members to stand up and say, “We want more debate time on bill X or bill Y, and that is the reason we are not passing legislation.”

I say that is a bogus argument, and I do not say that lightly. The last time I stood up to debate the behaviour of the Conservative Party members, I made the suggestion that we give unanimous consent to sit until midnight so more Conservatives could actually speak to the legislation. When I made the suggestion, a number of them said, “Oh, yeah, why not? Let's do it.” Therefore I actually proposed it; I asked for unanimous consent to be able to sit that extra time.

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After all, Canadians do not mind. Millions of Canadians work past 6:30 in the evening. Why can we not? I asked the question after hearing all the enthusiasm for working late coming from the Conservative Party. The moment I asked, what was the response?

An hon. member: No.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: It was absolutely “no”; there was not one Conservative who agreed.

Mr. Speaker, even individuals who were saying yes until I posed the question flip-flopped on the issue, because I called their bluff.

It is not about their wanting more time to debate. No, it is about the leader of the Conservative Party and the Conservative Party House leadership team, who really feel compelled to do two things. The first is character assassination. It does not matter what one does or say; they want to focus on trying to make the Prime Minister look as though he were some sort of a corrupt individual, and we all know that is not true.

A few Conservatives are actually applauding that, because it is an actual tactic the Conservatives use: They have no problem attacking the character of an individual just for the sake of scoring some cheap political points. That is one of the things coming from the Conservative Party, and it is consistent.

The other thing is that the Conservatives really and truly go out of their way to prevent legislation from passing. However, the irony is that they are not only doing a disservice for Canadians; they are also not allowing the opportunity for the House to deliver on important things for Canadians, and that is really sad. We hear from the Conservative benches at times that they want good legislation passed, especially when we get into Private Members' Business.

We spoke to a wonderful piece of legislation this morning during Private Members' Business. I indicated that it is something we are very much open to, as we have actually supported other pieces of private members' legislation. If it is good for Canadians, we should recognize that and at least facilitate some sort of passage, but the Conservatives do not do that, because when it comes to critical government legislation, they really do not want it to pass.

Here is what is going to happen, and I can already see it. At the end of the week, the Conservatives will say, “Well, those Liberals are so bad because they cannot even have a legislative agenda that has them pass the legislation. They did not pass bail reform legislation.” The Conservatives are actually going to criticize us, yet they are the ones who are preventing it from passing.

At the end of the day, it is not like it takes a great effort to filibuster and prevent legislation from passing. We know that. I have said in the past that they can give me any public high school in Canada. I can identify some students from that high school, and with 12 of them I can prevent legislation from passing. That is a no-brainer; it is not that difficult.

• (1615)

The real challenge, however, is trying to be a little more creative. The Conservatives can still be an opposition party, but they should be creative.

Look at it this way. Members will remember back in June, the leader of the Conservative party did not have a seat in the House. Do members know what was really good? We were able to pass Bill C-5, an election platform from the Prime Minister and the government to build one Canadian economy to consider major projects in this country and how we can advance them and take down trade and labour barriers. I and many members spoke to the legislation. It was good legislation.

The Conservative Party, in June, without its leader's sitting in the House, concurred. We could not have passed that legislation if it had not been for the Conservatives, at least in part, and I would say that it is because they did not have their leader here that we were able to pass it.

That legislation took a great effort, just like the bail reform legislation. Compare the two: If we look at the number of meetings and discussions the Prime Minister had with the different premiers in bringing forward Bill C-5, what we see is that there was a consensus built. It was with more than just premiers; it was also with indigenous leaders, many other stakeholders, and indigenous governments.

Now let us take a look at the bail reform legislation. Even more extensive work was done on it. Not only was the Prime Minister making that commitment to Canadians, but the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of State for Combatting Crime also took on the file and advanced it. It took a great deal of time and effort to build the consensus that was built. Everyone, including law enforcement officers, provinces, territories, indigenous people and communities as a whole, seems to recognize the value of the bail reform legislation.

I would have thought it would have passed, but because the leader of the Conservative Party has made the decision with his House leadership team that they are not going to allow that legislation to pass, it is not going to, yet we all know it is what our constituents want.

I serve the residents of Winnipeg North first and foremost, and I believe they want bail reform legislation. The reason they do not have bail reform legislation is the behaviour of the Conservative Party of Canada; that is the roadblock. Whether it is the budget that provides tax relief for Canadians, or whether it is bail legislation or other pieces of legislation, like the hate legislation or legislation on strengthening our borders, the Conservative Party of Canada is the biggest roadblock we have.

I would challenge the Conservative Party to reflect on the actions it is taking. I would suggest that it is time the Conservatives start putting the interests of Canadians ahead of the interests of their own political party.

With that, I move:

That the question be now put.

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• (1620)

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

Conservatives have been asking for bail reform since I came to the House, which is almost five years now, and the member consistently told us, like the Liberals, that there was no problem.

The justice committee meeting was cancelled last week. Last week we voted on Bailey's law, Bill C-225. Should we not be doing some work? Will the member support discussing intimate partner violence, rather than having the Liberal chair cancel the committee meeting again?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member who just posed the question has actually stood in the House on more than one occasion and asked for unanimous consent to pass legislation from first reading, second reading, a committee, third reading and right through with zero debate.

Can my colleagues imagine the amount of frustration that members of the Liberal caucus have in regard to the bail reform legislation? Just months ago, the Prime Minister made a commitment on bail reform legislation. The member, if he was genuine in his thoughts, should be talking to the House leadership within the Conservative Party, and we should be passing bail reform legislation. There is no excuse except for the Conservative Party of Canada. It should become the law.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the gentleman who seems upset. The Liberals chose to fly solo. The people elected a minority government. The government tabled a budget without seeking the support of another party to get a majority of votes in the House. The same thing goes for Bill C-15. The other opposition parties chose to let the budget move on to the next step so as not to trigger an election, even though it was not to their liking.

Now, the member wants to change the rules of the House. Why? It is so that a minority government can govern like a majority would. I do not think that will happen. I would like to humbly remind him of the way things work. People vote to elect members of Parliament. The government needs to listen to members and get a majority of votes in the House. That is where the problem lies.

If the Liberal members chose to fly solo, to work alone, then they should not be surprised when they have a hard time getting things done. What does the parliamentary secretary think about that?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the thing I would suggest to the member is that even under majority governments, we need to have programming of legislation. We saw that during the Harper era, too, where we had Stephen Harper's government House leader stand time and time again. He would literally stand, introduce a bill and then follow the reading of that bill with a time allocation motion.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, he did. Members do not have to believe me; they can do a bit of research if they want. The point is, majority or minority, having legislative programming. The House of Commons needs to modernize its rules. Just like, as I am sure my friend would recognize, having the voting app changed the House in a very significant way, I would suggest we need to go the extra mile so we can do even more work for the constituents we represent.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour and privilege to represent the good people in my riding of Waterloo. It has been interesting because in my inbox, I am receiving several emails. I am receiving emails in regard to some of the challenging times Canadians are facing, and they see that in budget 2025, there is opportunity. They see some ability and some hope. They appreciate the national school food program. They appreciate that it would become a permanent program in Canada, not only for the days when times are tough, but for when they are not so tough. There are always going to be some families that struggle, and a program like that can ensure we help some of the most vulnerable in society.

They look at the measures for homes, for people to build their first homes. They look at the ability to actually see that the Canadian Armed Forces are going to get the supports they deserve and need. I know this member served in uniform, and I thank him for his service to this country, as well as all men and women in uniform.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Hon. Bardish Chagger: I know the members opposite want to call time because I am talking about our armed forces and the important work they do, and the Conservatives have a history of chopping them.

I would like to hear from the member why it is important we pass this legislation. Why can Conservatives not grasp that we are here to fight for Canadians? We have to leave some of our political stripes aside so we can ensure people in our communities can benefit.

• (1625)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there are many signals that provide Canadians the opportunity to have hope, to look at things in a very positive way. We could talk about the 150,000-plus jobs that have been created in the last three months in a row. There are many things in the budget implementation bill that would have a profoundly positive impact on Canadians as a whole.

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When I say, “pass it through second reading,” it still then needs to go to committee. There are still going to be all sorts of discussions and dialogue once it hits the committee. Then it comes back to the House, where there will be more debate on the issue. The important thing is that we need to move forward. I believe it is because the Conservative Party of Canada really and truly has put their political party interest ahead of the interests of Canadians. This takes away hope, I would suggest.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as much as I would like to do the back-and-forth here, I am hearing from constituents in my riding who are deeply concerned about the privatization of health care. They expect health care to be based on need, not the thickness of their wallets. We saw in Alberta the scheme to let doctors jump between the public system and a pay-to-access private stream that shreds the spirit of our universal health care system and violates the Canada Health Act. This will pull doctors out of public hospitals, drive up wait times and drag us toward an American-style system.

Both the Canadian and Alberta medical associations and front-line physicians are sounding the alarm. I would like my colleague and the Liberals to tell us this: Are they going to step in, enforce the Canada Health Act and stop this dangerous push toward a two-tier health care system?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate thing is that I am exceptionally opinionated on the issue of health care. I am not going to be provided enough time to be able to expand on what I really feel about health care. Suffice to say, I believe it is a part of our Canadian identity in terms of who we are as a nation. I fully support the Canada Health Act, and even if there are things that we could do to enhance the strength of the Canada Health Act, I believe every Liberal member of the House of Commons understands and appreciates the health care that Canadians receive. I am proud of the fact that, even with the need to look for efficiencies, this is a government and a Prime Minister that continue to support health care in a very real and tangible way.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that our motion is already delivering results. The Liberal chair has called a justice committee meeting for tomorrow to do clause-by-clause review of Bill C-9. It is an eight-hour meeting.

My question to the member opposite is very simple. Will the Liberals be voting with the Bloc to remove religious protections from the Criminal Code?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, who am I to pop the bubble of the member? Even the committee chair indicated he had just been put into the chair's position, and he wanted to take a couple of days just to understand the nature of the discussions and the debates that were taking place.

It is always nice to see committees having good, positive debate that ultimately sees the advancement of legislation, and I would hope that the Conservatives will participate in a positive way, so we can see more advancement of legislation.

• (1630)

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

It was very noisy. The member clearly did not hear the question, because he did not answer it. How are the Liberals voting, with or against the—

The Deputy Speaker: It was not noisy enough. If it is noisy enough, I will rise and get members to stop, and I will yell, “Order.” I assure the member, it will happen. I am sure the member heard.

We have time for a very short question.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks about co-operation. I would like him to explain to me why his committee chairs do not consult the vice-chairs before cancelling meetings. A huge number of meetings have not been held. I am getting comments from our members, who are complaining about this.

If the member wants co-operation, then he needs to co-operate too. Will he promise to talk to his members so that we can work toward the same goal?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there was a time I used to attend committees a lot more than I do now, which is not very much. I can tell the member that a lot of it depends on the sense of co-operation that we see. Nothing prevents someone, whether Bloc, Conservative or Liberal, from approaching the chair and having a positive discussion. I suspect some committees might even be more effective than other committees because of the makeup of the personalities around the committee, quite possibly.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Budget; the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Natural Resources; the hon. member for York—Durham, The Economy.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this. I was very happy to learn that the Conservatives had moved the motion, because we are working on that right now. I have in hand reports on committee meetings held since the parliamentary session started. I have to say, the numbers are not great. We hear speeches about collaboration, yet 412 out of 468 meetings have been held as of today. If we include today and tomorrow, I know that at least one meeting is going to be cancelled. Apparently, there was some good news about the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, but we know that there will be others. In the past week, it has been happening more often, but that is not a good thing, because we are here to work. So that is going to increase again.

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Taken all together, then, we are talking about 56 meetings that were not convened and 112 hours of work that was not done, which amounts to 12% of committee hours. That is before today. If I add today, that is another 12 hours of meetings that will not be held. I predict that it will go up to 20 hours, because there are several discussions and we are being told that, since we are just wrapping up studies, we are not going to start the next one and that everyone wants to go home. Those are the discussions that are taking place, but we are here to work. The sad reality is that for the six years I have been sitting on these benches, the House of Commons has unfortunately not been known for its efficiency. It is really sad.

We need only look at the debates we have here, where we spend several days on one bill. In theory, as the hon. member for Joliette—Manawan pointed out earlier, it is the members, representing the people in their ridings, who will come and speak. It is up to the government to win the support of a majority in a minority situation. Unfortunately, we often get here with our main points and our positions, and then we go on and on about our positions for three or four days. Ultimately, we end up voting the same way as if we had voted on the first day. That is often the case. Sometimes opinions change, but it is rare. In terms of efficiency, sometimes we wonder whether what we are doing is productive, whether we are moving things forward. Sadly, the hourly cost of our operations is quite high. That is the truth.

Committees are usually the best part of parliamentary life. A committee is supposed to be made up of people of good faith who want to advance a cause. They may have differences of opinion, of course, but they want to debate them in a healthy way, then sit down, get to work and study.

We are talking about filibustering. It is appalling how much time we are wasting. Earlier, I repeated one of my questions from last fall. In response, the member told me that it was not his fault, that the government that did not want to release the documents. In fact, both sides are right, and we find ourselves caught between the two major political parties, trying to move things forward. Unfortunately, far too often, if not almost always, we seem to be the only adult in the room. That is very sad.

We are here to work. If someone chooses to not work or not call a committee meeting the next morning or the next evening, they are not paid less; they receive the same salary. The work needs to be done, but it is not getting done. There are various reasons for that, but it is not right. The statistics I gave cover the 25 standing committees, but they do not include the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament or the Subcommittee on International Human Rights. In total, there are 29 committees, so the statistics may actually be even bleaker than the numbers I provided.

How does this happen? What possible reason could there be for a committee not to sit? The chair is supposed to consult with the vice-chairs. It may happen once in a while, once in a session or once every two or three sessions, that a meeting is cancelled because something is not working or because there is a problem with witnesses or something like that, but that is rare, and that is not what we are seeing in this session.

How is that possible? I have asked my colleagues in the House about this. How is it that we find ourselves talking about this today? It is not right for us to be compiling statistics to show how little the committee meets and why we need to sit down and look at how often this is happening. I would like to announce that I have planned some meetings with colleagues, including a colleague on the government side, with whom I want to discuss this issue.

• (1635)

Beyond that, I want to discuss the issue of filibustering. This is actually quite surreal. It is understandable for the opposition to sometimes use this approach to block debate, but why are government members blocking their own bill? They are filibustering their own bill. This is unbelievable. They introduce a bill and then, once in committee, they refuse to discuss it. Take, for example, Bill C-9, which we were debating earlier. When they realize that an amendment does not suit everyone, they no longer want to move forward. They do not know how to back down, so they choose to talk for hours and hours on end. I have identified three examples from committees.

First, at the Standing Committee on Finance on October 22, we witnessed the Liberals using appalling filibustering tactics to avoid debating the motion tabled by the Bloc Québécois, which was next on the agenda. That is one of the games they play. People watching us at home should take note: This is what their elected representatives are doing. When they do not like the next item on the agenda, they prefer not to talk about it because they do not have any intelligent arguments to defeat it when it comes to a vote. They prefer to prevent discussion, so they take the floor and talk for hours. On November 19, the same thing happened. On December 8, they did it again during the study of their own bill, Bill C-15. In total, there were 5.5 hours of filibustering at the Standing Committee on Finance alone.

Let us talk about the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, which was mentioned earlier. There was supposed to be five meetings on Bill C-9, the law on hate speech, but two of them were not held. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives contributed to the filibuster. The Conservatives are good at pointing fingers, but they are even better at filibustering. I have noticed since I entered this place that they have a lot of experience with that. The Liberals cancelled the December 4 meeting. We still had meetings scheduled this week, but we were unsure whether they would go ahead. We thought they would be cancelled until a Conservative colleague gave us the scoop: He told us that the committee had been convened. We are very pleased about it, but in all, seven hours of work were lost. Those seven lost hours are no small matter. Sitting around the table are 10 members, two analysts, the clerk, the technical team and the interpreters. Every hour is expensive. That is the message I want to get across today: It costs a lot of money. Then they talk to us about budget efficiency. They want to cut transfers to the provinces. Something does not add up there. We need to be efficient for the common good.

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Now let us talk about the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Bloc members raised the Driver Inc. issue in the House. My colleague asked some excellent questions about that today. Six meetings have taken place, and five more are scheduled, almost as many as the number of meetings that have already taken place. Sometimes, our members only find out the day before when a meeting is cancelled by a unilateral decision of the chair. I know that the Liberals like unilateral decisions. We talked about the Constitution recently, about “operation citizenship” and other things that have been done unilaterally. Bloc Québécois members are offering to collaborate, but under certain conditions: There needs to be an openness and a desire to work, instead of trying to corner us in uncomfortable positions. That requires an open attitude on the part of chairs. I mentioned it earlier to my colleague from Winnipeg North, who is paying close attention right now. I hope he will ask me a question about that, because things need to move along. Since November 6, there have been nearly 12 hours of Liberal filibustering at the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Last week, the Bloc Québécois succeeded in passing a motion to summon a former prime minister to explain what this “operation citizenship” was all about. We were able to get it passed because, good news, the Liberals do not have a majority. Every once in a while, they are not the ones calling the shots. Since they were not happy about what happened, they cancelled all committee meetings this week, citing bogus reasons. We were told that there could be votes, so it would be impossible to hold a committee meeting. Give me a break. It is not as if votes never take place. We could simply start later. Then we were told that there were no witnesses, or that we have worked hard since the start of the parliamentary session so everything is fine; it is time to take a break. I was told that by email. It is appalling. People are asked to be thorough and do the work, but while the parties are blaming each other, nothing is moving forward. We were elected to study bills in committee and pass them in order to improve things for the common good.

● (1640)

I am a new whip. I must confess that I have been in shock since I began observing the 29 committees of the House of Commons, including the 25 standing committees. I am shocked because I realize that there is no co-operation in many of the committees. There is only obstruction, and many meetings do not take place.

I want to acknowledge the people who sit with me on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. Although imperfect, they are much better than others because we work for the common good. That should be the case for all committees. That is what matters.

I have a tip for people who sit on other committees. Sometimes, even when we are working on resolutions or recommendations for reports, we talk to each other before the meeting. To save time, we talk to each other before the meeting. Rather than arriving at the committee meeting, filibustering proceedings and wasting everyone's time and money, we come to an agreement beforehand. We call each other to find out what the others are thinking. That way, when we arrive at the committee meeting, we are ready to go. It is very efficient. Instead of arguing for two hours, we pass resolutions and get things done.

We do not always agree, but most of the time we manage to find common ground. I dream of the day when this will happen at all House of Commons committees. Obviously, if we do that, there will be fewer clips to post on social media. I understand that some people think that is a shame. People want to have clips to show how they put someone in their place, but things should not be that way. That is how naive I am. That is what I would like to see.

I talked about witnesses earlier. As an elected official, there is something that I find completely unfathomable. When we get to committee, three or four witnesses are already seated at the end of the table. These people travel a long way. Their travel costs are paid for, and often their accommodation expenses are, too. They also come thoroughly prepared. After all, they are here to testify before the Government of Canada. These people are not stupid, they prepare, they show up with documents and they know they only have one shot at stating their position.

Then they sit down and people start filibustering. One member starts talking and never stops. Meanwhile, the witness at the end of the table is not really sure what is going on. He listens and looks at his watch. Finally, after an hour or two, two or three members quarrel and move motions. Sometimes, members move motions with witnesses present. After two hours, we apologize and tell them that there was not enough time to hear from them. We thank them for coming and ask them to send us their brief by email. Had they known, they would not have come.

The following week, the clerks tell committee members that they will have to cancel the meeting because no witnesses have agreed to appear. That is not surprising; it was to be expected. We need to be serious. We are bothering people, everyone from professionals and scientists to academic researchers and farmers, people who do not have time to appear. They have to be on their land, working. When they come here, it has to serve a purpose. Let us be serious.

It is important to respect witnesses. When they are sitting in a committee room, they should always be given priority. I know sometimes we have no choice, because of procedure, but that should be a rare exception. That is not what we are seeing in this Parliament, and it is incredibly sad to hear the comments. For example, at the beginning of a committee meeting, the chair decided to change the agenda and raised another subject. This allowed the Liberals to move a motion that undermined the one that another member managed to get adopted at the previous committee meeting. These are unfair tactics. The Liberals should talk to us if they want to change something, and they should talk to each other. Can we work seriously?

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Earlier, I heard the parliamentary secretary criticize the Conservatives for moving this motion, because we should be talking about Bill C-15, a 650-page omnibus bill. On page 300 of the bill, the fine print says that any minister can repeal any legislation whenever he or she wants as long as they can claim that it is in the name of innovation. Is that what they call co-operation? It is up to us to seek it out, find it, flush it out, and expose it in the media. The Liberals tried to sneak this through. Afterwards, they will come here acting all offended and say that we are preventing them from doing their job. If everyone acted in good faith, I think we could make progress much faster.

● (1645)

As for me, I worry a lot about resources and issues. The government tends to hide the issues.

I would like to take this opportunity to give another example that really worries me, and that is the situation of interpreters. I raised this issue at the Board of Internal Economy. We are talking about filibustering and keeping committees going until midnight, cancelling one meeting and then holding another, and so on. Who is being negatively affected when that happens? It is not just the MPs, their teams of advisors, the clerks and all those people. It also affects the interpreters.

Imagine how difficult their work is. Interpreters listen and speak at the same time in the other language. Imagine how complex that task is. I do not know what percentage of elected officials in the House are bilingual, but it is certainly not half. I know it is not 60%. I would guess that it is closer to 20% to 30%, and even that is generous. They cannot learn another language because that requires effort.

The interpreters are good enough to be able to listen in one language and summarize in the other at the same time. They do not translate word for word. They interpret, and to be able to do that, they need to see the speaker's face and hear how they express themselves. They have to be aware of the context, and they need a basic knowledge of the topic under discussion. It is a big job.

This year, however, the House of Commons let them know that it would be accepting the lowest bidder and that it made no difference if the guy interpreting a legal discussion was not well versed in the law. They could not care less. An interpreter only needs to give a rough idea of what is being said. People are even starting to talk about bringing in AI, but we need human beings to pick up on human emotions and listen to real people.

I have another chart that I am not supposed to show the House, but I can refer to it during my speech. It lists technical incidents involving interpretation. I have not yet pulled out the statistics, but what we notice on a daily basis with the whips' team is that, very often, when there are technical problems, it is because the interpreters were online remotely. There are delays, they cannot see people, they cannot see each other to take over, which means that when one of them stops talking, sometimes there will be a bigger gap in the interpretation.

Who pays the price for this? Apart from, of course, the interpreters who have to protect their hearing health, it is always francophones who pay. Mr. Speaker, you are one of the few who are truly

bilingual, but you know as well as I do that it is always francophones who pay, because 80% to 90% of the discussions take place in English. So, the little piece of missing information is the one that francophones are lacking for their analysis, to make their representations, or to properly evaluate legislation.

However, the constituents of a francophone member are just as deserving as the citizens in an anglophone province. They have the right to be properly represented. I see some members who seem to want to object, so if they have something to say, they should stand up and raise a point of order. I think what I just said was very parliamentary. Every voter has the right to be represented with dignity.

Do my colleagues know why I am taking this opportunity to talk about it? It is because when I spoke to officials from interpretation services at the Board of Internal Economy, they gave me a bit of an empty statement that really said nothing. Then they barely addressed my questions and concerns about how the process for awarding future contracts is changing. They told me not to worry, that the certification exam is extremely rigorous and ensures top quality. They kept telling me that, but what did I learn last week? They changed the exam. They have said there will be no problem and no more shortages. They have added an external auditor to come and evaluate, and that individual's votes would count as much as those of the four House of Commons experts who used to do the evaluation. When there is a tie, the administration will decide. There will be no more shortages.

That is one example among many where I think the government is being somewhat insouciant and saying that it is going to fix things and that everything is going to be fine. However, we have to be serious and thorough, and the same goes for committees.

I have a message for the government. Being the chair of a committee is a privilege. The role of chair—and you are doing a magnificent job sitting in the chair of the House—is to be neutral and to be fair to everyone. However, I have some examples where that is not the case. Then people wonder why some members are not acting in good faith like others. If everyone acts in good faith, it can be a virtuous circle, but if there is bad faith, it can be a vicious circle. Bad faith on one side leads to bad faith on the other. Let us stop wasting time and get serious about working for the people.

● (1650)

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could my hon. colleague stop playing around? At the last Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities meeting, the Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives voted to dismiss the witnesses. In the House, Bloc members talk about respect, but in committee, they do not show it to witnesses.

Can the member at least be sincere? It is disrespectful. He is not being honest. Let us be honest. This is the House, this is the seat of democracy—

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The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. member. We cannot do indirectly in the House what we cannot do directly. To say that a member is not being honest is essentially to say something that even I cannot say in the House.

I am going to ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark. He can finish his comments or question, but he must withdraw that remark immediately.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Natilien Joseph: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my remark. I will use the word sincerity instead.

The Bloc and the Conservatives dismiss witnesses, yet in the House, they talk about respect. No, that is not okay.

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, there is respect, but there is also the tone and aggression with which comments are made. I am offering a constructive comment to my colleague across the way. I will give him a chance. I am not looking for an apology from him. However, we know full well that I could because of the words he used. Withdrawing his remark is one thing, but apologies are more meaningful. I will not ask him to apologize, but I am making a friendly suggestion. The comments he made, which I witnessed, were often very aggressive.

He mentioned another point. I challenge him to look in the archives of the past six years and find a single instance, in any of my speeches, where I have been disrespectful to people, especially invited guests. If there is a specific context in a committee, I invite him to share it with me, and I will take a look.

He may not have listened to my entire speech. He may have missed some parts. However, as I mentioned in my speech, this can happen on rare occasions, but it must remain an exception and there must be very good reasons for it. What I want, in general, is for people to be treated with respect. I ask that there be less aggression in the comments.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that I have a lot of respect for my colleague. He is a great guy. We may disagree politically, but I have a lot of respect for him.

I am very pleased that my colleague is looking at the statistics on how committees work. We are doing that as well. Today's debate is about the fact that a number of committee chairs are Liberals. As my colleague said, the chair has a lot of power and can cancel meetings.

Does my colleague think that democracy suffers when Liberal chairs operate this way? Does that diminish the ability of members to do their work in the House and in committees?

• (1655)

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that the respect is mutual.

He is absolutely right. When proceedings are blocked, when there is a filibuster and when meetings are not held, we cannot work. We were elected to work, and sometimes the committee chair does not know what our intentions are. The chair can decide not to call a meeting even though I have prepared a motion and have

talked to my counterparts, the other two vice-chairs, to get their input on what I plan to present. In such situations, we are prepared to move forward on a new issue, but we learn that the committee will not be meeting, that it will meet in a week, two weeks or a month. This week's meeting of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration has been postponed until January. However, the motion said it would be this week. It is deceiving.

This certainly undermines the value of our work.

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to sincerely thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé, who is also my whip and my friend, for his speech.

In his speech, he spoke candidly, frankly and with an open heart about how we, as parliamentarians, could work better together in the House and in committee. He concluded his speech by saying that we could create a virtuous circle by showing more respect for one another and by working more collaboratively.

However, the first question was asked by a member of the Liberal Party who stood up and shouted reprehensible comments at him. I will not repeat the words here, but it went against everything my colleague said, and it put us back in the vicious circle. A party that forms the government but does not have a majority should reach out to the other parties to try to work together, make some progress and move forward with the other parties. That is what my hon. colleague and friend said, yet the first thing we heard afterwards was some reprehensible language, and the member refuses to apologize for what he said.

What message does that send to my hon. colleague?

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, the message this sends is that we put him in his place and gave him a chance this time. He will not get a second chance. Let us get the message across. Beyond that, it was the perfect example of how not to behave. I much prefer the questions from the member for Winnipeg North. We do not often agree either, but at least he does not hurl insults every three words.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member recognizes the makeup of a committee can determine the productivity of that committee. In committees that work well together, we see a higher sense of co-operation. However, in some committees, and I am sure he would admit this, there is a high sense of politicization that takes place. That is where we will often see filibusters occurring.

As a specific example, the motion for one of the committees is that the committee be granted the power to travel throughout Canada to hear testimony from interested parties and that the necessary staff accompany that committee. I perceive that particular motion as a way in which the taxpayer would pay to facilitate something that was not in the best interests of Canadians, and I am trying to be gentle with my comments on this.

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Would the member not agree that, at times, committees can be a challenge because the personalities around the table can make it very challenging?

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the member for Winnipeg North answered my call and asked me a question; it lowers the temperature of our debate.

Of course the composition of a committee plays a role, but that is only part of it. To be honest, calls get made, missions get organized. Earlier on, I held the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food up as an exemplary committee, but something really unpleasant once happened to me. I once asked a colleague a question only to be told in response that we all have a job to do. What did that mean? It meant that a call came in from on high. In political parties, I think that the will has to come from the top, and I think that could be improved a lot. That is obvious.

In answer to my colleague's example about the motion, I would tell him that it depends on the study. It is like when another colleague told me earlier about a time that witnesses were not heard, but he gave me no context. There may have been a specific context involved. To answer the question from the member for Winnipeg North, a motion like that could be a valid part of a study if it were necessary to travel to see people, but it might also not be valid. It depends on the interpretation, and that is part of the work done by committee members. If they are diligent, they will ask themselves serious questions and make the right decisions.

• (1700)

John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in my colleague's comments. I am the chair of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. In this Parliament, as in all Parliaments, there are committees responsible for government oversight. My job is to closely monitor the work of these four oversight committees, as well as the committees chaired by Liberal members.

Could my colleague comment on how oversight committees function in comparison to committees chaired by Liberals? In my opinion, the latter seem to function less effectively than the former.

Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and congratulate him on his French. Frankly, if everyone tried as hard as he does, we might end up being truly bilingual.

To answer his question, and based on what I have observed during my short time as whip, I have to say that he is right. I could give several examples of chairs from the governing party who seem to be biased more often than they are impartial, who make decisions that appear to be skewed or who try to squelch certain debates.

I think the example that was mentioned earlier about the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration is quite telling. I know that debate is frustrating, but that is what democracy is all about. It means that sometimes we have to bring information to light and, if it is not good news, try to change it for the future.

I think we owe it to the public to be transparent. These oversight committees are extremely important. It is part of democracy, and

we must remain vigilant in this regard. My colleague raises a very good point.

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting conversation we are having. I think the Conservatives are attempting to try to turn the tables, since I think that the message is getting out to Canadians that there have been delay tactics by the Conservatives to obstruct and stall legislation for some time in many committees. We have been talking about that for some time, so it is good that they are upset about some committees being cancelled this week. I would argue that this was due to the obstruction that the Conservatives have been leading for weeks and weeks.

I will give us an example. After weeks of blocking work that would have made our communities safer, the Conservatives were demanding that the justice committee pack up and hit the road to embark on an expensive, credit-card budget, cross-country tour with a fully staffed entourage that would burn through taxpayer dollars while accomplishing absolutely none of the urgent work that Canadians are expecting of our government right now. Conservatives moved two motions to paralyze the justice committee. It was nothing but bad-faith obstruction.

We were not going to let them hijack another committee meeting and that is why, when a new chair was appointed to that committee, he had to cancel one meeting in order to sort things out. For the previous several meetings, all that had happened was obstruction. I will give exact examples of how that was done.

Instead of hijacking the meetings and accomplishing nothing, it is better, at times, to pause. The committee chair in the House had also explained why that pause was needed: to gather parties together and come to a path forward so that we could work together more productively.

I would like to point out that in the justice committee, two major public safety bills, the combatting hate act and the bail and sentencing reform act, are both being stalled, even as provinces and territories, municipalities, police chiefs, police associations and victims groups have been pleading with parliamentarians for swift action. Blocking these reforms is really irresponsible. It is an affront to the public safety of Canadians.

Under the Conservative leader, what we have seen is that the Conservatives would rather stage political theatre on the taxpayer's dime than do the job that Canadians have sent them here to do as an official opposition. They are not serious about public safety. They are not serious about governing, that is for sure. Hopefully, they are not given the opportunity one day, because they are showing clearly where their interests lie. It is in gaining political power and not in what the opposition is sent here to do, which is to make constructive amendments, to make our legislation stronger and to make Canadians safer. That is exactly what they have not been doing.

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In fact, I would argue that what they are doing is trying to make sure that the government is not able to accomplish its agenda and pass these reforms and pieces of legislation, so that Canadians would be upset, so that these community groups would be upset, and so that the Conservatives can continue with the rage bait that they do online. What would they do if we were to solve all of these problems with our legislation? What rage bait would they be able to carry on about at that point?

We have seen, in fact, that every time there is some type of impasse, the Conservative Party of Canada gets online and raises money at the expense of the serious issues that affect Canadians and the incidents that victims suffer from. They have no qualms or feelings about fundraising off those issues. That is why I would say that the Conservatives are absolutely not serious, not genuinely serious, about public safety. They are certainly not serious about listening to the people who are most affected by crime.

• (1705)

Communities across Canada have been calling for stronger protections in the face of rising hate and rising anti-Semitism. We had many community associations call upon the House to make changes in legislation, to make changes to the Criminal Code of Canada, and we are doing exactly that. Every Conservative delay means that those protections are also delayed in getting to Canadians.

The proposed combatting hate act could not be reviewed at the committee, and the amendments that were put forward were not considered. There is a lot of conversation happening right now as to whether the Liberals agree with the Bloc amendment its members were going to be putting forward, but that amendment was not even put forward and was not moved at committee. However, somebody leaked that information, which is a serious matter of procedure and a failure of the member who made that leak.

It is important to give committee members the opportunity in committee to debate these issues and come up with a sincere decision on those issues, but what we saw were complete delay tactics. For example, on Thursday, November 27, the committee's work was completely derailed when the Conservative member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South filibustered for two hours. All confidential amendments had already been submitted on November 24, and the Bloc amendment was scheduled to be introduced that day, but the filibuster prevented that from happening. In fact, the amendment was never debated at all, and so no consideration was given to that matter.

In the meantime, what the Conservatives have been busy doing is demonizing this piece of legislation and coming up with what-ifs, hypothetical scenarios that are not even in the bill. The Conservative leader is going to events and telling people they will not be able to read the Torah, the Quran or the Bible without being charged. These are complete falsehoods. It is not true. These are hypothetical scenarios that have been created, and I would argue that even with potential amendments, that would not be the case. Once again, it is all rage bait.

Like I said, after weeks of filibusters, procedural games and attempts to drag us backwards, the Conservatives have now moved two motions at committee to stop clause by clause and to send the

committee on a national tour. This is after the bill has already been debated. Witnesses have come before committee, and I can let members know how many witnesses; I have a list right here. The work the committee was able to do has been impressive, but I just wish it was given the opportunity to continue this work to completion. Instead, the Conservatives are holding up two very important bills in that committee.

The committee had eight hours of time on this bill. It should have been 11 hours, in terms of the time that was scheduled, but due to the Conservative filibustering, those hours were not allowed for committee work. We were left with eight hours. In terms of the number of witnesses, the committee saw 23 witnesses on this hate crime legislation, but it should have seen 33 had the Conservatives not started filibustering the committee. It is quite clear that it is the Conservatives who do not want to hear from witnesses and experts who come to give their testimony as to the pros and cons of different aspects of the legislation, which is really important in a democracy. It is the work that committees are given to do, and it is incredibly important.

What shocks me is that the other day in this House, the co-deputy leader of the Conservative Party stood up, and she was referring to Bill C-9. Maybe she was referring to all Criminal Code changes; I do not know. I will say that when the issue was Bill C-9, she stood up in the House and said, "We do not have a law problem in this country. We have an enforcement problem".

• (1710)

I am wondering, is the deputy leader saying the police do not know what they are doing? What we have heard from police agencies across this country is that hate crime charges have not been laid. What we have heard from Jewish communities across this country is that they are not seeing the law being applied, due to the lack of clarity that had existed, and so consultations had been done to create this legislation so communities could be better protected through our code.

Every time the Conservatives get up in the House, they want Criminal Code changes. All their private members' bills ask for Criminal Code changes. Every time they get up in question period to talk about crime, they ask for Criminal Code changes. We are doing all of the things the Conservatives have asked for, all the things that law enforcement, the communities and victims have asked for, and all of a sudden, we are seeing this pattern. The Conservatives are trying to stop us and obstruct us from doing the work that is necessary.

The pattern we have been seeing is a very clear one. What we have been seeing is that the Conservatives are incredibly weak on crime this Parliament, and they are blocking bail reform. The proof is in their actions, and not in what they get up and say, because we cannot trust what they are going to say. One day they are asking for changes in the law, and the next day their deputy leader is getting up in the House and saying we do not have a law problem; it is an enforcement problem. If that was the case, then why are they asking for all these law changes?

There are changes that are necessary. We have implemented them in legislation. However, the pattern we are seeing is that the Conservatives are opposing all those changes. Therefore, they are blocking bail reform. People are being released today because of the Conservatives' failure to work with the government. They are blocking protections for peaceful protesters and peaceful worshippers. One thing we have seen that is very clear is that the Conservatives definitely will not allow the police more of the investigative powers they have been asking for so they can actually catch extortionists and pedophiles.

The second bill we tabled in this House was Bill C-2, the stronger borders act. In that piece of legislation, we had a lawful access regime, which is something that, once upon a time, the Conservatives agreed with. However, all of a sudden, once again it is their way to fundraise and rage farm. Clickbait and rage farming is the stuff the Conservatives are famous for doing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Ruby Sahota: The Conservatives are angry, Mr. Speaker, because of the tactics I am pointing at and the clear pattern we have been seeing.

The powers in lawful access would help provide police the powers and the tools they need to catch extortionists, things the Conservatives bring up in the House every single day. They complain about a problem, but they do not want a solution. Also, it would help catch pedophiles.

Right now, even if the police know the IP addresses all across the country where people are downloading child pornography, they are unable to act on that information quickly because they need to go through procedural court orders, which takes a very long time. In many of these extortion cases, we are seeing the criminals go free and commit more and more extortions. Child predators are continuing their work because it takes up to six months at times to get judicial authorization. It is so important to give these modern tools to police.

Our Five Eyes allies all have these types of modern tools, but the Conservatives will not allow us to be able to give that to our police agencies. I think they are listening to an extreme base that they have right now and bending to its wishes.

Another pattern I have seen is really interesting, because the Conservatives used to be pro-police. However, we have heard the Conservative leader calling the RCMP “despicable” and then the co-deputy leader getting up in the House and saying enforcement is the problem in this country. Meanwhile, our law enforcement officers have been working incredibly hard, giving us the proper recommendations we need so we can put them into our legislation.

• (1715)

We presented this legislation, we have debated it in the House, but all we have seen from the Conservatives are stall tactics and misleading information being spread to Canadians about how the government is going to go after their data. That is absolutely false. That is not true. There is no interest in going after anyone's data. However, it is important for police to be able to narrow down the suspects they have, to rule out suspects they have in cases, so that

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they can act quickly and so criminals do not go on to commit other crimes. This is the important work that is being held up in the justice committee.

Like I said, for Bill C-9, there has been three hours and 30 minutes of debate in the House already, and eight hours in the committee that could have been 11, but the Conservatives filibustered. They heard from 23 witnesses, which should have been 33, but the Conservatives filibustered. Now they are saying the work is not done and we should let them take a fancy tour across the country, pack it all up, spend and waste taxpayer dollars to go and continue to spread disinformation across the country.

We have done it before in the House, where all parliamentarians from all sides have gotten together to do what is right, to work in the best interests of Canadians, not in the best interests of themselves or their fundraising campaigns. Let us pass these crucial bills, these urgent bills that victims are calling for and police are calling for.

That is why this work is so important. It is actually life or death right now. I would plead with the Conservatives to help us pass this—

• (1720)

The Deputy Speaker: I have a point of order from the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

Matt Strauss: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the definition of disinformation includes purpose or intent, that it would be equivalent to intentionally misleading or lying. I just wonder if you would rule that it is unparliamentary to accuse the opposition of doing that.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for that point of order on the use of that particular word. That word has been used in the House before. I would say that without it being preceded by words like “wilful”, “deliberate” or “intentional”, in this particular case, no individual member was singled out or mentioned in the House as having engaged in that behaviour. Therefore, I did not rise to call the minister to order.

The secretary of state may continue.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I cited an example of a time when the Conservative leader went to an event. At that event, he said that Bill C-9, currently, in the form that it is right now, would criminalize religions in this country. That is misleading. That is misinformation that is spreading online. It is, obviously, causing concern. I would be concerned too, if that was the truth.

It is our job as parliamentarians to set the record straight, to be responsible, to debate bills on their merits, on the facts of what is in a bill, and if a motion is put forward, then to debate that motion on its merits. We can also, of course, vote against those types of motions. Instead, what is happening is that a lot of fear is being spread into our communities, and then bills are being held up based on that narrative, which is irresponsible. I think Canadians do not appreciate that.

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Canadians are being extorted. I was at a town hall this weekend. People asked me, “What is going on in Parliament? Why can't you get this done, when it's so important to us to be able to get the laws in place that would help give harsher penalties to criminals and make bail harder for them to get? What do the Conservatives have against that?” I am just flabbergasted. I am really shocked that those are measures the Conservatives are, all of a sudden, not supporting any more. I feel like things have been flipped upside down a bit. I do not know what's going on, but it is confusing.

I just ask that we work more productively together. It is great that the justice committee is going to be meeting. I encourage all the members of the justice committee to meet and to sort these issues out, to pass Bill C-9 and pass Bill C-14.

Also, at the the public safety committee, let us bring back Bill C-2. Let us bring back the provisions that were left behind by the Conservatives: lawful access provisions and being able to fill the gap of vulnerability we have through our mailing system right now. As it stands, even with a judicial warrant, we cannot search mail for fentanyl and—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Northumberland—Clarke.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to read into the record what has happened at the transport committee. The record is as follows: November 18, meeting cancelled by Chair; November 20, meeting cancelled by Chair; November 25, Liberal filibuster; November 27, meeting cancelled by Chair; and December 2, Liberal filibuster. Then the Chair got up and said the committee was going to suspend for 30 minutes and ran out the back door. December 4 was a Liberal filibuster. We are scheduled for another filibuster tomorrow.

Is this the Liberals' definition of “productivity”?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I think I would give precedence and priority to legislation, and committees do too. Committees give priority to legislative work.

The example I have been giving is that there are two very important and urgent pieces of legislation at the justice committee that need to be passed in order to change the Criminal Code. There are up to 80 different changes in one piece, the bail and sentencing piece, of the Criminal Code of Canada. It would make sentences harder for criminals and getting bail a lot tougher. That is really important. Canadians have been asking for that. In the face of rising hate, they have also been asking for us to act on that issue. Let us give legislation the priority it deserves and pass those pieces.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have heard rumours about dissent among the Liberals regarding the religious exemption in Bill C-9. I would like my colleague to tell me how many members of her caucus believe that we must protect the religious exemption defence for the offence of promoting hatred and the offence of promoting anti-Semitism.

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, it would be very important for the justice committee to resume its work so the member can get an

answer to that question. That question might eventually be before the committee. Members can debate that issue as they are supposed to be able to debate it in the committee process. We will then know what their views are when there is a vote on that issue. We will know where the issue lies. Let us get back to doing the work that is necessary, rather than debating hypotheticals. All we have been doing the last several weeks is talking about hypotheticals, filibustering about what may be, who may be thinking what or what is happening in which caucus meeting. That is not the work of Parliament. That is the work of gossip rags.

I would say the committee should get back to work, should have that discussion around the committee table and should have the important vote there.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the secretary has been a very powerful advocate in the area of bail reform. If we do a flashback to the last federal election a number of months ago, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians to bring forward bail reform legislation and to work with the provinces, law enforcement and many different stakeholders to have bail reform legislation. As a minister, I know full well she wants to see that legislation passed, as I do and as the entire Liberal caucus does. This is delivering for Canadians.

Would she not agree the only barrier to Canadians receiving bail reform legislation is the Conservative Party of Canada? If the committee wanted to, it could deal with this. We could have the legislation back here and passed.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the member. Right now, we have a comprehensive piece of legislation before the justice committee. I have been promising constituents that we will get this bill to the finish line with the help of the Conservative Party and with the help of all parliamentarians in the House. Who wants to see criminals go free? Who does not want to improve our judicial system? We are delivering that.

I would hope that the Conservatives would partner with us in that, but to my surprise, they have been obstructing every chance they get. They have been obstructing at committee. They have been obstructing in the House. They have been obstructing out at community events.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it grieves me to make this comment to my friend, the secretary. We are debating much in this place, but I am the lone representative of the Green Party and I was the lone representative of the Green Party in 2011. This current session of Parliament represents the time that I have felt the least respect, had the least opportunity to participate and seen the most anti-democratic measures to push things through.

In the case of Bill C-9, I did not get to speak to it at all before it went to a vote at second reading, and the vote at second reading passed on division. There are seven New Democrat MPs and me. In the past, the old days, we had rules that said five MPs could stand and force a recorded vote. That is no longer. The Bloc, the Conservatives and the Liberals decide when our constituents get to see how we would vote on a bill. Now we do not even get to do that.

I ask my hon. colleague to give us a chance to debate these bills in this place, in the House.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for that member, and I know that in the past there have been many opportunities provided to debate pieces of legislation in the House. If a member would like to appear before a committee, they have to work with that committee and it depends on the members and the consensus that is built at that committee. I hope that this member is given an opportunity because she always brings value to any debate that we have in the House.

• (1730)

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say quickly that I do substitute in at the transportation committee, and I have had many hours of listening to the Liberals filibuster this committee. One thing that really stood out to me was that my hon. colleague had mentioned that this is about life and death. All Conservatives have been trying to do, where we are studying Driver Inc., is to call witnesses to tell their stories about the victims and the lives that are lost.

Would the hon. colleague not agree with me that the Liberals need to get out of the way and allow us to do this study so their stories can be told?

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, my comment in terms of life was in relation to the work that is being done at the justice committee with respect to Bill C-9 and with respect to the bail and sentencing bill, Bill C-14. It is what I have been hearing from law enforcement and what I have been hearing from victims, so it was in reference to that. It is not to make light of anything. I take this issue very seriously.

In terms of what is being studied at the transportation committee, I think that is very important too. Safety on our roads is incredibly important. To a large extent, that issue is provincial. Provincial authorities can decide whom they license, whom they do not license and whether they want to license temporary visitors. I know Ontario is taking measures with respect to that. I would encourage all provinces to look into their safety measures for their roads because it is incredibly important.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up where my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord left off. He said that we proposed an amendment to Bill C-9 so that the religious exemption could no longer be invoked for hate speech. The Liberal Party was in favour of that amendment at one point, but that no longer seems to be the case.

My colleague therefore asked the government representative a question, and she replied that it was up to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to look into this. However, as I under-

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stand it, the Liberal chair has decided to stop convening the justice committee for the time being, hence the report we are discussing today. I would like my hon. colleague to comment on that.

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I will look into it, but I just heard as I was here in the House, and I do not have the ability to confer with anybody right now, that a meeting has been scheduled. I hope, for the sake of these important measures, that a meeting is scheduled. It is something that I would advocate for as well.

All the committees should be doing the work that is necessary, but I will also say that when studies are done, this is the time of year, during the last week of the parliamentary sitting, when committees will decide themselves whether they want to wind up the issue they are studying right now or they want to continue. That is not anything abnormal. In the last 10 years that I have been here, that has always been customary.

However, once again, I will go back to the point about prioritizing legislation. I think it is really important that we prioritize legislation because we also need to give the other place time to review that legislation.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to join this debate. This is an opportunity for parliamentarians to hear about some of the dysfunction that exists at committees, which is at the hands, largely, of the chairs and probably, in some cases, the parliamentary secretaries that carry the government's water on committee. It is due to the chairs' inability to manage their committees. I am going to talk about the finance committee.

We have heard a lot from members opposite who claim Conservatives are filibustering at committees to obstruct bills.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: It's true.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I am being heckled by the member for Winnipeg North. Maybe he does not know that it is his own caucus colleagues who have filibustered Bill C-4 at the finance committee, but I will get to that. I want to take this in order.

This committee formed and began in the spring. It had a chair who has demonstrated a disregard for the rules of committee, does not follow the practice and procedure according to our green book that spells out proper practice and procedure and, on June 16, gavelled out a meeting without the consent of members. I brought to her attention that this is not permitted.

I should point out that I am sharing my time with the member from Edmonton West.

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At committee, we repeatedly pointed out the rules of committee from the green book, page 1099, which states, "The committee Chair cannot adjourn the meeting without the consent of a majority of the members". This is a rule of committee that I have found in the debate today. The chair of the finance committee is not the only committee Liberal chair, governing party caucus chair, who gavelled out meetings when the going gets tough for their side or if they just feel like stopping a meeting. I bring to the House's attention that the rules of committee are not being followed.

At the finance committee, on October 22, when the governing party members were filibustering their own bill, obstructing Bill C-4, a bill that Conservatives and other members of the House did support and voted for in the House and referred to committee for study, we spent that entire meeting debating a single NDP amendment that had been brought forward, with the Liberal members, in particular the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, asking repeated vexatious questions of the officials present in order to prolong the meeting and prevent it getting to a vote.

It was not clear to us why at the time. Had they just not read the amendments and they were just treading water? Were they waiting for their higher-ups to tell them what to do? Were they waiting for their whip's office or the PMO to give them word about how to vote on these amendments? Did they not do their homework? Did they not have a pre-committee meeting? Did they not take this meeting seriously and were just blathering to prevent business from occurring? I did not know, and I never will. However, I do know that meeting was also gavelled out while the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance was literally in the middle of asking an official a question. It was the most disrespectful thing I have ever seen. We had officials present who were doing their jobs, answering questions of members of committee, and the chair gavelled the meeting out while her own parliamentary secretary was asking a question.

We returned the following Monday. Again, governing party members spent 110 minutes filibustering their own bill, Bill C-4. On the one hand, the member for Winnipeg North came into the chamber and, in debate, asked why we could not advance this bill. We cannot advance it because his own members would not let it advance at committee. I had to be the voice of reason at that meeting. We withdrew some proposed amendments of our own, but they were not the source of the logjam. We had not even come to those yet.

• (1735)

We eventually talked the Liberals into allowing the other amendments that other parties had proposed to come to a vote, which they did, and we managed to get through Bill C-4 and report it back to the House. It was no thanks to any of the Liberals.

Did any member of the finance committee approach other parties and ask to perhaps sit down informally to discuss what our priorities are and see if we could negotiate resolution to the different motions? This is how adults solve problems, but it has not happened on that committee. I do not blame the three new MPs on the committee; they all seem to be reasonable people, but I do have to ask why the chair and the parliamentary secretary come into every

meeting unable to work with members of other parties. We did get through that.

On October 29 we had a meeting with the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The committee chair completely inconsistently enforced the rule of relevance, enforcing it on one side but not the other. Toward the end of that meeting, there was kind of a blow up with the parliamentary secretary and the Parliamentary Budget Officer. It was quite something; it was not a credit to him, I can assure members of that.

Then, on November 19, with witnesses present, toward the end of the meeting but with time on the clock, the Bloc vice-chair, that being the only time that he would have had the floor, introduced a routine motion that we could have dispensed with very quickly, or we could even have moved to adjourn debate on it and returned to our witnesses, but no: Liberals, the parliamentary secretary in fact, filibustered the meeting until, I think, 8:30 in the evening, before then agreeing to adopt the motion. The dysfunction for no purpose, apparent strategy or goal is just bizarre. I do not understand it.

What we have had on the finance committee is a complete lack of co-operation, and not for lack of willingness. I do not know how many times I have said on the record at the committee, and urged the chair, to hold a steering committee meeting where her vice-chairs can come, present their agendas, talk about the motions they have put on notice and, with the cameras off, discuss the potential business of the committee ahead and plan a schedule and a work plan. This is how committees that are strong, functional and do good work together can, through the process of collegial disagreement, forge better policy and outcomes and produce better reports and legislation for Canadians, but it is not happening at finance committee.

There has been of late a fixation from the Liberals who have proposed motions to pre-study the budget implementation act. Pre-studying legislation is not normally how it is done. There is a motion before the House to refer that bill to the finance committee upon its adoption in the House, and that is the correct order in which to do things. If the Liberals had a particular reason, or if there were a negotiation they wanted to have over this, I am sure we could have it; that is what a subcommittee is for.

The chair has cancelled meetings twice in the last couple of weeks and has scheduled only one hour instead of two when witnesses were not available. The second hour could have been devoted to a subcommittee where the issues could be worked out so the committee could function together more properly.

The purpose of the debate and the report before the House is to examine the efficacy of the finance committee. I am sad to report that it is not going all that well at the finance committee, and I put the blame fully with the chair and the parliamentary secretary, neither of whom ever reaches out to members to encourage working together to co-operate and have a work plan.

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• (1740)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the member is aware, years ago the Conservative Party actually developed a book on how to obstruct committee work. I wonder if he might want to just reflect on that. I do not know if Conservatives have brought the book back, but I suspect they have. The current leader was part of the former book. They might have an updated, more modern book.

Could the hon. member share with the House whether the Conservative Party still has that book? Has it been updated? What is the status of that book that was meant to disturb and disrupt standing committees?

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I have been here for 10 years, and I have no idea about that book.

I do know a couple of things though. First, if the member had listened to my speech, he would have noted that it is entirely his caucus that is obstructing the work of the finance committee. Second, with respect to the opposition leader, with whom I have the privilege of serving on the finance committee, I noted that there was a strong chair, Wayne Easter, who could cope with strong personalities and could allow for a cohesive work plan with members that included the opposition leader.

It is all about the will of the chair.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe the document the parliamentary secretary is referring to is *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, the fourth edition of which was just published.

On a more serious note, I am no longer a permanent member of the Standing Committee on Finance, but I stood in for my colleague from Mirabel today. I witnessed over two hours of filibustering, including an hour and a half from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue.

This is because the Liberal members, who are in the minority, are insisting on a pre-study of the budget implementation bill. Before it is passed in the House at second reading, they are refusing to allow the committee to conduct any other study in the meantime, such as a study on the Canada Revenue Agency and all the issues it is plagued with. In my opinion, that is problematic.

I would like to know what my hon. colleague, with whom I had the pleasure of serving on the Standing Committee on Finance in the past, thinks about this.

[*English*]

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what has happened. The member was there for the filibuster that the parliamentary secretary undertook.

The Liberals do not want to study anything else. They were fixated on pre-studying the BIA. Can they go 18 or 20 months without tabling a budget, and then all of a sudden the budget implementa-

tion act has to be pre-studied, even when they are still amending it in the House?

The same parliamentary secretary was pushing for a pre-study at the finance committee while he is tabling amendments to the bill in the House. The Liberals have not even gotten it straight in the House, so why do we not wait until we get it voted on in the House, and if it is the will of the House to approve the BIA and refer it to the committee, then the committee will study it?

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech by my colleague from Calgary Crowfoot, and I think that in one of his answers he really hit the nail on the head: He said that maybe it is because there are such weak Liberal chairs in the finance committee. I remember that when I was in government in Saskatchewan, I always thought it was the government's job to make sure the legislative agenda passed, not to slough it off and whine and complain that the opposition was not making it easy enough to get the job done.

I would like the member to reflect a little more on not only the finance committee but perhaps also on the other committees where the weakness of the Liberal chair is allowing disorder and not making sure that the studies are taking place, as well as the fact that many chairs are not even calling meetings in the first place. Is that part of the problem of not getting legislation passed?

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I have been in the House for the Liberal government's 10 years, and it is terrible at managing the legislative agenda.

When it comes to committees, I am very disappointed with what I have learned during this debate about the dysfunction at a number of committees, not just at the finance committee. The member is absolutely right; if a government is competent, it should have a legislative plan at each stage and should be able to manage its own agenda. The current government does not.

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

I am hoping and believing there will be unanimous consent that would allow me to table some questions for return.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

Agreed.

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

Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN**

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521 and 522 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

LIAISON

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

[*Member spoke in Latin*]

[*English*]

These were the famous words spoken by King Edward I in 1295 when calling the model Parliament. For those who cannot follow my very poor Latin, he stated, "What touches all should be approved by all, and it is also clear that common dangers should be met with measures agreed upon in common." This is the basis of our Parliament today. What taxes and spending the government proposes should be approved by all.

When King Edward called the model Parliament, it was to gain funding to fight wars against Scotland and France, which was maybe great if someone was Irish, because they got a break for a change from the English, but that was what it was about: getting common people to approve taxation. It is the basis of our Westminster process right now, especially around the estimates process.

Today's government is actually raising money for what seems to be a different war, a generational war of debt against our children and our grandchildren to come, but I will get to that later perhaps.

Does any member of the House remember in 2015 when the Liberal government stated, with Trudeau at the time, that it was going to be "open by default"? He said that very many times: It was going to be open by default and was going to be the most open government in history. However, we see basically the opposite; what we are seeing in the House and in committee, especially in committee, is the opposite of open by default.

I have been hearing today our debate about the transport committee. I have had the pleasure of sitting on the operations committee for over 10 years. Liberal chairs, in the last month alone, have cancelled

transport meetings more than chairs did in the 10 years combined that I have been on the estimates committee. In 10 years, we have cancelled one meeting, but the Liberals, open by default and wanting to work with everyone, have cancelled transport meetings more times in the last couple of weeks than the estimates committee has cancelled meetings since 2015.

What is happening in operations right now? This is the basis of today's discussion. Tomorrow the procurement minister was supposed to show up to defend the estimates. He has refused. We have offered him many dates, telling him he could pick the date and we would make the committee available. We meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, but I have said we would meet on Monday if necessary. We would accommodate him, but he has refused.

About a month and a half ago, we offered up briefing sessions for the Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and a separate meeting for the treasury board president to come and brief committee. We offered each of them a separate hour, but they would appear only together. We offered them various dates. They refused to appear separately, despite what the motion called for. They would appear for only one hour, and only together, holding hands like little schoolgirls, afraid of committee. This was not about the estimates; it was for them to just brief the operations committee on their roles. They refused to attend separately.

We have a motion out for the CEO of the Defence Investment Agency, much ballyhooed by the government. This gentleman, the president, is going to make about \$700,000 a year. In his past life, according to LinkedIn, he was deputy chair of Royal Bank wealth management and managing director of Goldman Sachs. We put out an invite. His office, PSPC, refused to allow him to show up. We put out another invite, along with a separate invite to the Secretary of State for Defence Procurement. One would think they would want to come and explain all the incredible things the Liberals are going to do for defence, as they often do with the media, but they refused to appear in committee unless they could appear together.

• (1750)

Imagine, as an MP, one door knocks. They then work their way up to minister, but they are afraid to show up to committee unless they have someone there to hold their hand. The government members are talking about billions of dollars for defence, yet they refuse to allow the CEO of the Defence Investment Agency to appear unless he has his minder. We brought this up in committee. The Liberal members of the committee said that it is customary for a minister to show up with his deputy minister, except the CEO of the Defence Investment Agency is not a deputy minister. He is the CEO of a separate department. This same secretary showed up at defence alone, but he will not show up to the operations committee.

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I am not sure what they are afraid of. Maybe they are afraid of explaining the back-and-forth about the F-35 versus the Saab Gripen. This is the same Saab, by the way, that members of the government have said is going to create 10,000 jobs in Quebec, for a plane that has an average of six being built per year since coming into production. There are only six per year, yet somehow it is going to create 10,000 jobs. Maybe they are afraid to explain that. Maybe they just want to go out and have the friendly media repeat their talking points instead of being in front of committee.

When did this start? When did ministers start refusing to show up? We would think they would want to come to defend their estimates. We would think they would want to come to explain. In the budget, there is talk of \$60 billion of cuts through the CER. We asked the President of the Treasury Board if it would provide that information to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, and he said, yes, he would be happy to. Then, he did not. If members opposite have forgotten, a previous PBO actually sued the government for access to this data, and now the government is saying it will not provide it, even though it is required under the Parliament of Canada Act that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has a right to access this data.

• (1755)

This was aggregate data he was looking for. He was not looking for specifics, such as if Bill or Frank's department is going to get shut down. It is for aggregate data, and the government refused. What the President of the Treasury Board said is that they cannot release the information on the cuts to Parliament until Parliament votes on the cuts. They wanted the budget passed before they would tell Parliament what it is voting on. We actually had to have a motion from the operations committee to demand this information be turned over to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

In committee, we found out that the PBO wrote to five different departments asking for the data. We know it exists because, on Halloween day, the comptroller general presented the information. We know it exists. He wrote to the five departments asking for this information, and out of nowhere, the Treasury Board interfered to say to not release that information to the PBO, that it will aggregate it and forward it out. The PBO did not ask the Treasury Board to interfere politically. It asked the departments to.

Right now, we are consumed with an order from the industry committee to hand over unredacted docs regarding Stellantis. The Liberal members of the committee voted for it and then spent weeks filibustering, blocking it when industry refused to turn it over. This is an ongoing problem we have heard about from many speakers today, and we see it every day in the operations committee. Government is interfering with the roles of committee and the roles of parliamentarians, blocking information and violating the law to protect itself. The government needs to focus on delivering to Canadians and focus less on delivering to their political masters.

• (1800)

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I struggle to understand how my colleague across the floor sets his priorities. Personally, I go to my riding and ask people what they want us to do.

They tell me they want us to strengthen security. We are doing that with Bill C-12 and various changes to the Criminal Code. They tell me they want us to make life more affordable. We have Bill C-4, which is currently being studied and which we would like to see passed shortly. People also talk to me about the much-needed investments in infrastructure. That is in the budget implementation bill. What people are not asking me to do, however, is to engage in filibustering, block the work of the House and prevent us from debating bills that address the priorities of Canadians.

I would like to ask my colleague how he sets his priorities. Does he think it is justifiable to use the House's valuable time to obstruct proceedings rather than debate bills?

[English]

Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, it always amazes me. I have been here for 10 years, and for 10 years I have dealt with the absolute incompetence of the government and its members in terms of getting legislation across. They had 19 months, since being elected, to table a budget. It is the second-longest period we have had between budgets since the Trudeau government refused to drop one during the COVID era. The member opposite and his government need to learn how to govern and stop blaming the opposition for their own incompetence.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, throughout his speech, my colleague mentioned ministers who did not answer or who refused to appear before a committee. There is a fundamental principle called ministerial responsibility. The minister is responsible for what happens in his or her department and must be able to provide clarification, particularly when elected officials ask questions. I think that is a serious breach of parliamentary privilege.

I want my colleague to comment on that and on what we can do to make sure that does not continue. This is what we are trying to do today, but it does not mean that the Liberals will start working collaboratively as of tomorrow.

[English]

Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, my colleague brings up an excellent question about ministerial responsibility. He asks how we could fix this. I think that the government could fix it by actually promoting competent people into ministerial roles. At the public accounts committee, we once heard one of the senior Liberals state that ministers are not responsible for their own departments. They actually stated this.

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Last week, at the government operations committee, the President of the Treasury Board was being asked questions, and his answer was that if one wants an answer, one needs to ask his official, and to not ask him. That is the Liberal version of ministerial responsibility, and it is a joke.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I sit on the science and research committee. Last Wednesday, the chair arbitrarily cancelled the meeting half an hour prior. Today they cancelled our Monday meeting without any advance notice. They cancelled the meeting on justice and other committees.

What are the Liberals trying to hide? What do they have to hide? Why are they running away from questions? Why are they not doing the job that people want them to do?

Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, what are the Liberals trying to hide? It is a lot. I look at my own committee, in terms of trying to get the Stellantis contracts. The government gave \$13 billion to Stellantis, only to see Stellantis flee, fire people in Brampton and then show up at the White House with Trump, bragging about a \$15-billion investment in the U.S. Specifically, with Stellantis, it looks like the Liberals are hiding the fact that taxpayers are funding production and job growth in the U.S. instead of in Canada.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the member would acknowledge that, at times, we get things that come out of committees. We have a committee that says it wants to try to travel, at taxpayers' expense, to talk about and promote what I would suggest is misinformation or misleading information.

Why should the taxpayers have to pay for it? Why would the government want to support an initiative like that?

Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I wish the member for Winnipeg North had had the same feeling and concern for taxpayers before his government gave millions for gender-just rice in Vietnam and before giving billions to U.S. multinationals that actually use some of that money to fund ISIS in Syria. The member should get serious.

• (1805)

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna.

It is an honour to rise today ahead of what I guess is an early Festivus miracle to air some grievances on how committees are functioning in this place. I can assure members that in my experience at the environment committee, things are not going well. As my colleague so ably stated, we are watching, in real time, ministerial responsibility fall apart. We are watching an erosion and a decay of ministerial responsibility.

In the case of the environment committee, which I have been a proud member of since I was first elected back in 2023, we have been graced so humbly by the minister, it was only for a total of one hour of her time, one hour of her presence. We have been ignored, with over five invitations for the minister to appear. We have been ghosted time and time again. We have been stood up. It is starting to feel like she just does not like us. She is just not that into

us. Asking tough questions is not a good enough reason to not be accountable to Parliament and to all Canadians. I would go so far as to say there have been more verified pictures of Bigfoot taken than there have been of our minister in the environment committee.

I will say something about the previous environment minister. He showed up. He was a scrappy guy. I will give him credit. I did not like his answers and I am sure he did not like my questions, but at least he had the guts to show up with regular occurrence. He got so fed up with his current government that he, of course, had to quit cabinet. Nonetheless, he at least showed up.

For Canadians out there thinking, well, we have question period, if anyone ever watched question period, they would notice that it is certainly called “question period” and not “answer period” for a reason. I think there has been a tremendous regression in question period under the current Liberal government. Committees are the place where accountability is meant to be had. It is where I, as a member of Parliament, just like all my colleagues, is on the same footing as a minister. It is where we can ask tough questions and are expecting fair, truthful answers. It is not a place to come and hide from accountability.

To give members a bit of a timeline, the first meeting we had at the environment committee was back on September 18, where we passed a very reasonable motion inviting the minister to appear for a total of two hours on her mandates and priorities. Given that, under this so-called new Liberal government, it was no longer publishing the mandate letters, it made sense to have the minister come and appear, particularly in the aftermath of a platform that was focused on removing many of the Trudeau-era environmental legacy pieces. The invitation was sent out later that day on September 18.

In that same meeting, we passed a second motion for an important study and invited the minister to appear to kick off that study on the electric vehicle mandate, or EV mandate, that this government is trying to impose upon manufacturers, dealers and all Canadians. There was a timeline associated with both of those, with October 10 for the mandates and priorities and prior to Halloween for the EV mandates. We ended up starting that study a little later, but that study was completed without the minister's appearance. We are unable to move forward with our report because, as per the motion adopted by the committee, we have not had all of the witnesses, including that minister. It is like she is hiding from a policy that she knows is going extremely poorly.

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On September 25, we passed another motion asking for a different minister, the former minister of Canadian identity and culture, for two hours to discuss the transition of Parks Canada from Environment Canada over to the heritage department. At that time, it was the minister who resigned from that post recently, who was the former minister of the environment. He was the perfect minister to come and explain how this transition had happened. We did not even receive a response. I recognize that it is different; it is not the environment minister, but it was a very reasonable request that was just looking for a briefing. However, there was not even so much as a no thanks. They would not even respond to us. We simply did not matter.

On October 20, we passed an important motion seeking clarity out of the Government of Canada by having the Minister of the Environment appear regarding the Canadian government's vote at the United Nations International Maritime Organization on the UN net-zero scheme that would apply a carbon tax of up to \$500 per tonne to the entirety of shipping goods in the world. I have no idea where this money is going to go.

• (1810)

An hon. member: It's Brookfield.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, Brookfield is a very reasonable guess, and if only the minister would come and answer, maybe we would know whether it is Brookfield or someone else.

All I know is that it seems as though the minister just hoped that nobody would notice that Canada went along with trying to impose this massive tax on the import of every good that we bring into this country. Unfortunately for her, though, we did notice. We asked her to come forward within a few weeks to explain the vote and explain the process that was happening, but we got crickets; we have been ghosted yet again.

Then, all of a sudden, the Liberal MPs moved a motion to bring forward the minister for supplementary estimates, the bare minimum of what a minister could appear for. Surprisingly, she agreed to lump one hour of supplementary estimates in with one hour of the two hours that were requested regarding her mandate and priorities. That was for Monday, December 1.

Lo and behold, hours before the meeting, she got too busy. She could not possibly come for two hours. She would come for one hour, combining all of the spending and supplementary estimates for the environment department with what her mandate and priorities are. She would give us one hour, in which the chair would start the meeting a little late, she would leave a little early, and we would call that a day.

That is not accountability, and it is not ministerial responsibility.

There is another outstanding future invitation for the minister to come with respect to the industrial carbon tax, the so-called strengthening that we are expecting to perhaps see, as alluded to in the budget and in the memorandum of understanding with Alberta. I hold out next to no hope. This minister is simply terrified to show up. She is terrified to come and answer tough questions about a \$500 carbon tax and about the fact that manufacturers, dealers and Canadians broadly despise the electric vehicle mandate. If this

job is too hard, then give up the car, give up the driver, give up the salary, give up the responsibility and let the Prime Minister appoint somebody else. I am sick and tired of asking officials questions that ministers should be accountable for at committee.

Speaking of not being up to the job, there is our committee chair. Aiding and abetting this ministerial dereliction of duty is an unchecked, tyrannical, power-tripping chair who is unwilling to collaborate with any members of the opposition. Now, this member has been elected for a long enough time to know, I would have assumed, the rules. It has become clear that either intentionally hiding behind not knowing the rules, or simply not knowing the rules, is perhaps cover for following orders from on high from the minister's office, to try to avoid any sort of accountability.

Just to give a few examples from a very in-the-weeds procedural standpoint here, I have never seen so many requests for suspension and all of a sudden the chair whacking gavels and we are suspended. I have never seen so many attempts at a point of order just ignored to adjourn a meeting. I have never seen such a rude exchange as the one with my colleague from the Bloc Québécois, in which the chair took issue with the professionalism of a member.

I hope that in future, this debate today sparks a conversation, as it appears that there are many other chairs who are certainly lacking in awareness of the new and improved big green book that was just recently circulated to members' offices here. There should certainly be an increase in training for chairs, either to better understand the non-partisan nature of their role or simply to understand the rules. They should not have so many rookie MPs, who have just taken the time to read the rules of this place, providing guidance to the chair. They should not have chairs so reliant on and attempting to follow but basically bungling the advice of the clerks.

All in all, the environment committee has been a difficult one for the Liberal government because of its terrible track record of coupling the amount of pain and suffering that it has imposed upon Canadians with its incredibly disastrous track record of environmental policies and the lack of gain in terms of any environmental results, made worse by a complete disregard for ministerial accountability.

It is time that we did better. It is time for the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Transport, the ministers of the Liberal government, to do a heck of a lot better.

• (1815)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what has not been lost on me regarding the debate that has been taking place to date is what should have been taking place today. We should have been talking about the budget implementation bill. However, the Conservatives, once again, are using this debate to filibuster instead of talking about the budget. There is a lot of irony there.

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I would suggest to the members opposite that, if they have any interest in serving Canadians in the delivery of the many projects in the budget, they need to recognize that they need to stop the filibuster and allow the budget implementation bill to go to committee.

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, that was just such a Liberal question: “Why would they not just do what we want them to do?”

It reminds me a lot of Bill C-9 actually. The Liberals are trying to control what people say and how they express themselves. It is a continuous track record for people who do not agree with the Liberals, as they then do their level best to silence them. The Liberals try to control everything that people say, see and think. Can members remember when we could share news articles on social media in this country? What a time to be alive that was.

The Liberal government is all about control. It is not surprising to get a question like that, asking why we would not just do what they think should be done. No, we are not going to do that.

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that he has never seen so many meetings being cancelled. I am glad to hear that. I do not know whether he was here when I gave my speech, but I mentioned that we have a lengthy report on this very subject. We are going over it now to present the statistics, and that is not normal.

My colleague also said that one minister was afraid to appear before the committee. That is not normal either. We have statistics on that as well. We are not talking about those who simply have not yet responded and may never respond because they are hoping for a suspension.

The Conservatives have also been experts at filibustering in the past. They have to concede that. I would like my colleague to tell me how we can break the current deadlock. It seems that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has been convened and that a meeting will take place tomorrow. We are very pleased about that.

Will you commit to not blocking the committee's work and to doing the clause-by-clause study, even if it means voting?

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind the member that he is addressing the Chair when he uses the word “you”.

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

[*English*]

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the acknowledgement of the stats that have been kept by my colleague and the report undertaken about the lack of appearances.

It would be one thing if it was just the odd camera-shy minister who was not very confident in their portfolio and did not want to show up, knowing they might get rung through the ringer a little. However, we are seeing a consistent pattern across every single department, a fear to come and defend the ideas, policies and the spending by this Liberal government.

If the Liberal ministers are proud of what the government is doing, they should have the guts to show up to a committee and an-

swer tough questions from parliamentarians on behalf of their constituents. That is the job.

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Portage—Lisgar just landed on something quite relevant, and maybe some of my Liberal colleagues missed it, which is the stifling of debate.

He mentioned that, because of the Liberal censorship bill, we cannot share news articles online. The government has prorogued Parliament not once, but twice, in the past 10 years. Once it was to cover up the WE Charity scandal and another time it was to cover up the green slush fund scandal.

I am a big fan of the idea that future behaviour is dictated by past behaviour. The government has done nothing but stifle debate over the last 10 years. Would my colleague agree with that?

Branden Leslie: Mr. Speaker, it is like the Liberals cannot help themselves and it is in their DNA to try to control what other people think.

Canadians are sick and tired of it, and I think they wish they could just share that message with a few more Canadians on social media.

• (1820)

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a pleasure to rise to speak on behalf of the good citizens of Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna. Unfortunately, it is to do something that is not in my nature, which is to be negative, but it has to be done.

The government and its members have treated Parliament badly. One only has to take a look at the debate tonight. There are Liberal members here, but they are not in sufficient numbers that I would say shows they take this issue seriously—

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I stand on a point of order. The member is trying to walk a fine line in terms of talking about members being present or not present, and I just want to caution that he is not supposed to be doing that.

The Deputy Speaker: That is a good reminder. There is a standing order that says members cannot draw the attention of the House to a member being here or not being here.

I will let the member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna continue. He is an experienced member.

Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I would simply be mindful that no member was mentioned; I was talking about the House in general. I think all of us would consider that a strong presence by all parties would always be a welcome thing in a democracy.

At committee, I have found the government and its members to be unaccountable, undemocratic and obstructionist. I will be talking about each one today.

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Unaccountable is when the transport committee sought to have the Minister of Public Safety and the former minister of transport, who is now just the member for University—Rosedale. We found it was like pulling teeth when we invited them to come and speak about the BC Ferries scenario. Again, let us be mindful that over \$1 billion of federal taxpayer money is going to a corporation that is sending that money, effectively offshoring Canadian jobs in steel, aluminum and shipbuilding.

We could not get the Minister of Public Safety to come, even though the former minister of transport, in her capacity as minister, wrote to the B.C. government outlining her concerns with national security with those vessels being procured from a hybrid, both military and civilian, Chinese shipyard. The fact that those ministers never came, to allow us to have a complete study, means we still have not been able to do our recommendations. I hope that eventually the members of the transport committee will encourage those ministers or former ministers to appear and to share their expertise so that Canadians can know their Parliament is working and there is accountability for ministers.

I also mentioned the undemocratic or anti-democratic behaviour. I have to say, this pains me to no small extent. I work with the member of Parliament who acts as the chair of the transport committee on the all-party cancer caucus. Unfortunately, in his capacity as chair of the transport committee, Conservatives have twice had to invoke emergency powers under Standing Order 106(4) in order to force the chair to convene meetings while Parliament is in session. I will repeat that: meetings while Parliament is in session. I could understand the reticence of a chair to hold meetings, unless there are emergencies, during the off period, during the summer when we are in our constituencies, working with our constituents, but when Parliament is in session and our committees are running, there is no reason why we should not be having regular meetings.

During a meeting, we have seen the chair gavel out without the consent of the room, just leave and the meeting is over, even though there were resources, which was confirmed. We had one case where the chair suspended for technical reasons, walked out, and then all the Liberal members went while we were switching over to new translators and used that opportunity to effectively end the meeting. That is purely undemocratic and unbecoming behaviour of a chair who is supposed to be an impartial referee for our parliamentary committees. This chair needs to think deeply on his role.

The last one is obstructionistic.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

The member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation keeps filibustering at committee. This behaviour is unacceptable. The Conservative Party and the other party, the Bloc Québécois, want to continue the study on the changing landscape of truck drivers in Canada.

[*English*]

We want to hear from victims and other people who can provide the committee with necessary information. The longer this one particular member filibusters continually, using up all the time and resources, is another day that victims are not heard. That is unaccept-

able to me, and it is unacceptable to the members on the transport committee on the opposition side, whether Conservative or Bloc. This member needs to stop and recognize that there are other voices that need to be heard, such as victims. Every day we do not have a step forward on that report is a day when we do not get to do those recommendations, which all members say that they want.

It is so important for us to hear from some of those final voices before we give recommendations that could save a life. It could save the life of one of the Speaker's family members or the life of one of our constituents, so we need to move forward with this.

I have gone through a few things today. One is that we need to have an accountable government, with ministers coming to committee within a reasonable period of time. Number two, we need to change the undemocratic way that some chairs are choosing not to convene regular meetings during parliamentary sessions, gavelling out or taking advantage of technical situations, such as when translators are switching over. That is undemocratic behaviour that is unbecoming of the House. Lastly is the obstructionism coming from the Liberal Party, particularly one member on the transportation committee.

This is not what my constituents sent me here for. They sent me to be a powerful voice as they have sent all of us to be powerful voices for their interests. I cannot think of anything more important in our transportation system right now than having a safe highway, where we can have a safe, smooth and efficient exchange of goods using our trucking system, connecting with our ports, connecting with our jobs and connecting with our supply chains.

This is one of those things where the government needs to listen, and particularly the chairs of the committee, all committees. Just because members do not have a majority on committee does not mean they do not need to follow the rules of democracy, which means basic things like votes and motions. Those are what parliamentary committees are set up for.

I look forward to hearing from other members here tonight and answering their questions.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found my colleague's speech rather ironic. He talked about obstruction. I completely agree with him that we must avoid obstruction, but that is actually what the Conservatives are doing this afternoon in the House. We were supposed to have a debate on the budget implementation bill. This is a budget that meets Canadians' expectations with investments in public safety, border security, and infrastructure. Instead of debating this important bill, we are witnessing parliamentary obstruction by the official opposition.

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When I am in my riding of Madawaska—Restigouche, people ask me to advance their priorities, and those priorities are reflected in budget 2025.

Why is my colleague trying to delay the adoption of the budget, which meets Canadians' expectations?

[*English*]

Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, the member's intervention really does cause me to think of the reason I am here. As I said in my speech, we are here to be powerful voices for our constituents. I was here during the majority years when I first was elected in 2011. Sometimes I probably gave the government of the day a little too much latitude and not enough to the priorities of members in this space.

This member right here is essentially shining the shoes of the government rather than listening to the voices of our constituents. I bet that member's constituents want to see those recommendations from Driver Inc. and also want to see a government that respects parliamentary committees, so we actually have meetings and get business done.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think the member is right to criticize systematic filibustering, especially when the government does it. We received good news. It seems that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights will finally be meeting tomorrow, after being blocked for I do not know how long. According to what my party's critic told me earlier, the committee will have resources until midnight, and we are a little apprehensive that the Conservatives may engage in filibustering.

My question for my colleague is this. Will his party commit to working tomorrow and proceeding with a clause-by-clause vote, instead of filibustering until midnight?

[*English*]

Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, the only thing I know about the justice committee right now is that when we are in transport committee and, for example, we are suddenly told that the justice committee has ended abruptly, we get those resources and we specifically say we would like to continue the filibuster to let that member of Parliament have his say and maybe perhaps finally finish. Unfortunately, even with all the extra resources, the chair still ends the meeting early and before that member stops talking so he will again have the floor the next meeting. All I know about this place is that there is a cascading effect, and if this member feels the government is playing games at his committee, I guarantee they are playing games at my committee. This needs to stop.

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we have seen consistently in this Parliament is the disrespect of the government for the democratic process. Government members claim they want committees to bring forth meaningful amendments, but they vote down amendments. They claim they want things to go to committee, but they shut down committee meetings.

Now the PMO has given a directive to the Liberal House leader and all the committee chairs to muzzle Parliament by eliminating committee meetings, by basically not having them.

I wonder if the member can share his thoughts on how he thinks this is helping democratic voices in Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: We are out of time, so I cannot let the member respond to that.

The question is on the motion:

That the question be now put.

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

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, I request that the motion be carried on division.

(Motion agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: The next question is on the concurrence motion.

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

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, I ask that it be carried on division.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

OPIOIDS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I was not certain we would get to petitions today, so I am pleased to rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents who are very concerned, as we all should be, about the ongoing opioid crisis. We know that where we have seen success, it is in recognizing that this is a health crisis and not a crisis under criminal law, and that we need to do far more to ensure that the services are there.

We hear from all sides on this. In particular, these petitioners ask us to cease incarceration for those who suffer from a medical condition and focus on the rehabilitation of people, to bring them back into society with better treatment programs that are run as part of our public health care system.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising this evening to present a petition on behalf of residents in the town of Georgina, specifically in Keswick, on a new invasive aquatic species that was discovered in Lake Simcoe, in Cooks Bay, last year.

This invasive species is known as water soldier, and the petitioners point out that it is a threat to both the aquatic and plant life in Lake Simcoe, as well as to our agricultural work in the area, because of its proximity to the Holland River.

There are remediation efforts available. Therefore, the residents of my constituency are asking three things of the government. First is to list or identify the water soldier as an invasive species. Second is to nominate a single federal department or agency to take ownership of this issue. Third is to allocate sufficient financial and technical support to advance remediation efforts.

• (1835)

HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will present a number of petitions today.

The first petition draws the attention of the House to the worsening situation of human rights in North Korea, as documented by various commissions. These violations of human rights include prioritization of food distribution to those considered useful to the survival of the current political system; a vast security apparatus that suppresses dissent through surveillance, coercion, fear and punishment; public executions; putting citizens in political prison camps; terrorizing the population; and the state-sponsored abduction of citizens of other nations.

The petitioners are also concerned about how the People's Republic of China has disregarded or ignored recommendations from the UN commission of inquiry regarding North Korean defectors and other issues. They have concerns about refugees from North Korea being sent back to North Korea by the Government of China despite the human rights abuses those defectors will certainly face.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to take the following steps in response to this worsening human rights situation. They want the government to table regular reports in Parliament on these issues, including highlighting concerns about political prison camps, Camp Kwan-li-so and Kyo-hwa-so. They want the Government of Canada to also report on the situation of North Korean defectors and Canadian policy toward North Korean defectors. They want the Government of Canada to engage actively with international organizations and foreign governments to press the Government of China to allow the safe passage of North Korean refugees to South Korea, where they are recognized as citizens, and to establish initiatives to support the promotion of human rights in North Korea and aid defectors.

Measures proposed include monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation and addressing the challenges facing North Korean defectors in China and other regions, developing strategies for Canada to assist in protecting North Korean citizens from crimes against humanity and supporting their human rights and freedoms, supporting international efforts to safeguard the people

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of North Korea from crimes against humanity and supporting political freedoms, including through dialogue with relevant organizations and governments.

I thank, in particular, the Korean community for bringing this petition to the House through their hard work, solidarity and concern for those suffering right now in North Korea.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I would like to present to the House deals with the issue of MAID or euthanasia. The petitioners are concerned, in particular, about so-called track 2 MAID that makes people living with disabilities the only group eligible for medical assistance in dying when they are not dying.

The petitioners argue that allowing so-called MAID for those with disabilities or chronic illnesses who are not dying devalues their lives, tacitly endorsing the notion that life with a disability is optional and, by extension, dispensable. They are concerned about the ableist trajectory of our health care system, with euthanasia being proposed to those who are seeking other services. They are concerned about how people with disabilities are increasingly limiting their exposure to the health care system for fear of facing pressure from the system to consider euthanasia in cases where they do not want it and have their lives, dignity and well-being challenged and devalued by the system that is supposed to protect them.

The petitioners are, therefore, in this case, calling for the end of so-called track 2 MAID. They want the government to protect all Canadians whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable by prohibiting euthanasia for those whose prognosis for natural death is more than six months.

• (1840)

HAZARAS

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I will table today highlights the condition of the Hazara people in Afghanistan. The Hazaras are an ethnic minority, indigenous people of Afghanistan, generally also a religious minority. They come from the Shia Muslim community. They faced significant challenges even prior to the Taliban takeover, but their situation is that much more dire now.

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The petitioners also want to draw the attention of the House to some of the history around past genocides that Hazaras have faced over the last 150 years. They identify the significant Canadian contribution and, therefore, connection to Afghanistan, the significant level of assistance that was given and the loss of over 150 brave men and women in uniform in the fight against the Taliban. The petitioners, therefore, would like the House to recognize the 1891-93 ethnic cleansing perpetuated against the Hazaras as a genocide and to designate September 25 as Hazara genocide memorial day. They also expressed support for Bill C-287. This was a bill in a previous Parliament. It is not a bill in the current Parliament, as far as I know.

FALUN GONG

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling draws the attention of the House to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

The petitioners highlight that Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline that consists of meditation, exercises and moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance. They describe, in some detail in this petition, the persecution that Falun Gong practitioners have faced and continue to face, including, among other things, forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners ask the House to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs. They want to see the government more forcefully call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I will table draws the attention of the House to many Ukrainians who have come here under a CUAET visa and have questions about the government's policy with respect to next steps for them. They want to see the government provide Ukrainians who are currently in Canada temporary emergency measures with—

The Deputy Speaker: The time has elapsed for petitions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pursuing a question I originally asked on November 5. The budget was tabled November 4, and I asked the Liberals if they were prepared to consider amendments or changes to the budget. As we know, they did change the budget, but not in any normal way that we have seen in the past. I will get back to the question and the matter that I hope to take up tonight.

Just to recap, on November 4, the budget included, on page 348, a commitment that fossil fuel subsidies would not be available for something called “enhanced oil recovery”. That was a part of the

budget I actually liked and did not want changed, but within 10 days, it was reversed in agreement with Madam Smith of Alberta, and they are now available. It was not what I was trying to get to in my question to the government about changing a budget. In the first few days after it was tabled, there were changes made that I thought would move us closer to consensus.

The answer from the hon. leader of the government in the House, who also happens to be Minister of Transport, is what I wanted to take up further this evening. In his response, he said that the government was making historical investments in climate competitiveness and that it would get Canada to net zero by 2050. He said, “compare us to any country around the world”. He said it is a historic effort and historic budget. We have heard the platitudes.

In the time I have tonight, I just want to make a couple of quick points. Other than the aforementioned betrayal on the budget from page 348, which was reversed in the MOU with Alberta, there is a lot of misunderstanding about this notion of net zero by 2050. As someone who has worked on climate issues for quite a long time, it is important that every member of Parliament understand that, what we committed to as a country in the Paris Agreement, which is a legally binding commitment, is to stay as far below 2°C as possible.

Now that becomes impossible if we focus on something not in the Paris Agreement, which is this notion of a deadline in the year 2050 of being at net zero. It is very clear from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that we must rapidly reduce emissions by 2030, or 2035 at the latest, to have any hope of staying below 2°C at all, much less as far below 2°C as possible.

It is also the case that when the hon. leader of the government in the House asked me to compare our record to any other country around the world, we compare very poorly. Of all the G7 countries, we are the only country that has such a high level. Emissions have grown more rapidly in Canada since 1990 than in any other G7 country. Our emissions are far above our 1990 levels, whereas all the countries in the European Union, as a block, are 40% below their 1990 levels of emissions. We can look at some of the other countries around the world, smaller developing countries such as Costa Rica, that have done an enormous amount to reduce emissions. Canada does not look good compared to many countries around the world.

When we look at our budget and recognize that a budget is the single most important environmental statement made by a government, this budget, unfortunately, despite promises on the floor of this place, has come in at an F, and we are failing. I hope, in the time we have for debate, we can take up these matters based on facts and science.

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• (1845)

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

Of course, our government is always ready to listen to Canadians, and of course, budgets are always moment-in-time documents. We did engage with Canadians in our pre-budget consultation, and the insights gathered through these consultations and online submissions played a vital role in shaping the budget. This is a plan to build major infrastructure, homes and industries. We need to grow our economy and create lasting prosperity.

It also supports durable climate action and understands that climate action is an economic necessity. As we know, the world's economy is undergoing a historic transformation towards low-carbon energy and clean technology. In 2024, global investments in clean energy reached \$2 trillion U.S., nearly double the level of investment in fossil fuels, and the global clean technology market is expected to triple by 2035.

At the same time, the Canadian Climate Institute estimates that climate disruption, if left unchecked, could cut median Canadian household income by nearly 20% by the end of the century from where it would otherwise have been, impacting many segments of our economy, from food supply chains to financial markets. This means that to compete internationally, Canada will need to reduce its carbon intensity to meet the growing demand from global markets for products with low associated greenhouse gas emissions. Buyers of Canadian resources are increasingly looking for low-carbon sourcing.

Canada is well positioned to take advantage of growth opportunities. For example, our electricity grid, which is one of the cleanest in the world, guarantees access to clean power that businesses around the world are looking for in sectors ranging from aluminum and steel to AI. In conventional energy, too, Canada is one of very few large-scale suppliers committed to strong environmental, social and governance standards. We have reduced emissions intensity, but more importantly, we have reduced emissions by 6% over the last 10 years, and that was while Canada's population grew by 15%. It is not enough, but it is a significant start, and it is turning the curve in a way that other oil-producing jurisdictions simply have not been able to wrap their heads around.

We know that Canada's natural resources, workforce and commitment to climate change adaptation will position us to surpass economies that fail to adapt, and we are moving forward on that understanding. We will build new infrastructure and capitalize on projects that further Canada's standing as a clean energy superpower. We will explore initiatives such as nuclear energy, electricity, grid interties and investments in low-carbon fuels. With the federal tax supports being delivered through our suite of clean economy investment tax credits, Canada will get the investment that will be absolutely necessary in order to build the economy that will take us to net zero. It is much more than just a slogan; it is something that is essential for ourselves, our children and our children's children.

Improving the effectiveness of industrial carbon pricing will ensure that every dollar spent delivers maximum impact, because industrial carbon pricing rewards innovation and spurs investment in

cleaner technologies, helping Canada's industrial sectors to grow and compete. This means that as our government moves decisively to build major nation-building projects and millions more homes, we will be doing so while reducing emissions and growing our economy.

We must get to net zero. I believe budget 2025 supports durable climate action that will withstand the changing of governments and the turmoil we have in the world right now. It also identifies that it will require massive investment to get to net zero, and the old tools can only get us so far. Budget 2025 provides new investment tools that will allow us to capitalize on those investments to build the green economy of tomorrow.

• (1850)

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the hon. parliamentary secretary. I know he has a personal depth of concern on climate, which is welcome in this place.

However, the harsh reality is that, to quote Greta Thunberg, net zero by 2050 is a fraud. The only thing we do with net zero by 2050 is ignore the immediate need to cut emissions quickly and globally. We have cut our emissions very slightly in this country, but the tools that the government was using in the previous cabinet under a different prime minister have been eliminated, and nothing has been put in its place. We are now at 8.5% below our 2005 level of emissions, which is woefully inadequate if we are to get to 35% below by the year 2035.

In my 10 seconds that remain, I will plead with everyone in the Liberal caucus: It is time to be serious. Cut emissions before the window closes on any hope to stay below 2°C.

Corey Hogan: Mr. Speaker, I personally believe that more is required. It is not enough, and we are going to need to figure out new ways to address emissions as we move forward. Some of those technologies are in infancy, and some do not exist yet, but it will require significant investment to get us to where we need to be and, in fact, push beyond that to start taking carbon out of the air to allow us to undo the damage that we have done here.

However, I believe that with an effective industrial carbon pricing system, transparent long-term price trajectories and our clean economy investment tax credits, we can supercharge affordable net-zero energy projects that turn our natural wealth into lasting prosperity while protecting this planet. That is why I believe budget 2025 deserves our support.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently, in question period, I called out the Prime Minister for being a flip-flopper. He says one thing about pipelines to Premier Danielle Smith in an MOU and gives quite another story to Premier David Eby of British Columbia, which I represent as a member of Parliament.

He says that even though he was against oil pipelines, he is now for them. He was for a tanker ban, but he is now against it. We just have to scratch our heads because he told a different story to David Eby, who is adamantly opposed to pipelines. It is wink, wink, nudge, nudge; they are for a pipeline but it will not happen anytime soon. How is that happening? It is through debate, regulations, excessive red tape and endless consultations.

Does it seem that he is speaking out of both sides of his mouth and that he is being two-faced? I think so. It is not only oil pipelines. At the end of the summer, the B.C. caucus visited several mills in southern Vancouver Island. We were hearing from the mills that they were happy that, as far as what the Prime Minister was saying, he was going to get things done for them. Guess what. They were also very concerned that this was just words. We just recently, and I believe it was last week, heard that one of the mills that we saw in Crofton is closing permanently, 350 jobs gone in a small community. This is happening throughout Canada. It is catastrophic for a small community.

The Prime Minister won the election in large part because he would be a master negotiator with Donald Trump. What a terrible joke that has become. Tariffs have actually gone up three times. They have tripled under the Prime Minister, let alone on our other industries. Our automobile sector is packing up and leaving.

Can I say it in black and white, plain and simple? I do not trust the Prime Minister and I do not trust the Liberals to get this pipeline project done, despite what they say. Make no mistake. I want the MOU to proceed. Conservatives want it to proceed. Canadians need it to proceed. We are an exporting nation. Our standard of living and our health care are based on our exports.

Millions of Canadians do not have access to a doctor. Food bank lineups have doubled under the Liberals. What is our number one export? The Deputy Speaker is from Alberta. He knows. It is oil. We are being hobbled by the Liberals. We have the fourth-largest reserves in the world after Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Iran, three times more than the U.S.

Guess what. The U.S. is now the biggest producer in the world at 20 million barrels a day. Canada has just one-quarter of that production. Nations have come to us and asked if we would give them our energy and sell them our energy. What do the Liberals do? They yawn. They say that they will see if there is a business case.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is whether he can confirm that the Prime Minister will uphold his constitutional right to get a pipeline built expeditiously and regardless of Premier David Eby's stated opposition or the rejection of it by different first nations.

• (1855)

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was heartening to hear the member opposite say he wants the MOU to proceed. I hope he does realize that includes strong industrial carbon pricing, moving the effective price of carbon in Alberta from approximately \$25 a tonne to \$130 a tonne. I welcome that kind of environmental commitment, but it is very inconsistent with what I have heard in the House before.

However, this gets us into the story. It is a story of balance. The Prime Minister has been very clear that we can, we should and we must develop our energy resources, but we must do it in a responsible fashion. That responsible fashion includes an industrial price on carbon, action on methane and investments in the Pathways project, which would take carbon out of the industry in a way that has just not been considered by other oil-producing jurisdictions.

On the question of British Columbia and Alberta, as we move forward, one of our next steps in implementing the MOU is for the federal government to engage, immediately, in trilateral discussions with B.C. and Alberta. This action is, of course, not just reasonable; it is laid out in the memorandum itself, the one agreed to by Alberta. The MOU also includes conditions that are necessary for the projects to be considered, but not sufficient for them to proceed as projects of national interest.

To be clear, the MOU does not bind British Columbia into any predetermined outcome; rather, the MOU establishes how to coordinate regulatory and economic decisions more efficiently while ensuring environmental integrity. Any project that is brought forward will continue to undergo rigorous project-specific assessments, including environmental and economic due diligence, as well as rigorous consultations with indigenous peoples. That is the approach Canadians expect. They expect a balanced approach that looks at the economy and the environment and sees how we can develop them both in harmony.

The potential pipeline project is still very much in its infancy, with a formal proposal expected to come from Alberta next spring. The government's objective is always to work in partnership with provinces, territories and indigenous peoples. That is the very fabric of our Confederation, a collaborative approach. Again, the MOU establishes the necessary conditions for a project to even be considered, but they are considered in a broader context. Any inter-provincial pipeline will require Alberta and B.C. to work closely together towards reaching a substantial agreement, grounded in the promise of shared economic benefits.

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Equally crucial is the need to meet commitments to indigenous peoples, including ensuring meaningful consultation on project decisions that could affect their rights and interests, while also advancing opportunities for indigenous economic participation and partnerships. There have already been several constructive conversations with B.C., recognizing that there is a pressing need for significant and sustained effort to build substantial support from both British Columbians and the indigenous peoples whose lands and livelihoods would be affected. Premier Eby has publicly stated there may be scenarios under which his government could be supportive of a pipeline to the west coast should those conditions be met.

While it is true that ultimate jurisdiction for approving inter-provincial pipelines lies with the federal government, it remains our wish to achieve a conclusion built on consensus with B.C., Alberta and first nations. This path of working together in partnership and respect, striving to achieve consensus, is the Canadian way, and it is the right way to do it.

Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, all I am hearing from the parliamentary secretary is “nope”. It is a long time, and Canadians cannot wait this long.

We have a lot of problems. Our businesses and factories are moving down south. As a matter of fact, I am surprised that the Prime Minister does not wear a MAGA hat, a “make America great again” hat. His company moved down to New York City, where investments are moving. Liberals are giving away billions of dollars in taxpayers' money, and Stellantis is taking it and moving it down south.

The Liberal government is making America great again. How about putting Canada first, not the United States? It is time to put Canadians first. We need to see the change. We need to get this oil pipeline in and build up our revenues and jobs. Young people need it. Seniors need it. All Canadians need it, because of health care and all the other needs. It is time to get our country going again.

• (1900)

Corey Hogan: Mr. Speaker, I worry that the follow-up betrays a bit ignorance of Canadian jurisprudence and the operating of the oil sector. I have worked on many pipeline projects in my career, and it is not just building a pipeline; it is building the product to get into that pipeline. That is going to take some time. Those things need to be aligned.

Now, Alberta will not even submit a case until the spring. It is only at that point that the federal government can respond to specifics. I will also note that in the meantime one of the things the MOU talks about is optimization of the Trans Mountain expansion, which could increase, by hundreds of thousands of barrels, our ability to get product to the coast, which is something that can be used to take up the production that is currently envisioned to be constructed.

These things need to be in alignment. These things take careful thought. That is what the government is going to provide.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am following up this evening on a question I asked earlier in the month in question period on the economy.

One of the most important parts of our economy is our two-way trade with the United States. We know that there are significant difficulties there right now and that, unfortunately, our negotiations are stalled. The Liberals have not really gotten very far, unfortunately, with our American counterparts there.

I want to specifically ask the parliamentary secretary if the government is following the ongoing Supreme Court case that is taking place and is expected to release a judgment shortly. I believe it has to do with VOS Selections and a challenge to President Trump's imposition of tariffs under the IEEPA legislation.

Could the parliamentary secretary advise the House if the government is following this case and, if it is, if it has a view on what the outcome of that case would mean for Canada, whether the court strikes down those laws or whether it upholds the President's authority?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, this is a case that we are following very carefully. I will note that this is probably a question better targeted toward the justice minister, but I will say that in terms of the view of the case, one of the things that we are aware of is that while this is a lever that the President has used in the United States, there are other levers, so we should not assume, just based on that case, that our problems will go away.

The reality is that the Americans have decided they want to change their trade relationship with the world, and we need to manage that situation. We need to do it in order to make sure we are protecting the various businesses that are being deeply affected, such as softwood lumber and steel. There is also the reality that we are somewhat supported at this point, with the fact that we have the best trade deal with the United States, with 85% of our products being essentially tariff-free.

Yes, it is a complicated situation. It is something we have to watch closely. There are many opinions, I am sure, in the justice department. I have opinions myself. I am sure International Affairs has opinions. However, we cannot assume that any resolution to a court case in the United States would resolve our particular challenges here, north of the border. It is incumbent on us to go out and build our own destiny. That includes diversifying trade relationships with the world, as the Prime Minister has done; that includes building the infrastructure to make us self-sufficient, which we are doing right now through the Building Canada Act; and that includes thinking of ourselves differently as Canadians and making sure that we are doing what is necessary to protect Canada during these trying times.

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Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I am actually very encouraged by the member opposite's response, because I think I agree with him. My own view is that this case is dealing with tariffs that were imposed under the IEEPA legislation. In fact, the industries that are most hard hit, which as the member mentioned are steel, aluminum, lumber and autos, have nothing to do with IEEPA. With steel, aluminum and autos, those are section 232 tariffs, and on lumber, of course, there are also anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

As such, I am glad to hear the member agrees. Maybe he could just confirm his view that even if the court strikes down the President's authority under the IEEPA legislation, that would do nothing and provide no relief for our hardest-hit industries.

Corey Hogan: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree. That is just the simple reality of it. However, I do think it would put additional pressure on the United States to potentially come to the table. Hopefully that is something that could be leveraged by our negotiators to get strong deals for our affected sectors. It is just very

painful to see, and of course, the government needs to be there for them as those sectors are dealing with pain.

I am proud to be part of a government that has invested significantly in supports for affected industries, not just in the short term, and is also helping them reorient toward the rest of the world and find new Canadian markets. I would like to just end on the same note, that I am glad we are in agreement. I welcome the member opposite to work with me. We are here to support Canada, all of us.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:05 p.m.)

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