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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for York—Durham will be leading us in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À TROIS-RIVIÈRES PATRIOTES

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I highlight the victory of the Patriotes of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, who were crowned Canadian university hockey champions a few weeks ago.

This remarkable achievement is a testament to the talent, discipline and determination of our student athletes, who represented Trois-Rivières with honour and passion. Throughout their journey, they have shown exemplary resilience by refusing to give up, even in their darkest moment.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the players, coaches and all the staff who support them. I also want to acknowledge the support of the fans, who help surround the team with such a special energy.

This victory puts Trois-Rivières on the map and fills our community with pride. In fact, we are honoured to host the 63rd U Sports men's hockey championship in March 2027.

Congratulations to the UQTR Patriotes!

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[*English*]

RED BRIDGE

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am launching a campaign that gives me great pride, and that is to bring back one of the most iconic landmarks in Kamloops, our Red Bridge. The Red Bridge was built in 1936,

based on the Howe truss design. It was one of the few remaining functioning bridges of its type in British Columbia. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by arson in 2024, destroying a vital link between downtown Kamloops and the Tkemlúps te Secwépemc territory. The loss of this crossing continues to impact commuters, industry and emergency access.

I would like to encourage all people in Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola to sign petitions, write letters and make phone calls to encourage the federal government to support the fast-tracking and rebuilding of the Red Bridge. I am calling on all parties, including Kamloops, Tkemlúps te Secwépemc and the province, with the federal government's support, to get the Red Bridge rebuilt.

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[*Translation*]

EARTH DAY

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the environment and climate change caucus and as a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I want to wish everyone a very good Earth Day.

I want to commend the remarkable work of businesses, environmental organizations, financial institutions, our young people, our seniors and indigenous groups who are working tirelessly to protect our climate and biodiversity.

Our government has taken meaningful action to protect the environment: a new strategy to protect nature, a strategy for a clean and competitive automobile industry and regulations to reduce methane emissions, while strengthening industrial carbon pricing.

Building a greener Canada also means building a stronger Canada.

[*English*]

I wish everyone happy Earth Day.

*Statements by Members***ARCTIC GATEWAY**

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada needs an Arctic gateway to get our energy, commodities and resources from the prairies to the world. Hudson Bay offers two great locations: at Churchill and Port Nelson. Sitting on the shores of Hudson Bay, they offer the shortest shipping routes from the Canadian prairies to Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Energy companies stand ready to move liquefied natural gas through Port Nelson. The port of Churchill is already connected by rail and hydro and has enormous potential to enhance intermodal traffic through CentrePort.

Conservatives have been calling for the renewal of the port of Churchill for years so we can protect Canada's Arctic sovereignty and get our LNG, oil and critical minerals to market. Alberta supports it. Saskatchewan supports it. Even Manitoba's NDP premier supports it.

The Prime Minister is the only one left standing in the way, and his Major Projects Office has completely ignored this underutilized Arctic gateway. He has had all the power he needs for over a year, but we have heard nothing but silence. It is time for the Prime Minister to stop stalling and start delivering for Manitobans, and all western Canadians.

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● (1405)

[*Translation*]**FIRST BUILD CANADA HOMES PROJECT IN QUEBEC**

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 2, we announced that the first Build Canada Homes project in Quebec will be built on the iconic Îlot Saint-Vincent-de-Paul site at the top of Côte d'Abraham, right in the heart of Quebec City.

This project includes 151 community housing units, a child care centre with 80 spots, and a public plaza featuring gardens and scenic views, which will breathe new life into and enhance the value of a unique site at the junction of Old Quebec and the beautiful Saint-Jean-Baptiste neighbourhood.

I would like to congratulate the members of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste citizens' committee, the Old Quebec citizens' committee, and the many partners involved in this project, including Action-Habitation, La Bouée, and the Patrotôt solidarity co-op for their collaboration on this initiative, which is a source of pride for our city and will continue to be so for generations to come.

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[*English*]**KERRY MCMANUS**

John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Kerry McManus, a caring teacher, courageous community builder and tremendous public servant to the people of Stratford.

Last week, Kerry was taken from us far too soon by cancer. An educator by profession, but a lifelong learner by vocation, Kerry went above and beyond to support her students and everyone she

met to reach their full potential. A passionate champion for the environment, the vulnerable and mental health, Kerry was elected to two terms on Stratford City Council, where she showed unwavering integrity and passionately stood by her convictions. She was never afraid to be the lone voice in a one-to-10 vote. I will miss her warm smile, her compassionate outlook and her collaborative approach to problem-solving.

My heart goes out to her husband John, her father Barry and her entire family. We are diminished by her death, but strengthened by her countless contributions.

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STUDENT GRANTS IN ONTARIO

Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, students in Mississauga—Erin Mills are already feeling the impact of Doug Ford's cuts to OSAP. At a time when students are struggling to afford school, they are seeing the Ontario government spend millions on private jets instead of investing in our future generation. Students are taking on more debt, working more hours and questioning whether they can even afford to continue their education. Right now, when students need support the most, they are being asked to do more with less.

That is exactly why our federal Liberal government is extending enhanced Canada student grants, with a 40% increase, through the 2026-27 school year, supporting more than half a million students with larger grants in Ontario.

Students deserve a fair chance to succeed, and we will keep standing by them to build Canada strong.

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TRAGEDY AT LAPU-LAPU DAY FESTIVAL

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on April 26, as we commemorate the one-year anniversary of the terrible attacks in Vancouver at the Lapu-Lapu festival, we have in our prayers the victims, their families and the survivors. The entire nation was shocked at the news of the tragedy, and Canadians from coast to coast grieved for those who were lost.

The Filipino community in Canada is an integral part of many communities, where they overwhelmingly volunteer and contribute to their surroundings. The Lapu-Lapu festival is a celebration recognizing Filipino heroes who embody the best values of Filipino culture. The values of family, community and hard work are shared among Filipinos and all Canadians.

Today, we remember those who were lost and those whose lives were changed forever, through either injury or loss. I would also like to thank those in Vancouver and across Canada who stepped up in the aftermath of this awful attack to help all those affected and to start healing the community.

All those affected should please note that the nation stands with them and admires their strength and perseverance.

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[Translation]

ANNIVERSARY WISHES

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Valleyfield Rotary Club is proudly celebrating 80 years of service to the community.

For eight decades, this club, which is made up of dedicated business people, has embodied the values of solidarity, generosity and leadership. Through their involvement, members make a real contribution to improving quality of life in the region. Under the leadership of the current president, Jean-Michel Montpetit, the Rotary Club is continuing its work with energy and vision. He is doing an outstanding job of supporting many local initiatives with the help of a team of passionate and dedicated volunteers.

This anniversary is an opportunity to recognize the enduring commitment of those who make the Valleyfield Rotary Club an essential force for development and community support. I wish the Valleyfield Rotary Club continued success.

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● (1410)

[English]

EARTH DAY

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the newly elected chair of the House Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I am honoured to rise to recognize Earth Day.

Today, it is time for all Canadians to think about our shared responsibility for the environment around us. The impacts of climate change are more present in our lives every year. Too many Canadians have suffered from extreme weather events like wildfires and floods, but we have also seen communities come together to rebuild and adapt to a new global reality.

Young Canadians are leading the way on climate action. Earlier today, I co-hosted a reception celebrating the work of the Youth Climate Corps British Columbia and the launch of a national Youth Climate Corps in budget 2025. This program will pay young people a living wage to foster climate resilience and a low-carbon future in their communities. We must all stay committed to reducing our emissions, building resilient communities and creating a more sustainable Canada for future generations.

I wish everybody happy Earth Day.

Statements by Members

THE ECONOMY

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everything costs more. Families are deeper in debt and home ownership is slipping away from an entire generation. Canada now stands alone as the only shrinking economy in the entire G7.

The Prime Minister's legacy is unfolding right before our eyes. Every country in the G7 faces the same global pressures, but the results are worlds apart and Canadians are left to pay that price. From farmers to tradespeople to seniors and young families, the people of Abbotsford—South Langley deserve a Prime Minister who will fight for them. They are tired of the excuses, the recycled speeches and the broken promises. They simply want results.

Conservatives have been fighting to end the Liberal government's wasteful spending and restore the Canadian dream once again, where hard work leads to a great life. We will never back down from that promise. It is time for the Prime Minister to get his act together, work with us and bring results for Canadians.

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HOWARD E. GRANT

Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this will undoubtedly be the hardest minute in my time as an MP, where I honour my father, who passed away on March 29 this year. He was born Howard Hong to a Musqueam matriarch and Hong Tim Hing, a Chinese immigrant. He grew up without a father; his father died when he was 10. My dad was the greatest father that my five siblings and I could ever have.

He was Dad to many other people because of his large shoulders that we all stand upon. He built bridges between communities and between cultures, and he became a bridge himself, a person who would bring people together. He told me to come here to the House of Commons and to shake the hands of each and every person here because we are all working together. That is the Canada he wanted for his children and his grandchildren.

Today I have a little secret: My name is Howard Wade Grant. He named me after him. If I could say something to him today, I would say that the love that I shared with him, the love that we shared, is so much better because I got to share his name.

The Speaker: My condolences to the hon. member; that was beautiful.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a year ago, the Liberal Prime Minister said he would have tariffs with the United States removed by July. He failed. The cost of that failure was tens of thousands of jobs in the Canadian auto sector, the Canadian steel and aluminum sector, and the softwood lumber sector, and now expanded tariffs on Canadian manufactured goods, which will have a devastating impact.

Oral Questions

Meanwhile, Mexico, it is reported, is close to signing a deal to remove tariffs and have a trade deal. Our Prime Minister's response is that the trade with the United States is a weakness. There are 2.6 million Canadians whose jobs directly rely on trade with the United States. That is not a weakness. They need action.

I have been told these Liberals have not had a meeting of substance with the Americans to exchange proposals in over six months. These workers deserve better. Our country deserves better.

Why have these Liberals given up on a trade deal with our most important trading partner?

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[Translation]

FREEDOM DAY IN PORTUGAL

Carlos Leitão (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a few days, on April 25, Portuguese communities in Canada and around the world will celebrate Freedom Day, which commemorates the Carnation Revolution of 1974.

On that historic day, the people of Portugal peacefully ended decades of dictatorship and restored democracy, fundamental rights and freedom of expression. Canada is home to a vibrant and proud Portuguese-Canadian community, whose members make an outstanding contribution to our cultural, economic and social fabric. Their values of hard work, resilience and commitment to democracy enrich our society.

As April 25 approaches, let us pay tribute to those who fought for Portugal's freedom and let us celebrate the lasting bonds of friendship between Canada and Portugal.

25 de Abril, sempre!

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

FUEL TAXES

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have some good news and bad news. The good news is the Liberals have finally recognized once again that the Conservatives had the answer when it comes to rising gas prices. The bad news is they are not really implementing the whole thing. Once again, it is a half-measure. Actually, it is less than that. They are taking one-third of the taxes off gas for only a third of the year.

Our Conservative proposal would have cut the fuel excise tax, the GST on fuel and the Liberal clean fuel standard, but these Liberals are only giving Canadians a modicum of relief, a small break that pales in comparison to what Canadians need, especially in my riding, where driving is not a luxury; it is a choice. Gas prices today in St. Thomas are \$1.63 a litre.

Why are the Liberals not giving Canadians what we would have given them, which is gas that is \$1.48 a litre?

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 42,397 people signed a petition calling on all federal party leaders to seek and maintain top security clearance. With it, leaders can be informed and prepared.

Marc Hachey of Carleton is a retired senior RCMP officer who initiated the petition. Throughout his distinguished career, he worked on national security investigations, so he understands the risks we face.

The Leader of the Opposition has refused to seek top security clearance. He believes the less he knows about national security, the more effective he can be. Wilful ignorance does not make a leader; trust and intelligence do.

This issue is not going away. All federal party leaders, without exception, have an important role to play in national security, and that requires intelligence.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we cannot solve a problem if we deny that it exists. The Prime Minister rejects the fact that Canadians are struggling. He said, "Affordability is the best it has been in...a decade." Yesterday, he doubled down. Let us take a look at the facts. Rent for a one-bedroom unit has doubled since 2015. The typical Canadian house is up 51%, and in fact, over the last 10 years, housing prices have outpaced incomes in Canada by 29%, which is the worst drop in affordability in the entire G7.

Now that he has had time to learn the facts, is he going to keep telling Canadians that their struggles are all in their imagination?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are telling Canadians is that no matter the circumstance, we are going to be there for them. I just want to take this moment to say to all Canadian students across the country that there are 100,000 new jobs in the job bank and to please apply for Canada summer jobs in their own community. This is the kind of action, by the way, that these guys vote against all the time. They vote against kids. They vote against moms. They vote against seniors. They vote against tradespeople. What are they in favour of?

Oral Questions

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in favour of lowering taxes and prices and fighting Liberal inflation. That is what Conservatives are all about. Maybe Liberals believe times are not so bad because their friends around boardroom tables have never had it so good. Lobbyists and consultants are raking it in. Meanwhile, since 2015, visits to food banks in Canada are up 77%. Food prices are up 42% since 2015, and just this week, the newest data confirms food inflation continues to be the highest in the G7, and overall inflation had the worst one-month jump in over a year.

If the Prime Minister still does not believe that grocery prices are rising, maybe he could ask the guy who buys his strawberries for him.

• (1420)

Hon. Adam van Koevorden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, this anti-intellectual approach to policy on behalf of the Conservative Party is not convincing Canadians. This is coming from a guy, the failed former leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who claimed to be an insurance broker. Actually, the Insurance Bureau of Canada said he was never a broker and asked him if he could take it back; he had to. He also used Conservative Party funds to put his kids in school, or something like that.

I am sorry, but the credibility coming from the other side is just not convincing Canadians. We are cutting taxes, we are lowering gas prices and we are creating a more affordable future for all Canadians.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we cannot solve a problem if we deny it even exists, yet the Prime Minister told Canadians that, “Affordability is the best it has been in over a decade.” Yesterday, he doubled down, denying the pain Canadians are feeling at the pumps, in their wallets and at the grocery stores. The fact is, half of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque. After a year of this Liberal Prime Minister, Canadians are paying more but getting less.

When will the Prime Minister stop denying reality and deliver real results for Canadians?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, world events and a number of disruptions around the world have caused prices to increase. The government has been there with a timely reduction in fuel taxes, including on cars, trucks and airplane flights. In the month of June, we will see the first payment under the groceries and essentials benefit. That is all on top of 22 million Canadians getting a tax reduction from this government, which is the first thing we did. We have been there for Canadians on affordability. We know they need it and we will continue to do that.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals want us to believe everything is fine, but Canadians are being crushed by food and fuel costs. After the Prime Minister's rhetoric, a whole year of it with no results, inflation has jumped again. Families are being forced to cut back, stretch every dollar and, in many cases, rely on the food bank. The government could

have adopted our plan to bring down the price of groceries or to remove all the taxes on gas for the rest of the year.

When will it stop with its illusions and deliver real results?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while that party is focused on anything but, we are focused on making life more affordable for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We just launched the groceries and essentials benefit, which will put up to \$1,400 in the pockets of working families. In fact, last week, we paused the federal excise tax on fuel, saving Canadians 10¢ a litre when they fill up. If we combine that with the cut in the consumer carbon tax, that is a 28¢ savings per litre that we are offering Canadians. That side can continue with the podcast tour, the bluster, the rhetoric; we are going to focus on making life more affordable—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[*Translation*]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last month, on March 25 specifically, the Prime Minister said that the cost of living in Canada is the best it has been in over a decade.

However, the price of groceries continues to rise, rent continues to go up, gas prices are now \$2 a litre in almost every region of Quebec and, in the past five years, home prices have increased by 67% in Quebec. Young Quebecers cannot even think about buying a new home.

Do the Prime Minister and the members of his government really think that the cost of living is at its best right now?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are acutely aware of the circumstances, so much so that the government adopted a range of measures to help Canadian households that are facing a cost-of-living crisis.

I could mention the Canada groceries and essentials benefit of up to \$1,800 per family. Another example is the reduction of the excise tax on gas, which has reduced the price of gas by 10¢ a litre, and let us not forget the tax cut for 22 million Canadians.

These are one-time measures and immediate supports, but we are not stopping there. The government is moving forward with structural programs like the Canada child benefit, the Canadian dental care plan and others.

Oral Questions

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fundamental question is not what band-aid solutions the government is coming up with to try to fix the problem. It is whether the Prime Minister truly believes what he said on March 25 when he claimed that cost of living is the best it has been in a decade.

Does the Prime Minister or anyone in his government really believe that? I do not want to hear about the government's countless band-aid solutions. I want to know whether he actually believes what he says.

• (1425)

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out how mind-boggling it is to hear the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles talk about band-aids when we consider that the Canada child benefit sends \$82 million a year to 13,000 families in his riding and that the Canadian dental care plan helps 25,142 people in his riding to go to a dentist.

They may be band-aids for the Conservative Party, which is completely out of touch with the reality of Canadians, but they are certainly not band-aids for us on this side of the House. This is effective assistance that Canadians need.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is Earth Day, but it does not really feel that way here in Parliament. Yesterday, sources confirmed that the government is pressing ahead with its obsession over a new oil sands pipeline. It is testing the ground for a pipeline that would transport an additional one million barrels of dirty oil every day from Alberta to Vancouver. That is one million more barrels every day, while southern Quebec is battling floods that have become almost an annual occurrence due to climate change.

Is it not time for the Liberals to come back down to earth?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been celebrating Earth Day for 56 years. It is an important day for us. All Canadians love nature. All Canadians recognize just how important the earth is. It is our little spaceship that will take us far.

We have launched a strategy to protect nature. It is a powerful strategy that will enable us to conserve 30% of our land and water by 2030. We are working in many other ways; we will get there, and that is how we will build Canada strong.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Earth Day should not just be acknowledged. Thanks to the Liberals, Earth Day must now be a day of resistance. Yesterday, we learned that the Liberals are moving ahead with their new dirty oil pipeline out west.

That is not all. Last Thursday, we learned that Canada hit a brick wall in 2024 with its greenhouse gas reduction targets, and it is because of the oil companies. The year 2024 also marked the end of the MP for Laurier—Sainte-Marie's tenure, before he left his minis-

terial role and his leader scrapped his climate plan. I cannot imagine what the coming years will bring.

If there are still any pro-environment Liberals out there, what are they waiting for to speak out against this?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working on several fronts. We find ourselves in a particularly different global context, and we are acutely aware that environmental issues are facing headwinds all over the world.

That is why we are trying to adopt new strategies to achieve our goals. Canada's strategy to protect nature is one example. The auto strategy is another. We continue to work with young people today. We were on Parliament Hill. We want to equip young people and develop their capacity to work. These young people are committed to the environment, and we will build Canada on that foundation, but alongside nature.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is Earth Day, and we have a message. To everyone who still believes in climate change: Do not give up; keep up the fight.

We do not have to accept a new pipeline out west. We do not have to accept that Canada is giving up on reducing greenhouse gases. We certainly do not have to accept that the Liberals are giving billions of dollars of our money to the oil and gas companies, including \$1 billion for Bay du Nord alone.

If this Liberal government wants to stamp out the fight against climate change, does it realize that we will not let it do that?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to be able to work on multiple fronts. As part of Canada's strategy to protect nature, we will work to keep nature natural. That is important. Our government has done tremendous work in that respect.

We will continue to work with indigenous peoples as well. They are there to help us ensure our sovereignty, but they are also there to help us steward nature, and we are not going to succeed in the long run without them.

We will also build things right. Our thinking on how to build major projects must include nature conservation, and we are going to do that. That is how we are going to build our country.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's food inflation is the highest in the G7 for the fourth straight month, but the PM wrongly claimed affordability is the best it has been in over a decade. Well, gas was a buck a litre in 2015. It is up 62%. Diesel is up 93%. A trillion dollars in brains, businesses and jobs has fled Liberal red tape and roadblocks. Most Canadians cannot afford to eat, house themselves, drive and put savings aside anymore. Young Canadians are losing hope. The middle class is almost gone. The rich, like the PM, keep getting richer.

How can the PM ignore Canadians' struggles and lecture them about just how good they have it?

• (1430)

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is controlling what it can. We know there are a lot of factors outside our control, but what we can control is ensuring that youth get a head start with the Canada summer jobs program, that Canadians get help with the fuel excise tax, that apprenticeships get a \$75-million injection in training and that Canadians get a groceries and essentials benefit that gives them up to \$1,400 per year for a family of four to put food on the dinner table.

We are giving Canadians a boost today and a bridge to tomorrow, while the Conservatives fight—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lakeland.

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should be able to afford essentials themselves. That is the job of the government. The PM says he is like Canadian war hero Sir Isaac Brock. Well, people ration food in wartime, but the Liberals make Canadians ration it in peacetime, do they not?

Since 2015, the cost of beef is up 69%, baby formula is up 84%, eggs are up 44%, and the PM has cut only one-third of Liberal fuel taxes for one-third of the year yet keeps his federal industrial carbon tax, fuel standard and other red tape that hikes costs for growers, shippers and Canadians at the grocery store.

We are a year in. When will the PM drop photo ops and one-third measures, and cut taxes on food and fuel so Canadians can afford to thrive, not just survive?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this feels like a good moment to remind Canadians that we made the national school food program permanent in the last budget. This is an investment that will ensure that over 400,000 additional children receive access to nutritious meals at school. It represents a savings of up to \$800 per family.

We are there for Canadians. We understand that they need supports. This is one of many, including dental care, the Canada child benefit and other measures to support Canadians.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I took an Uber last Saturday to the Vaisakhi parade in Surrey, and I got to talking with the driver. He told me he had lost his job to AI and now he is driving long hours just to make ends meet. He said that after all the costs of keeping his car on the road, he is mak-

ing next to nothing. He hardly sees his little boy, who is in kindergarten, yet the Prime Minister told Canadians that affordability is the best it has been in a decade.

Is this really what the Prime Minister thinks “better” looks like?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also attended that Vaisakhi parade in Surrey last weekend, and it was a tremendous opportunity to be in the community.

For nearly three decades, I ran a small business. I know the challenges that SMEs and entrepreneurs face. I have been there and know how close the margins can be. Things like the savings on fuel and diesel can make a difference for those drivers. It can put money back in their pockets, and it is just one part of the measures we are taking to support Canadians.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fellow I mentioned and his family definitely do not agree with the Prime Minister that affordability is the best it has been in over a decade. As a matter of fact, he admitted it has gotten so bad in Canada that he is wondering whether he should even stay. It is no wonder Canadians are talking about leaving. It now takes over half of median household income just to own a home in Canada, and food inflation is the highest in the G7.

How many more hard-working Canadians have to leave this country before the Prime Minister wakes up and admits his housing and affordability policies are failing?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are getting support with affordability with the measures we are taking right now. They are getting support with the school nutrition program. We are making changes to support first-time homebuyers. We have brought in the groceries and essentials benefit. We have removed the federal excise tax on fuel until September 7.

These are measures that are supporting Canadians. My question is why the member from British Columbia is not also supporting these measures to make a difference for Canadians.

Oral Questions

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals continue to ignore the affordability concerns of Canadians, the reality for families is getting worse. Monday's data shows that here in Canada we continue to carry the highest food inflation in the G7, a badge of shame that we have held for four months in a row. Beef costs 69% more, and the price of chicken is 43% higher than it was in 2015. Working-class families, young Canadians and seniors all feel that inflation every time they leave the grocery store.

When are we finally going to see action from the Liberals to increase domestic food production to bring down the cost of food in this country?

• (1435)

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need real relief right now, and we are delivering. I have great news. The very first Canada groceries and essentials benefit is going to Canadians right across the country this June. That means an additional \$1,900 for a family of four to help them with support on everyday essentials. From grocery support to child care and dental care, we are there. Of course, members already heard today that we are lowering the cost at the pumps by 28¢ per litre.

This is really going to help everyday Canadians. We are going to continue to do that because we are trying to build this strong country, and we are going to do that with the help of Canadians as well.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to peddle half measures and broken promises as the answer to the affordability crisis the Liberals created. They have had years to act. Canadians are in need of results, but what they get are recycled speeches and illusions, while food inflation remains the highest in the G7 and the Prime Minister pretends affordability has never been better.

With food bank and soup kitchen use in Brandon over capacity month after month in the heart of Canada's breadbasket, when are the Liberals finally going to recognize that when the region that grows the food cannot even afford it, the rest of the country is in crisis?

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the hon. member disagrees with child care, dental care, the Canada child benefit, the national school food program, the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, an increase in health transfers, the OAS, eliminating the carbon tax, a tax break for 22 million Canadians, the productivity superdeduction, investments in domestic processing for the breadbasket of Canada, an increase in AgriMarketing, and the advance payment program.

An hon. member: I can go on and on.

Hon. Heath MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, there is no more.

Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 25, the Liberal Prime Minister told Canadians that affordability is the best in decades, but food prices tell a different story. Apples are up more than 48%, fresh vegetables are up 57% and potatoes are up a whopping 60% compared to 2015.

When will the Prime Minister stop making the same promises, end the illusions and deliver results, instead of lecturing Canadians on why they have never had it so good?

Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that for 10 long years, the Conservative MPs from Saskatchewan told the people of our province that Canada was broken. That was their constant message. I think about the billions of dollars they left on the table because they would not represent Saskatchewan well and would not do the work.

Today, Saskatchewanians on this side of the House are going to help grow Canada, and we are just getting started.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister announced the members of his new advisory committee for the negotiations on a new free trade agreement with the United States. The committee includes people from almost every economic sector, which is a good thing, but we could not help but notice that there are no representatives from Quebec's cultural sector, even though our culture is clearly in Donald Trump's crosshairs.

How can the government justify not inviting anyone from Quebec's cultural sector to join the advisory committee?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two things to point out to our colleague. He knows full well that in our discussions with the Americans, we are not going to discuss the cultural exemption and we are not going to negotiate on this matter. It will not be on the table and it is not on the table. He knows full well that there is no chance of this kind of discussion taking place at the negotiating table with the Americans.

Personally, I am very proud of the Quebeckers and other Canadians who have agreed to serve on our advisory committee on a volunteer basis. There are people from the cultural sector, and there are plenty of people from Quebec. I am really looking forward to working with them.

• (1440)

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, people from the cultural sector are included, but none are from Quebec. There are plenty of good people on this committee. We are not questioning their qualifications. We are questioning the absence of a representative from Quebec's cultural sector. Quebec culture is being threatened by globalization. Netflix, Amazon and Disney+ leave very little room for our creators. Advertising revenues have dried up, and our television and film industry is paying the price, as Quebec producers have noted.

On top of that, Donald Trump wants to go after the cultural exemption in the next free trade agreement. He is not even hiding it. The cultural sector does not understand this, and neither do we.

Is there anyone in this government who can explain why the Prime Minister did not appoint someone to stand up for Quebec culture on this committee?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois member is well aware that the cultural sector is not on the negotiating table. However, I hope he is not accusing Jean Charest of lacking culture or, more importantly, saying that Magali Picard does not represent the cultural sector. He cannot be serious.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister is completely out of touch with the real world. It is high time he came back down to earth.

On March 25, he had the nerve to say that affordability is the best it has been in a decade. Was he serious? I do my weekly grocery run and talk to people at the checkout. I can tell the House one thing: No one is breathing easier as they watch the total going up. Families are cutting back on spending, counting every penny and worrying about how much it will all cost.

Why does the Prime Minister keep lecturing Canadians by telling them that everything is fine, when everyone knows that is not true?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well, having been here for several years, that he has consistently voted against the Canada child benefit, against school meals, against the Canadian dental care plan, and against both the one-off and sometimes permanent assistance we have offered to Canadians specifically to tackle the issue of affordability. We acknowledge that affordability is an issue; it is the reality.

Why are the member and his colleagues so determined to reject any assistance we propose for the most vulnerable Canadians?

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if everything is going so well, then why are food banks overflowing with young dual-income families? If everything is going so well, then why have all these measures not fixed the cost-of-living problem in Canada? If everything is going so well, then why

Oral Questions

does the government have to pay so every family can make ends meet? It makes no sense.

It is pathetic to watch the Liberals applauding all these measures when we know that families cannot make ends meet, that rents are higher, and that gas is more expensive. It is almost \$2 a litre in Thetford Mines. When will the Prime Minister stop being so arrogant and acknowledge the true reality of what Canadian families are going through?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dental care is not pathetic. School meal assistance is far from pathetic. The Canada child benefit is far from pathetic. It is far from pathetic that this government offered a 10¢-per-litre savings on gasoline and diesel this week. The member rejects any assistance and then accuses us of doing nothing.

Why do this member and his colleagues not stand up and speak out against their leader to demand the same assistance that we are offering—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrak.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrak, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is pathetic is seeing the Liberal Prime Minister stand up and say something that could not be further from the truth. On March 25, the Prime Minister said that affordability is the best it has been in a decade.

Where is the Prime Minister when we know that what he said about the past 10 years is really not true? In the past 10 years, rents have doubled. In the past 10 years, what has happened to housing prices? They have gone up 67%. In the past 10 years, the number of people using food banks has doubled. Those are the facts.

Why is the Prime Minister saying something completely out of touch with reality when families are struggling?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, repeating a falsehood day after day during question period does not make it true. This Prime Minister and this government have always recognized the affordability challenges Canadians are facing. That is why the first thing we did was lower taxes for 22 million Canadians. That is why one of the first things we did was eliminate the GST for first-time homebuyers. That is why we have impactful programs like the Canada child benefit and the Canadian dental care plan.

I see that my colleague is rising to ask me another question. In my second answer, I will gladly remind him how many people in his riding are receiving help through these programs.

Oral Questions

• (1445)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrak, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me no pleasure to tell my colleague that two million Canadians are using food banks every month. It is a proven fact that Canada has the worst food inflation for the fourth month in a row. What is true is that, compared to the past 10 years, beef now costs 69% more, vegetables now cost 57% more and chicken costs 43% more. That is insane.

What is completely false is what the Prime Minister said when he said that affordability is the best it has been in a decade.

Is the minister prepared to contradict his Prime Minister, who uttered a falsehood?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is true is that this member opposes the Canadian dental care plan, which is helping 20,545 Canadians in his riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrak. What is true is that this member opposes the Canada child benefit, which is sending \$73 million to more than 10,000 families in his riding. What is true is that he opposes the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, which helps the most vulnerable Canadians at a time when they are facing a higher cost of living, with up to \$1,800 per family. Shame on him.

Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 25, the Prime Minister told Canadians that the cost of living is better than it has been in a decade. I would like to remind him that, since 2015, the average price of homes has gone up by 51%, the price of food has gone up by 42% and the price of gas has gone up by 62%. What is more, the data confirms that food inflation in Canada remains the highest in the G7.

When will the Prime Minister stop lecturing people and start producing meaningful results?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, meaningful results is having lifted one million children out of poverty over the past 10 years. That is concrete evidence.

* * *

[English]

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Waterloo, UWaterloo grads are turning Canadian research into real-world solutions. KA Imaging's advanced X-ray technology is improving diagnostic accuracy, creating skilled jobs locally and helping clinicians make better decisions for patients. Its portable X-ray technology is being used in Canadian hospitals and globally in remote rural clinics in Kenya, Nigeria and 12 other export markets.

Will the government share how we are supporting innovators like this in Waterloo, across Canada and around the world that are improving global health outcomes and saving lives of women and children?

Hon. Randeep Sarai (Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, another unique feature of the Waterloo region is how technology intersects development. KA Imaging

is a great example of how Canadian innovation can have an impact both domestically and globally.

Through Grand Challenges Canada, our government supports innovators that are developing and scaling solutions to some of the world's most pressing health challenges, from improving maternal and newborn care to strengthening health systems in challenging contexts. Our government reaffirmed our support for GCC to ensure that Canadian innovators continue to turn bold ideas into life-saving solutions.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General found massive security screening failures with people allowed into Canada by the Liberal government.

Ahmed Eldidi entered Canada on a visitor visa. The Liberals let him in despite a 2015 ISIS propaganda video showing him participating in a brutal beheading-style attack. This guy is just one of many, as the same porous Liberal vetting process has allowed hundreds of IRGC agents into our communities.

Will the Liberals support the Conservative request for the Auditor General to audit all immigration screening processes, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every individual who applies to come to Canada is thoroughly reviewed for security. Our law enforcement agencies, including CSIS and CBSA, undertake a thorough check before documents are issued. When they are in Canada and are deemed to be inadmissible, CBSA enforces those removals.

Last year, we removed over 22,000 individuals for inadmissibility, the highest number in recent history.

• (1450)

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when confronted with cases of non-citizens convicted of serious crimes getting sentence discounts to dodge deportation, the former Liberal immigration minister claimed there was no rule requiring judges to do this.

Oral Questions

However, now a Quebec judge has exposed the truth, warning that judges and prosecutors across Canada are doing exactly that. If a person does the crime, they should do the time, but Canadians are paying the price as convicted foreign nationals are receiving discounted sentences due to their immigration status.

If the former Liberal immigration minister knew this loophole was being abused, why did he vote against our Conservative bill to stop the abuse so that there is one law for all?

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 very clear that serious crimes need to be met with serious penalties. I am pleased to inform the hon. member that the case law in Canada makes sure that judges may not completely distort a sentence so that it would not be fit for the crime committed.

It is essential that as we ensure we have more serious penalties, particularly for the most violent offenders, we also allow our court system to operate independently. I am proud to live in a country that is governed by the rule of law. I hope the same is true for all members of this House.

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the two-tier justice system exists not in spite of the Liberals. It exists because of the Liberals. In one case, a non-citizen criminal who was twice found guilty of groping a young woman's genitals avoided real prison time and instead received house arrest in order to help him avoid deportation. This loophole tells victims that the Liberal system cares more about protecting convicted foreign nationals from deportation than protecting Canadians. Justice should be blind.

How much longer is the Liberal government going to defend an ideological two-tier justice system and finally start standing with Canadians instead of siding with convicted foreign criminals?

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 completely disingenuous for any member of this House to suggest that members of another party care more about criminals than they do about public safety. The Conservatives have tried that before, and Canadians saw them out of office as a result.

We take crime very seriously. The kinds of very serious crimes that have been committed will be subjected to harsher sentences as a result of the legislation we are moving forward in Parliament.

The member is a new member. He may not be aware that in 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada made a decision indicating that this could be the case. For two years, the Conservatives remained in power and chose to do nothing about this issue.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been here a hot minute, and the minister should try telling that to the victim of a non-citizen who broke into their house in Canada, stole from them and then violently assaulted them. What did the judge do? They gave the criminal house arrest so he would not be deported.

Here is the reality. The former immigration minister broke the immigration system. He brought too many people in too fast. Our

ERs are overflowing, and we have a housing and jobs crisis. Now he is breaking the justice system.

Why did the former immigration minister vote against my bill to stop this disgusting practice?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, being accused of breaking the justice system for advancing more serious penalties for serious crimes is something that clearly defies logic.

The member is correct about one thing. She has been here for a minute. I have great respect for my colleagues, but during her time here, she sat in cabinet for a full two years after the Supreme Court of Canada demonstrated that courts may consider immigration consequences to ensure that there is a fit penalty. Despite sitting at the cabinet table, she took precisely zero action to address this problem. She only raises it now.

We believe that serious and violent criminals should face serious penalties. We will not just say that on the floor of the House of Commons. We will advance legislation to make it so.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are women who have been sexually assaulted in Canada by non-citizens, and then the non-citizens have been given leniency in order to stay here and avoid deportation.

The minister talks about what I did. I tabled a bill to stop this practice, and every single person on that side, including him, who would have given the recommendation on my bill voted against it. That is disgusting.

Why?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is disingenuous to call into question the commitment of any member of any party when it comes to dealing with heinous crimes such as sexual assault. For my part, we have advanced legislation that advances stiffer penalties—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am sorry. I know it is an emotional issue, but I am having trouble hearing.

Not from the top, but the hon. minister may continue.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, if anyone would question the government's commitment to gender-based violence, I would invite them to read the text of Bill C-16, the largest suite of reforms to advance more serious penalties to combat gender-based violence, which is matched with an announcement today to put \$50 million more in the hands of organizations that are working to combat gender-based violence in our communities.

Oral Questions

As I continue to be heckled talking about an issue such as gender-based violence, I will not be distracted. I will do the work.

* * *

• (1455)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister stood in the House and promised to keep violent repeat offenders off our street, but it turns out that was just another speech, just another illusion. Violent crime is up 55%, and Canadians are watching violent offenders walk free with judicial discounts instead of real consequences.

Speech after speech, the Liberals talk tough but deliver nothing. How many more empty speeches will it take before these Liberals stop the illusions and finally deliver justice for victims?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question is shocking. We have delivered more public safety and justice legislation than any government prior. Seven different pieces of legislation in the House, and what have the Conservatives done all along? They have delayed. They have not supported them.

On Bill C-22, lawful access, I am glad to see that they were able to pass it on division to committee the other day. I hope that, at the committee process, the Conservatives will support the bill and give law enforcement the tools they need to catch criminals.

Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant South—Six Nations, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here she goes again, talking tough and delivering nothing.

The Liberals had the chance to protect victims and restore public safety, but voted against our jail not bail act, the consecutive sentences act and the one law for all to finally jail criminals.

Liberal soft-on-crime laws continue to let violent repeat offenders roam free, handing out judicial discounts while Canadians pay the price. These Liberals keep recycling the same empty promises and the same illusions.

How many more Canadians have to suffer before these Liberals admit their failure and stop giving criminals a judicial discount?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the member is confused.

We are the party that has delivered the jail not bail bill. The bill is currently in the Senate. It is our bail reform and sentencing bill. It makes it more difficult for repeat violent offenders to get bail, and it makes sentences longer for criminals—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I cannot hear.

The member may continue if she desires.

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, we are doing the work needed to make sure that criminals are kept behind bars, but we are also doing preventative measures. We just today announced supports for victims. We have also announced programming to make sure that we prevent children from getting into a life of violence. We are

working on all fronts to make sure that Canadians are safer in Canada.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Canada, those serving two years or more are typically released at two-thirds of their sentence.

As a former parole officer, I am aware that Corrections Canada can apply to have people detained for the last third of their sentence. It does not look like Corrections Canada did this, and as a result, an ISIS terrorist, who was a recruiter for ISIS, was released into the community.

Before the public safety minister starts talking about independence for Corrections Canada, he should answer this: Did the Liberal government do everything it could to keep a dangerous ISIS terrorist behind bars for as long as possible, yes or no?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Correctional Service Canada is able to apply conditions on any offender being released. It can apply any conditions that it feels are fit. I hope that in this case, conditions will be applied that are appropriate to make sure that Canadians are kept safe.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, a young disabled man was assaulted for the fourth time by a gang in downtown Nanaimo. He was badly hurt but so traumatized that it took his mom a day to get him to hospital while his attackers remain perpetually out on bail.

Nothing the Liberals have proposed repeals the principle of restraint, which releases the accused at the earliest opportunity on the least restrictive conditions. The only person whose liberty is restricted here is the victim, who is afraid to go out, lest he be assaulted a fifth time.

When will the Liberals recognize that their soft-on-crime policies hurt vulnerable people and repeal Liberal bail?

Oral Questions

• (1500)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just acknowledge the heinous act that the member opposite talked about. I would say that, since taking office, we have brought forward the most comprehensive criminal justice reform in a generation. Bill C-14 speaks to that. It would ensure that repeat violent offenders are off our streets and will get stiffer sentences during the sentencing period. We have Bill C-16 now going through the committee process. Again, it would protect victims.

What we need is co-operation to ensure that—

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pays-d'en-Haut.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Earth Day, a day when we celebrate the beauty of Canada's natural heritage and our shared responsibility to protect it for future generations. To deliver on this commitment, our government has launched "A Force of Nature: Canada's Strategy to Protect Nature", backed by a \$3.8-billion investment to conserve our rich biodiversity and protect our ecosystems.

Can the Secretary of State for Nature tell Canadians how this strategy will produce meaningful results, benefit communities and maintain Canada's position as a conservation leader?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Les Pays-d'en-Haut for asking this question on Earth Day. I would also like to thank him for all the work he does for nature in Les Pays-d'en-Haut with his colleague from a riding a little further south.

All Canadians from coast to coast to coast appreciate nature. It is our number one value. It brings all of us together, and it is something members of all stripes agree on. That is why I am very proud today to talk about the "Force of Nature" strategy. We are going to better protect nature. We are going to build Canada strong, and on top of that, we are going to make sure that we mobilize capital for nature.

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[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mexico and the United States have been having ongoing formal discussions, and it looks like they are having additional discussions scheduled in May. Once again, it appears, just like it was in 2019, Mexico is much further ahead in its negotiations with the United States. We can discuss and resolve our trade irritants and disputes at the table, but we have to be at the table.

On behalf of the millions of Canadians who rely on trade with the U.S., when can they expect formal negotiations to begin?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our colleague knows very well that

we have been engaged with the Americans on a whole series of issues, including the unfair and unjustified section 232 tariffs, which are doing considerable damage to the economy of the United States and causing challenges for Canadian workers and Canadian businesses.

The good news is, unlike the Conservatives, we are prepared to support Canadian workers and Canadian businesses while we stand firm with the United States and, unlike the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, we are not prepared to sign any deal that is not in the interest of Canada.

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised he would negotiate a win on trade by last summer, but from his recent video, he seems to be throwing in the towel. The Council of Forest Industries said that last year softwood tariffs had tripled, to 45%, since 2022; 15,000 forestry jobs have been lost; and since 2023, 21 more mills have closed.

I ask the Prime Minister how many thousands of B.C. forestry workers need to lose their jobs before he keeps his promise to negotiate a win?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have announced \$2.5 billion in targeted support for the businesses and workers in the forestry sector. We have just finished an industry task force for recommendations on how to do more. We will pivot to grow. That \$2.5 billion will be used to help the 300 communities dependent on forestry in this country.

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 2.6 million Canadians depend on trade with the United States for their livelihoods. Niagara is home to 641 businesses that generated \$6.6 billion in exports to the United States. Trade with the U.S. is not a weakness, as the Liberal Prime Minister suggests. It is our daily reality.

Mexico and the U.S. are talking trade right now. Meanwhile, Canada has not had serious talks with our largest trading partner in five months. Why is the Liberal government dragging its feet?

Private Members' Business

● (1505)

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in serious negotiations with the United States because we are in a trade war. In a trade war, we have to do the serious work of supporting Canadian businesses. At FedDev Ontario, we put hundreds of millions of dollars into Canadian businesses, many of them in Conservative ridings, and they need that support. This includes Dishon in Vaughan, MVA in Stratford and Sensor Technology in Collingwood.

The Conservatives should listen to these business people. They are supporting our efforts to build a bridge to the future. The Conservatives have to get on board.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, supporting our military with our plan to rebuild, rearm and reinvest in our Canadian Armed Forces is a priority for our new government. Our riding is home to CFB Greenwood, the largest air base in the east coast. Federal investments will support paid infrastructure, RPAS drones and building 208 new housing units.

As we strengthen our armed forces, could the Minister of National Defence outline the measures that our government is taking to support CAF members and families based across Canada?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Acadie—Annapolis for his advocacy on behalf of the brave men and women of Canadian Forces Base Greenwood.

Our soldiers, sailors and aviators do important and incredible work, and we need more of them. That is why we have been reinvesting in our people. We have given members of our forces a well-deserved pay raise. We are getting them the tools, the weapons, the equipment and the housing they need. Recruitment has just hit a 30-year high. We are just getting started.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Amarjeet Gill (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Brampton families are living in fear. Extortion and organized crime are targeting small business and families. This week, multiple tow trucks were set on fire. Police believe these were targeted attacks. This is not isolated. My community is terrified. It is a growing pattern of violence and intimidation.

When will these Liberals adopt our Conservative plan to dismantle these criminal networks and protect our communities?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is about time that the Conservatives wake up. The second bill that we introduced in Parliament was Bill C-2, which included lawful access. However, after many, many months of Conservative delay, we have had to bring that bill back to Parliament as Bill C-22. Just yesterday, members of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police were on the Hill, and they were commend-

ing the work that has been done to bring lawful access forward because they know that this is exactly what is needed to help solve extortion cases.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 130 students from Gaza have been waiting over two years to continue their studies at 26 Canadian universities, including the University of Alberta. These brilliant graduate students have survived genocide. They have lost family members. They are trying to get into universities to continue their study, despite the fact that the Israeli forces have destroyed every university in Gaza. The U.K., France, Ireland and Italy have gotten students out of Gaza, but Canada has refused to expedite the process, and it is an international embarrassment.

I want to know why the minister is not acting. Is it—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned about the ongoing situation in Gaza. Anyone looking to come to Canada, including international students, must meet our visa requirements. We understand that this can be challenging, but it is necessary.

IRCC will continue to process study permit applications for those students in Gaza, and our visa application centres in neighbouring countries are offering expedited processing where possible. We will continue to do everything we can for the students in Gaza and everywhere else.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SPORTS BETTING ADVERTISING ACT

The House resumed from April 15 consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act respecting a national framework on sports betting advertising, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill S-211, under Private Members' Business.

Call in the members.

Private Members' Business

● (1520)

[English]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 100)

YEAS

Members

Acan	Aitchison	Hajdu	Hallan
Al Soud	Albas	Hanley	Hardy
Ali	Allison	Harrison	Hepfner
Alty	Anand	Hirtle	Ho
Anandasangaree	Anstey	Hoback	Hodgson
Au	Baber	Hogan	Holman
Bailey	Bains	Housefather	Hussen
Baker	Baldinelli	Iacono	Idlout
Bardeesy	Barlow	Jackson	Jaczek
Barrett	Beech	Jeneroux	Jivani
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	Johns	Joseph
Bendayan	Berthold	Kayabaga	Kelloway
Bexte	Bezan	Kelly	Khalid
Bittle	Block	Khanna	Kibble
Blois	Bonk	Kirkland	Klassen
Borrelli	Boulerice	Kmiec	Konanz
Bragdon	Brassard	Koutrakis	Kram
Brière	Brock	Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
Calkins	Caputo	Kuruc	Kwan
Carney	Carr	Lake	Lalonde
Casey	Chagger	Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Chambers	Champagne	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)	Lapointe (Sudbury)
Chang	Chartrand	Lattanzio	Lauzon
Chatel	Chen	Lavack	Lavoie
Chenette	Chi	Lawrence	Lawton
Chong	Church	LeBlanc	Leitão
Clark	Cobena	Lewis (Essex)	Lightbound
Cody	Connors	Lloyd	Long
Cooper	Cormier	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Ma
Coteau	Dalton	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacDonald (Cardigan)
Dandurand	Danko	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Mahal
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Majumdar	Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson	Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
Deltell	d'Entremont	Martel	May
DeRidder	Deschênes-Thériault	Mazier	McCauley
Desrochers	Dhaliwal	McGuinty	McKelvie
Dhillon	Diab	McKenzie	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Diotte	Doherty	McKnight	McLean (Calgary Centre)
Dowdall	Duclos	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	McPherson
Duguid	Duncan	Melillo	Ménard
Dzerowicz	Earle	Mendès	Menegakis
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Michel	Miedema
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Miller	Mingarelli
Eyolfson	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Moore	Morrison
Falk (Provencher)	Fancy	Morrissey	Motz
Fanjoy	Fergus	Muys	Myles
Fisher	Fonseca	Naqvi	Nater
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Nathan	Noormohamed
Fry	Fuhr	Ntumba	Oliphant
Gaheer	Gainey	Olszewski	O'Rourke
Gallant	Gasparro	Osborne	Patzer
Gazan	Généreux	Paul-Hus	Petitpas Taylor
Genius	Gerretsen	Poilievre	Powlowski
Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Gill (Brampton West)	Provost	Ramsay
Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Gill (Windsor West)	Rana	Redekopp
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Gladu	Reid	Rempel Garner
Goodridge	Gould	Reynolds	Richards
Gourde	Grant	Roberts	Robertson
Greaves	Groleau	Rochefort	Romanado
Guay	Guglielmin	Rood	Ross
Guilbeault	Gunn	Rowe	Royer
		Ruff	Sahota
		Saini	Sari
		Sari	Sawatzky
		Schiefke	Seeback
		Sgro	Shipley
		Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
		Small	Sodhi
		Solomon	Sousa
		Steinley	Stevenson
		St-Pierre	Strahl
		Stubbs	Sudds

Private Members' Business

Tesser Derksen	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Turnbull	Uppal
Valdez	van Koeverden
Van Popta	Vandenbeld
Viersen	Villeneuve
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Watchorn
Waugh	Weiler
Wilkinson	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zerucelli	Zimmer
Zuberi — 291	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Bonin
Brunelle-Duceppe	Champoux
DeBellefeuille	Deschênes
Fortin	Garon
Gaudreau	Godin
Jansen	Lantsman
Larouche	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lobb	Normandin
Perron	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Simard
Ste-Marie	Thériault — 28

PAIRED

Members

Arnold	Battiste
Dabrusin	Dancho
Fortier	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gull-Masty	Joly
Kusie	Lefebvre
Maloney	Morin
Nguyen	Plamondon
Schmale	Sheehan
Thompson	Vien — 18

The Speaker: I declare the motion adopted. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

● (1525)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from Thursday, April 16, consideration of the motion that Bill C-238, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (restitution orders), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-238, under Private Members' Business.

● (1535)

[English]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 101)***YEAS**

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Bains	Baker
Bardeesy	Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill Riv- er)	Bendayan
Bittle	Blois
Boulerice	Brière
Carney	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Chang
Chartrand	Chatel
Chen	Chenette
Chi	Church
Clark	Connors
Cormier	Coteau
Dandurand	Danko
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	d'Entremont
Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Earle	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson	Fancy
Fanjoy	Fergus
Fisher	Fonseca
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Fry	Fuhr
Gaheer	Gainey
Gasparro	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gladu
Gould	Grant
Greaves	Guay
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Harrison
Hepfner	Hirtle
Hodgson	Hogan
Housefather	Hussen
Iacono	Idlout
Jaczek	Jeneroux
Johns	Joseph
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Klassen
Koutrakis	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lapointe (Sudbury)	Lattanzio
Lauzon	Lavack
Lavoie	LeBlanc
Leitão	Lightbound
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacDonald (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)	May
McGuinty	McKelvie
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McKnight
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	McPherson
Ménard	Mendès
Michel	Miedema
Miller	Mingarelli
Morrissey	Myles
Naqvi	Nathan
Noormohamed	Ntumba
Oliphant	Olszewski
O'Rourke	Osborne
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski

Private Members' Business

Provost
Rana
Rochefort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Schieffe
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sodhi
Sousa
Sudds
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Weiler
Yip
Zerucelli

Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Solomon
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Watchorn
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 168

Mazier
McKenzie
Melillo
Moore
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Perron
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Richards
Rood
Rowe
Savard-Tremblay
Seeback
Simard
Steinley
Stevenson
Strauss
Thériault
Tochor
Uppal
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Zimmer — 153

McCauley
McLean (Calgary Centre)
Menegakis
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Reid
Reynolds
Roberts
Ross
Ruff
Scheer
Shipley
Small
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Stubbs
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vis
Warkentin
Williamson

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Anderson
Au
Bailey
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Bexte
Blanchet
Block
Bonk
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Chambers
Chong
Cody
Dalton
Davies (Niagara South)
DeBellefeuille
DeRidder
Diotte
Dowdall
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Windsor West)
Godin
Gourde
Guglielmin
Hallan
Ho
Holman
Jansen
Kelly
Kibble
Kmiec
Kram
Kronis
Lake
Larouche
Lawton
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lobb
Majumdar
Mantle

Aitchison
Allison
Anstey
Baber
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bonin
Borrelli
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Champoux
Cobena
Cooper
Davidson
Dawson
Deltell
Deschênes
Doherty
Duncan
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Goodridge
Groleau
Gunn
Hardy
Hoback
Jackson
Jivani
Khanna
Kirkland
Konanz
Kramp-Neuman
Kuruc
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Lloyd
Mahal
Malette (Kapuskasung—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Martel

Arnold
Dabrusin
Fortier
Gull-Masty
Kusie
Maloney
Nguyen
Schmale
Thompson

PAIRED

Members

Battiste
Dancho
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Joly
Lefebvre
Morin
Plamondon
Sheehan
Vien — 18

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD PRICE TRANSPARENCY ACT

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-226, An Act to establish a national framework to improve food price transparency, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-226, under Private Members' Business.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 102*)

YEAS

Members

Acan

Al Soud

Private Members' Business

Ali	Alty	Schiefke	Sgro
Anand	Anandasangaree	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Bains	Baker	Sodhi	Solomon
Bardeesy	Beech	Sousa	St-Pierre
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)	Bendayan	Sudds	Tesser Derksen
Bittle	Blois	Turnbull	Valdez
Boulerice	Brière	van Koeverden	Vandenbeld
Carney	Carr	Villeneuve	Watchorn
Casey	Chagger	Weiler	Wilkinson
Champagne	Chang	Yip	Zahid
Chartrand	Chatel	Zerucelli	Zuberi— 168
Chen	Chenette		
Chi	Church		
Clark	Connors		
Cormier	Coteau	Aboultaif	Aitchison
Dandurand	Danko	Albas	Allison
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	d'Entremont	Anderson	Anstey
Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers	Au	Baber
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Bailey	Baldinelli
Diab	Duclos	Barlow	Barrett
Duguid	Dzerowicz	Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Earle	Ehsassi	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	Berthold
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith	Bexte	Bezan
Eyolfson	Fancy	Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Fanjoy	Fergus	Block	Bonin
Fisher	Fonseca	Bonk	Borrelli
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Bragdon	Brassard
Fry	Fuhr	Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Gaheer	Gainey	Calkins	Caputo
Gasparro	Gazan	Chambers	Champoux
Gerretsen	Gladu	Chong	Cobena
Gould	Grant	Cody	Cooper
Greaves	Guay	Dalton	Davidson
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Hanley	Harrison	DeBellefeuille	Deltell
Hepfner	Hirtle	DeRidder	Deschênes
Hodgson	Hogan	Diotte	Doherty
Housefather	Hussen	Dowdall	Duncan
Iacono	Idlout	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Jaček	Jeneroux	Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Johns	Joseph	Gallant	Garon
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Gaudreau	Généreux
Khalid	Klassen	Genius	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Koutrakis	Kwan	Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Lamoureux	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)	Godin	Goodridge
Lapointe (Sudbury)	Lattanzio	Gourde	Guglielmin
Lauzon	Lavack	Gunn	Hallan
Lavoie	LeBlanc	Hardy	Ho
Leitão	Lightbound	Hoback	Holman
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Jackson	Jansen
Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Jivani	Kelly
MacDonald (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Khanna	Kibble
Malette (Bay of Quinte)	May	Kirkland	Kmieć
McGuinty	McKelvie	Konanz	Kram
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McKnight	Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanic—Sooke)	McPherson	Kuruc	Lake
Ménard	Mendès	Lantsman	Larouche
Michel	Miedema	Lawrence	Lawton
Miller	Mingarelli	Lemire	Leslie
Morrissey	Myles	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Naqvi	Nathan	Lloyd	Lobb
Noormohamed	Ntumba	Mahal	Majumdar
Olyphant	Olszewski	Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
O'Rourke	Osborne	Martel	Mazier
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski	McCauley	McKenzie
Provost	Ramsay	McLean (Calgary Centre)	Melillo
Rana	Robertson	Menegakis	Moore
Rocheffort	Romanado	Morrison	Motz
Royer	Sahota	Muys	Nater
Saini	Sarai	Normandin	Patzder
Sari	Sawatzky		

NAYS

Members

Private Members' Business

Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Rempel Garner
Richards
Rood
Rowe
Savard-Tremblay
Seeback
Simard
Steinley
Stevenson
Stubbs
Thomas
Tolmie
Van Popta
Vis
Warkentin
Williamson

Perron
Redekopp
Reynolds
Roberts
Ross
Ruff
Scheer
Shipley
Small
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Tochor
Uppal
Viersen
Wagantall
Wagh
Zimmer— 150

Bardeesy
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill Riv-
er)
Bittle
Boulerice
Carney
Casey
Champagne
Chartrand
Chen
Chi
Clark
Cormier
Dandurand
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Deschênes-Thériault
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duguid
Earle
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fisher
Fragiskatos
Fry
Gaheer
Gasparro
Gerretsen
Gould
Greaves
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
Jaczek
Johns
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lauzon
Lavoie
Leitão
Long
Ma
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Petipas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rocheffort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Schieffe
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sodhi

Beech
Bendayan
Blois
Brière
Carr
Chagger
Chang
Chatel
Chenette
Church
Connors
Coteau
Danko
d'Entremont
Desrochers
Dhillon
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fancy
Fergus
Fonseca
Fraser
Fuhr
Gainey
Gazan
Gladu
Grant
Guay
Hajdu
Harrison
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Idlout
Jeneroux
Joseph
Kelloway
Klassen
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
May
McKelvie
McKnight
McPherson
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sari
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Solomon

PAIRED

Members

Arnold
Dabrusin
Fortier

Gull-Masty
Kusie
Maloney
Nguyen
Schmale
Thompson

Battiste
Dancho
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Joly
Lefebvre
Morin
Plamondon
Sheehan
Vien— 18

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

● (1550)

[English]

USE OF FEDERAL LANDS FOR VETERANS

The House resumed from April 21 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 16 under Private Members' Business in the name of the member for Cumberland—Colchester.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

● (1600)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 103)

YEAS

Members

Acan
Ali
Anand
Bains

Al Soud
Alty
Anandasangaree
Baker

Routine Proceedings

Sousa	St-Pierre
Sudds	Tesser Derksen
Turnbull	Valdez
van Koeverden	Vandenbeld
Villeneuve	Watchorn
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zerucelli	Zuberi — 168

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Au	Baber
Bailey	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bonin	Bonk
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Davidson	Davies (Niagara South)
Dawson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	DeRidder
Deschênes	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Duncan	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Gill (Windsor West)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Groleau	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Hardy	Ho
Hoback	Holman
Jackson	Jansen
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmieciak
Konanz	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
Kuruc	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lawton
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Mahal	Majumdar
Malette (Kapusasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
Martel	Mazier
McCauley	McKenzie
McLean (Calgary Centre)	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perron
Poillievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner

Reynolds	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ross	Rowe
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Seeback
Shiple	Simard
Small	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stevenson
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Williamson
Zimmer — 151	

PAIRED

Members

Arnold	Battiste
Dabrusin	Dancho
Fortier	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gull-Masty	Joly
Kusie	Lefebvre
Maloney	Morin
Nguyen	Plamondon
Schmale	Sheehan
Thompson	Vien — 18

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 51 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 22 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, three reports of the Canadian section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, or CEUS.

[*English*]

The first report concerns the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group's participation at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Council of State Governments, CSG, Western Legislative Conference in Portland, Oregon, from July 9 to 12, 2024.

The second concerns the IPG's participation at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from July 15 to 18, 2024.

The third concerns the IPG's participation at the 78th Annual Meeting of the CSG Midwestern Legislative Conference in Columbus, Ohio, from July 21 to 24, 2024.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, in relation to Bill C-222, an act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code on the death of a child.

I would like to acknowledge the work of all members of the committee in getting the bill back to the House. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

* * *

• (1605)

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SOIL HEALTH ACT

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-230, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy for soil health protection, conservation and enhancement.

She said: Mr. Speaker, happy Earth Day. What a fitting day to introduce Senator Robert Black's Bill S-230, an act respecting the development of a national strategy for soil health protection, conservation and enhancement. This important bill would recognize soil as a national strategic asset. At its core, it calls for a national strategy on soil health, one that would bring together research, farmers, industry, indigenous knowledge and governments across the country. It calls for data collection and the appointment of a national soil health advocate.

The urgency is real. Soil is the foundation, literally, of food, feed and fuel. Protecting soil is good environmental, agricultural and economic policy.

The University of Guelph's Ontario Agricultural College is ranked number one in Canada, anchoring world-leading soil and agri-food research, and it brings together researchers, farmers and industry. We can do this nationally with a framework to scale. The Minister of Agriculture has already announced his commitment, and I invite all members to support passage of this very important bill.

I wish everyone a happy Earth Day.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition initiated by Mr. Drew Depratto, a

Routine Proceedings

resident of the Greater Toronto area, whom I congratulate for his advocacy. This petition is supported by 4,520 Canadians.

The petitioners call on the government to reaffirm Canada's role as a safe place for LGBTQI individuals fleeing persecution, by creating dedicated and expedited immigration pathways for those people in our community facing systemic discrimination, loss of rights, or threats to their safety in their countries of residence.

This petition reminds us of the work that remains to be done to ensure that people who are threatened simply for loving whom they love may reach safer shores.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to present a petition on behalf of constituents.

I rise for the 12th time on behalf of the people of Dauphin, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. Residents of Dauphin and the Parkland region are demanding that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that have fuelled a surge in crime throughout their communities. Since 2015, there has been a 54% increase in violent crime and a 75% increase in sexual assaults across Canada.

Petitioners are deeply concerned by what they read in the local newspapers, including a November report that the Dauphin RCMP is searching for a wanted man with three separate arrest warrants. Our once safe communities have now turned into places where people fear for their life because the government's catch-and-release policies have allowed violent repeat offenders to be out on bail instead of in jail.

The people of Dauphin and the Parkland region demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I fully support the good people of Dauphin.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of petitions to present today from the fine folks in my riding of Niagara West.

The first petition talks about Bill C-9 and the petitioners' concern around the Liberal-Bloc amendments to Bill C-9, an act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religion or cultural places, which could be used to criminalize passages from the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and other sacred texts.

Government Orders

I have another petition to present on Bill C-9. Once again, there are thousands of signatures from people in Niagara West. The concerns of petitioners are that the state has no place in the religious texts or teaching of any faith community, and that freedom of expression and freedom of religion are fundamental rights that must be preserved.

Therefore, the petitioning citizens and residents call upon the Government of Canada to protect religious freedom; to uphold the right to read and share sacred texts; and to prevent government overreach when it comes to matters of faith.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to join virtually today, and again, as other members have done, I wish everyone a happy Earth Day.

The petition I am raising today is not a happy story. However, it is all too typical. There are a lot of examples of Canadian mining companies operating particularly in Latin America, where there are allegations of human rights and environmental abuses.

In this case, petitioners wish to raise and bring to the attention of the House the situation for indigenous people of Guatemala, the Xinka people, who have been for many years opposing the Escobal mine, which is an operation of the Pan American Silver company registered in Vancouver.

Currently the position of the Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise is vacant, so petitioners are looking to the House of Commons and to the Canadian government to take action. The Escobal mine has been opposed by the Xinka people. The story is long and complex, so I will summarize. It has involved the murder of local indigenous people who oppose the mine. The courts in Guatemala stopped the company from operating until consultations could take place, but now, over the objections of the Xinka people, the mining operation wishes to proceed.

The petitioners point out that Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that Canadian mining companies must not violate indigenous people's rights to free, prior and informed consent. They call on Canadian authorities to direct Canadian consular officials to protect the Xinka defenders and to fully implement "Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders" to protect their safety and to preserve the rights of the people of Guatemala and the natural environment there.

* * *

• (1610)

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. 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929 and 930 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

RED RIVER MÉTIS SELF-GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION AND IMPLEMENTATION TREATY ACT

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.) moved that Bill C-21, An Act to give effect to the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that Canada's Parliament is located on the unceded and surrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe, whose presence here reaches back to time immemorial.

I rise today grateful for the opportunity to speak to the bill, a bill that would bring into force the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty.

[*Translation*]

This self-government treaty marks a historic milestone. It promotes reconciliation, recognizes the right of the Red River Métis to organize and govern themselves, and formalizes our government-to-government relationship with the Manitoba Métis Federation under Canadian law.

[*English*]

With the legislation, we would honour the legacy, the rights and the future of the Red River Métis, and we would reaffirm their rightful place in the social, legal and legislative fabric of Canada.

This self-government treaty is the result of working closely with the Manitoba Métis Federation president, David Chartrand, his cabinet and their team on a co-developed process shaped through the recognition of indigenous rights and self-determination discussion table. I wish to applaud President Chartrand and the MMF for their work to bring us to this day.

[*Translation*]

The journey leading to this self-government treaty with the Red River Métis began more than 150 years ago. Over generations, the Red River Métis have forged a distinct identity as a people with a rich and deep-rooted culture, language, and heritage. They have charted their own course by governing themselves according to their distinct vision, values, and priorities.

• (1615)

[*English*]

In the late 1800s, the Red River Métis formed their own provisional government of Assiniboia during the Red River Resistance. That government, led by Louis Riel, was formed to give voice to the Red River Métis. The Red River Métis colony was where Manitoba sits today.

In 1869, the Red River Métis provisional government began negotiations with the Crown about joining the country as its fifth province. These negotiations led to the Manitoba Act, 1870, and included promises to the Red River Métis. The Province of Manitoba was born. The promises never materialized.

The Red River Métis have had to undertake, often collectively, numerous court challenges to win Canada's recognition of rights they had exercised as a people for generations, which they were trying to negotiate into the law of the land in 1869 through 1870. These court challenges and the Constitution Act, 1982, set the stage for this: the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty.

It is in the Constitution Act, 1982, where Métis are legally recognized. Section 35 identifies three distinct indigenous groups: first nations, Inuit and Métis. It also affirms that all three hold aboriginal and treaty rights. Despite the promise of section 35, it still took subsequent court challenges to establish precedents upholding indigenous rights.

The Supreme Court of Canada's 2013 decision in *Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. v. Canada* was one of the catalysts for a series of negotiations and agreements with the MMF, which led to the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty and the proposed implementing legislation that is being debated today.

While today's moment is what Louis Riel and his government sought more than 150 years ago, the text, spirit and meaning of this landmark self-government treaty were developed in full partnership with the Manitoba Métis Federation over the last seven years.

The bill before us today is a co-developed, living document setting out rules, regulations and processes for self-governance crafted by the Red River Métis on their terms and agreed to by Canada, not imposed by the Crown. The treaty recognizes the Red River Métis' right to self-government and the MMF's role as their government. It

Government Orders

formally recognizes the MMF's jurisdiction over citizenship, leadership selection and government operations. This includes determining how their government is structured and operated, how they manage their finances, how they are accountable to their citizens and how they administer and enforce their governance laws.

Significantly, it will be the first self-government treaty achieved with the Métis government in Canada. This self-government treaty was developed in full partnership with the MMF and is the result of the negotiations that began in 2016. The MMF and Canada signed a framework agreement for advancing reconciliation that year, setting the stage for formal negotiations. Early in these negotiations, the MMF identified self-governance as a priority.

The Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty delivers on a key commitment made in an earlier recognition agreement signed by the parties in 2021. The treaty has the same focus on internal governance, and it affirms and builds on the recognition of the MMF as an indigenous government in the 2021 agreement, but the treaty includes more details on key issues such as implementation, harmonizing laws and dispute resolution.

The self-government treaty was approved by Red River Métis citizens in June 2023, and it was also shaped by over a year of engagement with other indigenous groups, including first nations in Manitoba and other Métis governments. On November 30, 2024, the Government of Canada and the MMF signed the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty at a historic ceremony held in Winnipeg.

The treaty needs federal legislation to make it legally binding and bring it into force. At that time, it will replace the 2021 agreement. Passage of this bill by Parliament is this final step in the process.

Government Orders

The treaty also sets out a process for negotiating other self-government arrangements with MMF in the future. The potential topics for such future negotiations are listed in the treaty. This includes, for example, education, economic development, language, heritage and culture. If any additional jurisdictions, i.e., law-making powers, are negotiated with the Manitoba Métis Federation in the future, Crown consultations will take place at that time with other indigenous groups on matters that may affect them. These consultations will take place, in keeping with the Crown's duty to consult, before any such future self-government arrangements with the Manitoba Métis Federation can be finalized.

I mentioned that early on in our negotiations toward the 2016 framework agreement, the MMF identified self-government as a priority. Self-governance empowers indigenous peoples to deliver programs and services in ways that reflect the traditions, priorities and goals of their people, by their people. This is what the Louis Riel-led provisional government of Assiniboia sought in 1869.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Self-government agreements also help to create stability, which paves the way for new investments, economic growth and better social outcomes in indigenous communities. Communities that have entered into self-government agreements often achieve better outcomes for their members when it comes to education, job opportunities and income.

Self-government agreements recognize and support indigenous rights, particularly the right to self-government and the right to self-determination. The right to self-determination is recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 4 of the declaration states, "Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs".

Self-government agreements are negotiated based on the unique needs and aspirations of different peoples and different communities.

We are also working with indigenous partners to jointly develop self-government agreements and other rights-based agreements by holding round tables across the country. These partners represent over 500 indigenous communities with a total population of approximately one million. We deeply value our relationships with all indigenous partners, and we look forward to continuing these conversations in a true spirit of reconciliation, shared prosperity and partnership.

Canada is a nation founded on many treaties. These are lasting commitments that shape relationships, empower communities and create opportunities for generations to come.

[*English*]

The self-government treaty with MMF would come into force once the implementing legislation is passed. Doing so would affirm the inherent rights of the Red River Métis, and it would also mark a critical step forward in Canada's ongoing journey of reconciliation and nation building. Passing this legislation would continue to

strengthen our relationship with the Manitoba Métis Federation and position them as full partners in building Canada's future. The Red River Métis have always been nation builders, from the fur trade to the founding of Manitoba, and now through major projects in energy, housing and environmental stewardship.

By passing this bill, we would fulfill a promise carried forward by generations of Métis leaders. We would affirm rights, unlock potential and empower the Red River Métis to continue shaping Canada's future as equal partners. This treaty is a foundation for long-term success. It would affirm the rights of the Red River Métis to lead in shaping their communities. Our modern-day treaty on governance with the MMF is a commitment to partnership, progress and shared prosperity. By supporting Métis self-governance, we are investing in a future where indigenous communities lead the way in building a stronger, more resilient Canada.

As our overall talks with the MMF continue and our joint work advances, the rights and interests of other indigenous peoples, third parties and all Canadians will be respected during the negotiation of any shared solution, agreement or approach to reconciliation. Canada and the MMF have developed an implementation plan that sets out what actions each must take to deliver on their commitments in the self-government treaty and put it into action. This plan would help smooth the transition to self-government based upon the terms and conditions of the treaty. An intergovernmental relations committee would also be created to provide a forum for the parties to jointly oversee the successful implementation of the treaty.

This treaty is a turning point in our shared history. It would help address a historic wrong and set the foundation for a renewed, respectful and enduring government-to-government relationship. When passed, the legislation will mark a historic milestone. The treaty is set to take effect on the day of royal assent, a moment that would formally recognize, at long last, the Red River Métis' right to self-government in Canadian law and formally affirm the MMF as their government.

This treaty is the result of years of aspiration, dialogue, negotiation and consultation. It began more than a century and a half ago and came together when thousands of Red River Métis citizens overwhelmingly approved the draft treaty in 2023. Let us finally act on their voices.

Marsi.

• (1625)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her well-thought-out and respectful speech. We do not see that in this House as much as we need to, nor as much as the provinces or the taxpayers deserve.

Government Orders

I have a question. I will be honest. I do not know as much about this file as perhaps others do, but I have a question that has been brought forward to me. In the Powley decision, the courts emphasized that Métis communities are diverse, with distinct histories and traditions across different regions. This treaty may risk pushing that diversity into a single narrative and elevating the Red River Métis above other authorities. I wonder if perhaps the minister can explain how this bill promotes inclusion as opposed to exclusion.

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, it is important that the Métis self-government agreements represent the Métis communities. Today, the item before the House is the Manitoba Métis Federation self-government agreement. The Government of Canada is also negotiating agreements with other Métis governments across Canada. Once those agreements are concluded, we will bring those to the House, but today's legislation is about the representation and the self-governance of the Red River Métis.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of the bill. We think this is a way to right an injustice that has lasted 150 years, since the promise of a treaty to Louis Riel and his provisional government.

My question is somewhat similar to that of my colleague. The treaty is with the Manitoba Métis Federation, or MMF, but there are other Métis groups, like the Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba. Will there be other treaties with these other groups? Unless they want to be part of the MMF, is there a mechanism to cover all Métis people within the various groups?

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, this bill concerns the Red River Métis and the Manitoba Métis Federation. However, we are also negotiating treaties with other Métis governments in Canada, including in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and the Northwest Territories. Yes, we are committed to making additional treaties with other Métis governments that represent other Métis people across Canada.

[*English*]

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to provide some brief commentary. I remember being a grade 6 French immersion student and winning a ticket to go to the Festival du Voyageur, which, all people from Manitoba will know, is a marquee event that helps us to understand our history. The deeply embedded culture of the Manitoba Métis people, the Red River Métis, is on full display during that time of year.

Hypothetically, because I am not allowed to draw the attention of the House to people in the gallery, if President Chartrand were here with us today, I would tell him and those with him that we are incredibly proud to have worked alongside their government and their people to enrich the fabric of our city, our province and our country. Louis Riel, Manitoba's first premier, is no doubt smiling down on the House today, a House he had to sneak into after being a duly elected member so many years ago to fight for the rights that we are recognizing in this chamber today.

• (1630)

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. I want to elaborate on two questions that were asked before.

This treaty includes robust non-derogation language, setting out that nothing in the treaty would affect, recognize or provide any rights, affirmed by section 35, of any indigenous community, collectivity or people other than the Red River Métis.

The other thing that is important to note is that individuals have a choice as to which Métis government represents them, so to become a Red River Métis citizen, an individual must apply. The treaty would establish that those who self-identify as Red River Métis have to show a demonstrable connection to the historical Red River Métis community. They also have to be accepted by the contemporary Red River Métis community. It is important with this treaty that it is also about membership and selection of leadership.

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for bringing this forward. Certainly, we see self-determination on behalf of any indigenous community, any Métis community included, as being a good thing.

The minister ended her last comments by talking about registration and identifying as a part of that community and that nation. The Liberal government took a different approach when it came to consultation regarding Bill S-2, which would ultimately define who first nations people are as part of the status in the Indian Act. They have undertaken significant consultations and delayed that bill.

On this one, I have heard from first nations that they have had zero or very minimal consultation on this. I am wondering if the minister could explain the level of consultation taken with first nations on this bill versus Bill S-2.

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed to ensuring that the duty to consult is met and, where appropriate, that accommodation is made for any indigenous group whose rights may be adversely impacted.

On August 24, 2023, Canada initiated a consultation and a strategic engagement process on the treaty with recognized Métis governments and those who assert section 35 Métis rights who could potentially be impacted by the treaty, as well as broader strategic engagement with all first nations in Manitoba and with the Government of Manitoba.

Correspondence and meetings took place between Canada and consultees between August 2023 and October 2024. The consultation process ended on October 9, 2024. I just want to note again that this legislation is about the self-governance of the Métis. Therefore, it does not touch on land, resources or harvesting rights.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister just indicated that the treaty formally recognizes Métis self-determination in Canadian law, but it is my understanding that Métis self-determination and self-government were already recognized under section 35.

Government Orders

I am wondering if the minister could clarify that for me.

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to elaborate.

This legislation recognizes the Manitoba Métis Federation as an indigenous government mandated to represent the Red River Métis in respect of its right to self-government and recognizes the law-making powers of the Manitoba Métis Federation in areas related to internal organization and governance, which includes matters such as the determination of citizenship, leadership selection, internal operations, accountability mechanisms, and measures for administering Red River Métis laws and for enforcing violations of those laws. We now have the opportunity to add this to Canadian legislation.

• (1635)

Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we get to correct a historic wrong. I want to thank the minister for bringing Bill C-21 to the House, the self-government treaty. I want to applaud her, and I also want to applaud our Minister of Public Safety, who did a lot of the work to bring this to fruition. I know that a number of the Manitoba MPs were at a special signing ceremony last year, and the parliamentary secretary to the leader of the House was one of those there.

Today, indeed, is a very special day. I give a big shout-out to the Manitoba Métis Federation, particularly President Chartrand for his persistence and collaborative spirit in bringing us to today.

I am wondering if the minister could respond to how signing this treaty and implementing this legislation would show the way on the reconciliation journey that all Canadians are on.

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, I think the importance of this legislation is establishing the self-governance of the Manitoba Métis Nation. Part of the legislation also talks about the opportunity for supplementary self-governance arrangements. The opportunity to negotiate the next steps would be language, culture and heritage, child and family services, health services, and education.

The opportunity for the Manitoba Métis to be leading programs for their people, I think, is an important next step.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois clearly supports the principles of the bill. I commend the minister and thank her for her speech.

Bill C-21 implements the first modern treaty between Canada and a Métis government, which represents a historic milestone for the Red River Métis. Recently, in committee, the president of the Manitoba Métis Federation, David Chartrand, indicated that the treaty is more symbolic than anything else. The Métis people are not asking for funding or anything else from the federal government. They are simply asking for the right to have the recognition treaty that was promised to them a long time ago.

This bill corrects a historical injustice by making good on the promise of a treaty made to Louis Riel and his provisional government 150 years ago when Manitoba entered into Confederation. The bill addresses the shameful way in which Canada has treated the Métis in the past by marginalizing them, stripping away their

rights, imposing military repression and making them invisible in the education system. The bill finally grants express legal and political recognition. It is consistent with the goal of nation-to-nation co-operation in that it formally recognizes the Manitoba Métis Federation as the government of the Red River Métis and establishes a lasting policy framework for intergovernmental relations.

The treaty clearly recognizes the political unity of the Red River Métis as a distinct indigenous community with a recognized democratic government, rather than merely a collection of scattered communities. It enshrines the right to self-determination and self-government for the Red River Métis, recognizing that this right is inherent and protected by the Constitution and is no longer dependent on the federal government's goodwill.

As for its contents, the treaty begins with the internal governance of the Red River Métis: citizenship, institutions, elections, accountability, government operations. It does not infringe on the areas of jurisdiction of other levels of government. It is the result of a process of co-development and ongoing negotiations between Canada and the Manitoba Métis Federation, where the Red River Métis defined their own governance priorities rather than having a unilateral model imposed on them.

This treaty is the culmination of a process that began formally in 2018, and unlike other initiatives like Bill C-33, it meets the requirements of a truly modern treaty in terms of form and content. Those other bills were not the fruit of this type of negotiation and did not explicitly recognize self-government. Rather, they were intended to give the federal government a blank cheque in its negotiations with other nations that claimed to be Métis.

Bill C-21 is a government bill introduced by the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, who just addressed the House. Bill C-21 begins with the gradual political and legal recognition of the Manitoba Métis Federation, or MMF, as the government of the Red River Métis. As of 2018, Canada and the MMF began formal self-government negotiations under the authority of the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, with the aim of moving from a simple political agreement to a genuine modern treaty regulating governance institutions.

A key milestone came in 2021 when, under a recognition agreement, the Manitoba Métis Federation was recognized as the Métis government and Canada's interlocutor for the collective rights and interests of the Red River Métis. This agreement serves as the foundation for more ambitious work on self-government and paves the way for the recognition of broader internal legislative powers.

This process culminated on November 30, 2024, with the official signing of the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty. It was signed in Winnipeg by the president of the MMF, David Chartrand, and the federal minister currently responsible for public safety.

Government Orders

The government press release describes this treaty as “first-of-its-kind” and “the first Self-Government Treaty concluded with a Métis Government in Canada” reaffirming the right of the Red River Métis to self-determination and formally recognizing the Manitoba Métis Federation as their government, with powers to make laws on who their citizens are, how their leaders are selected and how their institutions operate. The press release points out that the treaty centres on governance rather than land or harvesting rights and that, once it takes effect under the act, it will be protected by the Constitution. The treaty will replace the recognition agreement signed in 2021, and it represents a major milestone toward reconciliation with this indigenous people.

• (1640)

After the treaty is signed, the relationship between Canada and the MMF enters into an implementation phase, during which the parties prepare the necessary legislation to give the treaty force of law within the Canadian legal system. The treaty itself provides for the negotiation of other self-government arrangements and a framework for collaboration and consultation with other indigenous groups, but its full entry into force depends on federal legislation that ratifies it and incorporates it into domestic law.

It is in this context that, on February 12, 2026, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations introduced in the House of Commons Bill C-21, an act to give effect to the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty and to make consequential amendments to other acts, which we are discussing this afternoon.

The news release accompanying the introduction of the bill notes that this is the first self-government treaty concluded with a Métis government, described as the culmination of 156 years of effort on the part of the Red River Métis since 1870. It explains that the bill seeks to give force of law to the treaty, to recognize the Manitoba Métis Federation as the government of the Red River Métis and to clarify the legislative powers of that government in the internal matters covered by the treaty.

The purpose of the treaty is to recognize and implement the Red River Métis' right to self-determination and self-government as part of an approach to reconciliation that is consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is specifically designated as a treaty within the meaning of sections 25 and 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, has the force of law, is binding on Canada, the Manitoba Métis Federation and all persons and bodies, and engages the honour of the Crown.

The treaty also goes over colonial history, the historical role of the Red River Métis—the Red River Resistance, the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, the Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. v. Canada case—and Canada's responsibility to address the “unfinished business of reconciliation”, including in relation to section 31 of the Manitoba Act, 1870.

The treaty affirms that the Red River Métis are a distinct indigenous community that collectively holds rights protected under section 35, including the inherent right to self-government, and that the Manitoba Métis Federation is their democratic government and their exclusive representative for collective rights and interests, including section 35 rights and land claims.

In addition, the treaty confirms that the right to self-determination and the inherent right to self-government of the Red River Métis are not dependent on Canada's recognition or the implementation legislation. Rather, they are explicitly recognized and affirmed as section 35 rights, which are protected by section 25 of the charter. It clarifies that no section 35 right of the Red River Métis are extinguished or surrendered, that the governance rights listed are not comprehensive, and that other areas of self-government may be added through subsequent complementary self-government arrangements.

Chapter 4 identifies the particular Red River Métis jurisdictions, that is, the areas where the federation of the Red River Métis can enact legislation, with precedence over federal law in the event of conflict or inconsistency in the areas I will list.

With respect to the citizenship of the Red River Métis, the citizenship criteria, registration, renunciation, remedies, and the requirement of a demonstrable connection to the historic Red River Métis, the current register of the federation of the Red River Métis becomes the official register. In principle, a person cannot be both a Red River Métis citizen and a citizen of another recognized indigenous community, such as a first nation, other Métis group or modern treaty, unless that person is unable to give up that other standing. The treaty does not prevent individuals from choosing another indigenous body.

In terms of the method of selecting MMF representatives, the organization has full authority over its electoral processes and the appointment of its representatives, members, officers and others. With regard to the structure, operation, finances and accountability of the MMF, its internal organization, asset management, financial management and the rules governing civil liability and personal immunity of officers and employees, the privileges and immunity are comparable to those of parliamentarians. There is also a regime governing access to information and the protection of personal information within the MMF.

• (1645)

There is also democratic accountability: The Manitoba Métis Federation can adopt its own rules for accountability to Métis citizens, such as conflict of interest prevention rules, internal mechanisms and so on.

There is also administration, enforcement, prosecution and adjudication. The MMF can establish institutions to administer its laws. It can impose sanctions such as fines, restitution and imprisonment within certain limits. It can incorporate proportionate traditional sanctions and put in place mechanisms for enforcing and prosecuting its laws. In all of these areas, if there is an inconsistency or conflict between a Métis law and a federal law, the Red River Métis law prevails, to the extent of the conflict, for matters that are clearly covered by the treaty.

Government Orders

There is also taxation and financing. The treaty defines the concept of “expenditure need” and the “fiscal arrangements” that are meant to provide the MMF with a fiscal capacity comparable to that of other governments or public bodies performing similar functions. These fiscal arrangements are negotiated between the parties and specify the federal contributions and the responsibilities of the MMF. They are not part of the treaty within the meaning of sections 25 and 35, but they are governed by the treaty.

The treaty establishes the MMF's authority in matters related to access to information and the protection of personal information held by its institutions, along much the same lines as existing government systems but adapted to the Métis reality. It also acknowledges the specific role of the Manitoba Métis Federation in the areas of Red River Métis culture and language, as well as child and family services, particularly in relation to An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. The treaty specifies that it has no effect on the Constitution of Canada, does not abrogate or derogate from the other rights of indigenous peoples, and does not preclude the existence of other distinct Métis collectivities that may also hold section 35 rights. It states that nothing in the treaty limits the future rights of the Red River Métis or the possibility of recognizing new governance jurisdictions through negotiations. The treaty must be interpreted in a manner that upholds their section 35 rights without diminishing them.

The Manitoba Métis Federation was established in 1967 to provide democratic, responsible and accountable governance on behalf of the Red River Métis using the constitutional authorities delegated by its citizens. It subsequently incorporated as a legal entity to meet a federal government requirement in order to apply for programming.

The Red River Métis are defined as an indigenous collective made up of its citizens and individuals entitled to be citizens located within Manitoba, as well as elsewhere inside and outside of Canada. In terms of identity, the Manitoba Métis Federation states that it uses the 2002 Métis Nation definition resolution of the Métis National Council and presents itself as the continuation of the “one and only Métis Nation” rooted in its Red River origins. Its mission is to protect the Red River Métis “beyond borders” throughout their homeland and wherever its citizens live, including outside Manitoba. It describes itself as the protector of the Métis Nation and national definition.

The MMF places this mission within the context of the legacy of colonialism, emphasizing that provincial borders and other institutional boundaries have cut up traditional Métis territory and fractured Métis governance. It states that, since 2014, it has taken steps to unite the Red River Métis, and it clarifies that MMF citizens do not have to be residents of Manitoba. The organization also views its evolution as part of a longer historical arc: Since the ethnogenesis of the Métis people, they have had three governance institutions—the president, the council or cabinet, and the assembly—which it traces back to the collective decision-making structures of the time of the buffalo hunt.

These institutions are described as a hard-won and constantly evolving legacy formed in the crucible of a unique history of cultural practices, military campaigns and political arenas. As they are currently configured, MMF president Mr. Chartrand and a cabinet

of 22 ministers provide reports to the assembly and seek its guidance. The assembly is described as integral to providing open, accountable and democratic governance. Finally, the MMF administers a wide range of programs and services, including child and family protection, justice, housing, youth, education, human resources, economic development and natural resources. To do so, it relies on a network of affiliated corporations, authorities and agencies with more than 1,100 employees.

I would also like to remind the House that, in the 19th century, the Red River Métis formed a society descended from indigenous people, especially members of the Plains First Nations, and Europeans linked to the fur trade. They lived primarily in the Red River Colony area in the heart of modern-day Manitoba.

• (1650)

From the turn of the century, they played a central role in the northwest economy as buffalo hunters, pemmican suppliers and middlemen in the fur trade, while developing a distinct culture that was both Catholic and largely francophone, but also anglophone and Protestant, with collective practices such as big hunts organized according to democratic rules.

The Red River Colony was founded in 1812 under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company and Lord Selkirk and gradually grew into an important population centre, with francophone and anglophone Métis making up a significant proportion of the population. They had their own leaders, including Cuthbert Grant and later Louis Riel.

Starting in the 1860s, the context changed dramatically as Canada sought to expand its sovereignty westward. In 1869, the Hudson's Bay Company sold Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada without consulting the Métis settlers, raising fears that their land, language and religion would be jeopardized, especially as Canadian surveyors entered the colony without clear land title guarantees.

In October 1869, the Métis disrupted survey work and, under the leadership of Louis Riel and other leaders, took control of Upper Fort Garry, the company's main outpost, to force Ottawa into negotiating terms for the region's entry into Confederation. They created the National Métis Committee and a provisional government composed of francophone and anglophone Métis who developed a list of rights that would serve as the basis for the Manitoba Act.

The negotiations led by the provisional government resulted in the Manitoba Act, 1870, which created the province, recognized bilingual institutions and denominational schools, and granted 1.4 million acres of land to the children of Métis families in settlement of their “Indian land title”. That was the terminology used at the time.

Government Orders

However, the fulfillment of these promises was chaotic and delayed, and the fact that a Métis court executed Orangeman Thomas Scott in March 1870 sparked violent anti-Métis hostility in Ontario, leading to the dispatch of an expeditionary force that carried out reprisals and acts of violence against the Métis population. In this climate of fear, a significant proportion of the Métis left the region. They migrated westwards, to the present-day provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, or southwards, and the Métis gradually lost their majority status in Manitoba. By the 1880s, they accounted for only a small proportion of Manitoba's population.

The Northwest Rebellion of 1885 was the second major uprising led by the Métis and certain first nations allies against the Canadian federal government, building on the events of Red River.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the Métis living in the Northwest Territories denounced the lack of clear title to their lands, the government's inaction in response to their petitions, and the deterioration of their economic conditions following the collapse of the buffalo population, all of which fuelled a sense of marginalization and injustice.

In 1884, Métis delegates brought Louis Riel back from exile in Montana to help them formulate demands. They drafted a new list of grievances, and when Ottawa did not give them a satisfactory response, the movement shifted to an armed confrontation. In the spring of 1885, a provisional government was established in Batoche, under the political authority of Riel and the military leadership of Gabriel Dumont. After some initial successes, the Métis and their allies were ultimately defeated at the Battle of Batoche in May 1885 by British Major-General Frederick Middleton, his Northwest Mounted Police paramilitary troops and the volunteer militias, mostly Orangemen. Major-General Middleton was already a master at suppressing indigenous uprisings, having earned his stripes fighting the Maori in New Zealand.

I see that I am running out of time. I had more to say about the history and evolution of these events. For example, on November 22, Quebec premier Honoré Mercier told a huge crowd gathered on the Champ-de-Mars in Montreal that “[Louis] Riel, our brother, is dead”. Riel's surrender, his trial for high treason and his execution in November 1885, as well as the sanctions imposed on several indigenous leaders, marked a major political and military defeat for the Métis.

Today, we have an important role to play in repairing the injustice inflicted on this nation over these many decades, for over one and a half centuries. I sincerely applaud this bill and I want them to know that the Bloc Québécois and I are with them wholeheartedly.

• (1655)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): 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 Riding Mountain, Mental Health and Addictions; the hon. member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, The Economy; and the hon. member for York—Durham, Housing.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I think of the Red River Métis Nation, I think of Louis Riel. A couple of years ago, we recognized Louis Riel as Manitoba's first premier. Further to that, I think about the Manitoba Métis Federation. I have been a parliamentarian for over three decades now. It has been such a wonderful thing to witness first-hand how the MMF has stood consistently to ensure that the Red River Métis Nation not only continues to live on, but in essence, carries the city of Winnipeg, our province and indeed our country in many ways.

We hear of individuals like David Chartrand, Will, and others who instilled in the minds of so many Canadians how important it is to recognize the Red River Métis Nation and the fine work that it does. It is worthwhile to recognize the strong presence of MMF members in the parliamentary precinct today. I know they are listening to the debate.

Would the member not agree that it would be a wonderful thing to see the debate collapse so that we could actually get this significant piece of legislation through the House of Commons?

[Translation]

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, yes, it is important to move forward. I believe that if this nation had been respected 150 years ago, if its rights had been guaranteed and not betrayed, its culture would have flourished and we would be the better for it today. Better late than never. I sincerely commend the government and the minister for their commitment in this regard.

I would like to share a little story. May 1, International Workers' Day, will soon be here. It is a product of strikes and unrest in the United States and in Chicago. These associations called Louis Riel their brother, demanded his release and spoke out against everything that was done. He is an inspiring leader. On this day, which is celebrated by workers the world over, the example set by Louis Riel commands praise.

• (1700)

[English]

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, currently, the Canada Energy Regulator has confirmed that the Manitoba Métis Federation does some level of consultation in northern B.C. for major projects on the environmental effects of traditional section 35 rights. Should one day the Métis be in Quebec and want to acknowledge section 35 rights there, would my colleague from the Bloc Québécois be okay with that level of new jurisdiction in Quebec as well?

[Translation]

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, naturally, in Quebec, we fully recognize the rights of all indigenous nations, whether they be first nations, Inuit or Métis. Our position is to conduct nation-to-nation negotiations. I would remind the House that a former Quebec premier, the late Bernard Landry, set an example in this regard by negotiating the peace of the braves agreement.

Government Orders

This is not simply a matter of saying that we will try to guarantee them something. It is about fully recognizing who they are, their culture, their nation. We need to respect their territory and their resources. I would say that, right now, Quebec does not sign any economic development agreements unless the rights of first nations, indigenous peoples and Métis are at the heart of the negotiations and fully respected. We are symbolically correcting a mistake that was made 150 years ago. We must never repeat the colonialism that has taken place over the past 150 years.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we have seen, particularly at the beginning of the year, people's understanding of history varies greatly. However, there is an old saying: to know where we are going, we have to know where we came from. There are very direct and very close ties between the Métis people and Quebec. My colleague seems to have touched briefly on the historical aspect at the end of his speech. Are there any other historical details he would like to add to provide members with more information?

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, the history of the Manitoba Red River Métis and everything that happened there is fundamental to the identity and culture of the French Canadians who would later become Quebeckers. In fact, according to some historians, the imprisonment and hanging of Louis Riel was the trigger that led people to realize that something had happened there.

Honoré Mercier said “our brother is dead”. I will not repeat in the House the unfortunate reply of Sir John A. Macdonald, who called us animals because we were against what had just been done to the Métis leader.

We came to a sudden realization at that time. Later on, the writer and thinker Jacques Ferron said that this was the first time that a Québécois identity emerged. Standing up for our fellow brothers and sisters who were scattered and oppressed in the west was the trigger that led us to wonder what we could do in the province of Quebec to support ourselves.

We stand with our Métis brothers and sisters.

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his support for the treaty, his many stories and all his knowledge about the Métis.

I had the same question as his Bloc Québécois colleague. I was wondering if he would like to share another story with the House. I hope that all members will agree to conclude this debate today.

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank the minister for this excellent bill, which ensures that the treaty has the force of law in Canada. Indeed, I hope we can conclude the debate today so that the bill can be passed more quickly. I have countless other anecdotes and stories to share, both from the perspective of Quebec and that of the Métis nation, regarding the history of Canada.

I would remind the House that, throughout the first few centuries of Canada's history, first nations, indigenous peoples and the Métis were constantly cheated. For example, during the war between the British Empire, which held Canadian territory, and the Americans,

the British Crown promised a state to first nations in western Canada, a state that ultimately never materialized.

It is time to right the wrongs of the past and, today, Bill C-21 is a step in that direction, so I sincerely thank the minister.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to rise and speak to this bill on the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty.

I want to begin with respect for the Manitoba Métis Federation. The work we discussed today did not appear overnight. It reflects decades of organizing, advocacy, negotiations and constitutional work done by the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Red River Métis citizens.

The Red River Métis people have fought for recognition and their place on the land since before Canada became a country in 1867. In most recent history, the agreement itself records a long path, a 2016 framework agreement, a 2018 incremental reconciliation plan, a 2000 interim fiscal financing agreement and a 2021 self-government recognition and implementation agreement, all leading up to today.

The treaty also links itself to the unfinished reconciliation identified in the Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada action.

I want to acknowledge President Chartrand and his leadership, which has led to the Manitoba Métis Federation becoming a socio-economic driving force in Winnipeg, Manitoba and beyond.

I also want to show respect for those other indigenous governments for helping with the conversation about what could be improved within the treaty and for their courage for respectfully bringing their concerns to the broader discussion. I know from experience that indigenous critics can experience the most severe forms of abuse from outsiders and insiders via lateral violence, despite the shared goal of building solid foundations for future generations.

As members of Parliament, we have a duty to combat such abuse and bring respectful dialogue to such important matters, and this is a very important matter. We need to take the time to make sure this bill that proposes to bring the agreement into Canadian law and constitutional law is well-built. This is why this debate should not be reduced to a false choice between reconciliation and scrutiny. Parliament can support reconciliation and still insist on precision. In fact, when legislation will constitutionalize a treaty under sections 25 and 35, precision is a part of reconciliation.

Government Orders

Conservatives support treaty rights. We support Métis self-government. We support modern agreements that are durable, constitutional and workable. We even support the Manitoba Métis Federation's choice, as is their right, to negotiate and enter into an agreement that empowers them to move away from the Ottawa bureaucracy.

As a first nations person, I would not personally support growing the ISC bureaucracy as a part of implementing this treaty. A key part of the Manitoba Métis Federation's self-governance is its freedom to choose its partners even if ISC has shown a long history of being unreliable and abusive to other indigenous communities. Supporting the Manitoba Métis Federation's self-determination and governance over its own people does not require us as legislators to ignore potential challenges with implementation. It requires us to confront them before they become drawn-out lawsuits, which can still happen despite the best efforts of drafters, and to anticipate and resolve disputes in more conciliatory ways. It requires us to ask whether consultation in other indigenous communities was sufficient to anticipate the potential challenges this treaty might face.

The first reason for caution is that the treaty itself says that it is a treaty within the meaning of sections 25 and 35, that it has the force of law, is binding on all persons and bodies, and engages the honour of the Crown. Once Parliament gives effect to that, the courts, not the ministers, become the final interpreters of what this text means. If Parliament leaves ambiguity in a constitutional instrument, Parliament is not choosing flexibility, but risking future litigation.

The implementation legislation before us would give the treaty and future Manitoba Métis Federation laws the force of federal law, which would prevail in many areas over inconsistent other federal laws. Among other features, it has the potential to give non-Manitoba Métis Federation police forces and provinces the power to enforce Manitoba Métis Federation laws on non-members of Manitoba Métis Federation, including the possibility of the power to prosecute and imprison accused individuals. Because the Manitoba Métis Federation is not definitively geographically bound or defined in the treaty, Manitoba Métis Federation laws could potentially apply anywhere inside western Canada and beyond. Several Métis groups have made the point that the Manitoba Métis Federation jurisdiction should not extend to other Métis traditional homelands and territories, and that it should be up to the Métis justice systems, not the Crown courts, to determine what Métis laws mean and how they apply.

Modern treaties have the opportunity to place aboriginal and non-aboriginal relations in a shared legal system where we can build certainty, continuity, transparency and predictability.

- (1710)

Ambiguous modern treaty drafting can produce years of conflict. It is not fearmongering to remember the decades of history when interpretation and poor relations resulted in unintended division. Canada still lives with that today. We see this playing out in British Columbia. Governments, federal and provincial, are learning hard lessons about focusing their work on reconciliation rhetoric rather than the hard work needed to bring as many people along as possible, indigenous Canadians and non-indigenous Canadians alike.

There is much in the treaty that deserves acknowledgement. It recognizes Red River Métis self-determination and the inherent right of self-government. It recognizes the Manitoba Métis Federation as the government of the Red River Métis in paragraph 9. It provides concrete jurisdiction now over citizenship, leadership selection, internal operations, accountability, administration, enforcement and related matters. This is serious work, and it deserves respect, but respect for the work done by the Manitoba Métis Federation does not erase the duty of Parliament to ask what this text does, what it does not do and what it may be read to do later.

The next area of concern is the definition of Red River Métis, relationships with other Métis governments and the question of constitutional space for others. The Red River Métis should be the ultimate authority on determining who is Red River Métis. Paragraph 1 defines the Red River Métis as an "Indigenous collectivity...originally established within the historic Northwest and centred in the Red River Valley," distinct from any other indigenous collectivity and collectively holding section 35 rights, including the inherent right to self-government.

Paragraph 10 then says the Red River Métis acts "exclusively" through the Manitoba Métis Federation in exercising collectively held rights, in pursuing scrip claims and in Crown consultation respecting potential adverse effects on Red River Métis section 35 rights.

Paragraph 19 adds that any existing section 35 rights of self-government in respect of the definition of Red River Métis and the exclusive representation of the Red River Métis by the Manitoba Métis Federation continue and will be exercised in accordance with the treaty.

To many Red River Métis citizens, these provisions are long overdue recognition and nation building. That perspective needs to be heard. However, to other Métis governments, these same provisions raise alarms. The treaty's definitions and scope are read as expansive and ambiguous. We have heard from other Métis nations the concern that the treaty may fail to leave constitutional space for other Métis groups. Once implemented, it will be binding on third parties, including other federally recognized Métis governments. Self-government agreements and treaties with different Métis and other indigenous governments must coexist with each other.

Government Orders

There are strengths in drafting this agreement with flexibility and limiting language, but there is also too much ambiguity. Paragraph 13 says nothing in the treaty may be interpreted to determine the geographical location or the extent of the Red River Métis. There is also nothing in the treaty to imply that the Red River Métis is the only Métis collective under section 35. It also does not imply that the Manitoba Métis Federation represents any other Indigenous collectivity than the Red River Métis. It preserves the possibility that there are other Métis collective rights holders, which is a good thing, established before effective European control, that include individuals with Red River Métis ancestry and may hold distinct section 35 rights. Those are important safeguards, and any fair reading of the treaty should say so.

There is respect from other Métis governments that have also worked for years at securing recognition of their own rights-bearing communities and self-government agreements. Their concern is not that the Manitoba Métis Federation should have no treaty. It is quite the opposite. Various Métis groups appreciate, celebrate and support Canada's modern treaty-making with Métis governments and recognize the Manitoba Métis Federation's right to pursue self-determination through this agreement.

A second area of concern is land and aboriginal rights ambiguity. Supporters of the bill frame this as an internal governance treaty, not a land claims treaty. The treaty's immediate operative jurisdictions are about governance, citizenship, internal structures, accountability, adjudication and related institutional matters, not a direct land transfer.

In recent months, disagreements about how treaties and other agreements about land-based rights should be interpreted have led to much uncertainty on the part of Canadians and much undeserved ignorance, interpretation and hatred directed toward indigenous peoples. Canada's failure to be precise and to communicate about several recent agreements in B.C. has caused harm to everyone. If Canada wants to say now that the Manitoba Métis Federation treaty does not recognize land-related rights, it has a duty to spell that out explicitly, inclusive of protecting fee simple property.

- (1715)

Too often, it seems the current government wants to intentionally leave in that ambiguity so it can take credit but not responsibility for the decisions made. Why does this matter? Chapter 9 lays out the process for future supplementary self-government arrangements in areas including wildlife, migratory birds, and fish harvesting and management; environmental assessment and protection; administration of justice; and any other matters reasonably related to self-determination, self-government, or other rights and interests of the Red River Métis. For many first nations and other indigenous peoples, a traditional paradigm is that we are a part of the land, inclusive of wildlife and plant life.

Paragraph 88 goes further and says that the treaty contemplates future negotiation or recognition of Manitoba Métis Federation jurisdiction over lands that may be held by the Red River Métis, and the preamble of the treaty itself refers to the unfulfilled land-grant provisions of the Manitoba Act, implying the potential for redress.

For non-indigenous Canadians, especially those worried about their recreational or life-sustaining use of the land, it is important

not to inflame fear. This treaty would not, on its face, threaten fee simple title. It does not contain a clause expropriating private home ownership. However, it would create a legal framework that could affect future consultation questions, future jurisdictional negotiations and future litigation over the scope of rights. The responsible position is neither alarm nor denial. It is clarity.

For indigenous folks, especially Métis, first nations and Inuit people, the issue is equally serious but different. It is whether constitutionality can be protected via a treaty drafted in a way that leaves room for one indigenous government's hard-won recognition without crowding the constitutional room needed by others. It is whether reconciliation is being advanced through careful pluralism or through avoidable conflict. It is also about whether an indigenous community needs recognition in a treaty in order for its self-government rights to be exercised.

The Liberal government must acknowledge the push-back it received on Bill C-53 in consideration of the bill before us, not because the Manitoba Métis Federation is in the same category as other Métis in question in Bill C-53 but because other indigenous concerns were expressed explicitly. A fundamental question must be answered by the government, a question that I have received and that I know the Liberal government has received as well: How would this treaty overlap with the historic numbered treaties in Canada?

We cannot shy away from the fact that the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs in Alberta recently passed a resolution against the proposed treaty in question today. The chiefs of Treaty 3 in Ontario have said, in a submission to the Liberal government, that they have concerns about pre-approved modern treaties that will supersede historic Confederation-era treaties, practically making them second-class citizens. We have heard and we know that with the Liberal government, there has been little to no consultation with first nations across the numbered treaties in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba regarding the bill.

Government Orders

The Liberal government has started a significant consultation on Bill S-2 while doing no consultation on things like Bill C-5, and now, again, first nations are questioning the inconsistent politics being played by the government on when consultation is used and when it is not used. These concerns are real, and I know the Manitoba Métis Federation is aware of these concerns from first nations as well. I do not hear any indigenous nation, Métis, Inuit or first nation, wanting to see other indigenous peoples fail, but the process and details must be addressed. All of these types of agreements and treaties must live together, and we as indigenous and non-indigenous peoples must coexist.

A third area of concern is everyday predictability in governance and in how we grow the Canadian economy. The Canada Energy Regulator's process in British Columbia has seen the Manitoba Métis Federation relying on the treaty and the Red River Métis homeland claims to assert consultation rights far beyond the Red River, two provinces away. This can result in confusion, cost and delay in resource development. The impacts are not only political disputes but real, on-the-ground impacts that can hold back timely growth of Canada's economy for all treaty peoples.

As Parliament constitutionalizes a treaty whose wording and surrounding narratives are already being used in regulatory settings, Parliament has a duty to consider how wording matters outside this chamber. The commitment to a financial arrangement that would meet the expenditure need of the Manitoba Métis Federation to exercise its defined self-government functions is good in concept but poorly spelled out. Those IOUs promise big buckets of potential rights and obligations and a bureaucratic framework to ensure that Ottawa would get plenty of say in how it wants to maintain control over such agreements and this indigenous nation.

That brings me to my final point. The fairest and most constructive position is not to attack the Manitoba Métis Federation or deny legitimacy of the Red River Métis self-government. It is to say we honour the work that brought this treaty here, we recognize the unfinished business of reconciliation, and we accept that the Manitoba Métis Federation has spent years building toward this milestone. However, because this treaty would be constitutionally entrenched and binding on everyone, we owe it to the Manitoba Métis Federation, other Métis governments, first nations, provinces and everyday Canadians to draft the implementation legislation with maximum clarity.

● (1720)

This means asking whether Bill C-21 should include explicit protections making it clear that this treaty would not negate other Métis agreements, would not make the Red River Métis the only Métis people under section 35, would not constrain future negotiations with other Métis groups, would not recognize land-related section 35 rights unless Parliament intends to say so explicitly, and would protect private property of everyday Canadians.

These proposals are not antireconciliation. They make reconciliation more stable, more transparent and more durable at a time when many Canadians feel uncertain about where we are going. Modern treaties are too important to be carried out by implication when explicit language is available. Canada's own legal history teaches us that when treaty wording is uncertain, courts will spend years,

sometimes generations, trying to reconstruct the common intention of the parties, while communities and Ottawa are left to deal with the unexpected consequences.

Parliament still has time to reduce that uncertainty here, so let us proceed with respect: respect for the Manitoba Métis Federation, respect for other rights-bearing Métis communities, respect for indigenous rights, respect for legal certainty and respect for Canadians who deserve laws that are clear enough to understand and that promote unity, not down-the-road division.

We look forward to discussing how to improve this bill, with consideration of any amendments, in committee.

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his well-thought-out speech and for his final comment there about one of the best places, in my view, to discuss the details, which would be at committee. I am hoping the members opposite will consider letting this debate collapse today, because I do think the best opportunity to go through this in detail would be at committee, to the member's point about ensuring that the Manitoba Métis, other rights holders and all Canadians are able to express their support, provide amendments and raise any concerns they have.

Again, I hope the member opposite could speak to whether they would let the debate collapse today so we can move this to committee to be studied in more detail.

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for all her hard work on the file. It is a very difficult file on which to find the balance and everything. I will say, though, that debate on every aspect is very important. To be very blunt, I have heard from first nations in the last 48 hours that have serious concerns.

Every level of debate is important, but I do anticipate that the bill will move to committee so that those voices can also be heard in a timely manner.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech.

He spoke at length about the importance of ensuring that this treaty does not conflict with other treaties and that future treaties with other first nations and Métis nations are harmonized.

Can he elaborate on the measures he would suggest for ensuring that all first nations are respected in the treaty-making process?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, I think we have to go back to basics. Too often when it comes to indigenous relations, Inuit, Métis, and first nations alike, a lot of things are complicated. They are vastly complicated. This is a nation of many Inuit communities, many Métis communities and 600-plus recognized first nations across the country, so it is a very complex process when we are negotiating new modern treaties. That said, going back to basics includes the respect of having other first nations and indigenous groups in the conversation right from the get-go.

We hear the Liberals say this all the time. They are learning their lesson in that regard, but I think the first nations would want to be part of the conversation, in particular when it comes to historic treaties, maybe some of the modern treaties, but more the historic treaties on the Prairies, because that is where this will be interpreted to affect the most. I would like to have seen them engaged in the conversation from the get-go in a more structured way, rather than maybe a more government-defined way, a structured way defined by them.

• (1725)

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House on behalf of the people of London—Fanshawe. There is a small indigenous population that lives in London—Fanshawe.

Regarding Bill C-21, how would this treaty affect land or resource rights?

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, there are some good things about the bill, and there are some things that I think are a little too ambiguous. The first thing is that it would bring a level of certainty and new definitions to the section 35 rights of the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Red River Métis people. That is a very good thing because certainty, at the end of the day, is good for investors, good for business and good for things moving in a more structured way, in a more timely way.

However, the ambiguous nature of this means there are concerns from other indigenous groups that it is encroaching on their territory, encroaching on their space or jurisdiction. We have to hear those concerns in consideration of implementing the bill. Creating division among indigenous groups is not something the Canadian government should be striving toward, in the interest of creating business and moving this country forward.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask my hon. colleague a bit more about the concern he has about the lack of provision in the bill to safeguard the constitutionally enshrined rights of other indigenous peoples, which was something he brought up a lot. I also wanted to ask for his understanding of the term that was used in the treaty, which is “collectivity” versus “peoples”.

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, yes, I am first nation. I am a former chief from the Enoch Cree Nation. That is where my roots come from, but I also have Métis roots, to be frank. I have a Métis grandfather. It is very difficult as a member of Parliament to balance all the hats we wear and to be a Canadian, a member of Parliament, who represents everybody else beyond the distinction of indigenous peoples.

This bill is very important. It is a precedent setter when it comes to Métis governments, and it is going to go up against scrutiny and historic treaties that have not been implemented, and the honour of the Crown has not been upheld. First nations, rightly so, are of the position that they would like to see that honour upheld in consideration before anything else comes to this space. I think that discussion can line a solution. We will move forward on that.

I do think there is ambiguity in the term “collectivity”. I think it has to be better defined in consideration of other Métis groups.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was interesting listening to many of the comments members put on the record today.

There is a bit of an expectation that we would afford the opportunity to hear more comments, maybe answer some specific questions, by allowing the legislation to get to a standing committee. The time on the floor is wonderful, and we will get opportunities on third reading and so forth, but to see it go to a standing committee is really important, I think, not only to the Métis Nation, but also to Canadians and the interests of Canadians as a whole.

I would like to get the member's thoughts on the important role that the standing committee could play if we were to allow the bill to advance.

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, I agree that getting it to standing committee would be a good thing because those voices who felt they had been left out of the government processes in the lead up to this bill would have their opportunity to be heard. It is very important that we get there.

I also want to, again, acknowledge the inconsistencies when it comes to engaging those voices in consultation with the Liberal government. Bill S-2 is going through a multi-year engagement. On things like this, we hear from communities that there has been no level of engagement and consultation, and the only room left for them is through things such as standing committees.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Edmonton Northwest talked quite a bit about the ambiguity in the treaty and how that ambiguity might lead to confusion between various Métis groups.

I am wondering about the Métis Nation British Columbia. Yes, there is one, and it has jurisdiction over 30,000-plus Métis people. What assurances are there that this will not impact the very important work that they are doing in my home province?

• (1730)

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, there is language that attempts to create safeguards amongst jurisdictions. As mentioned in my speech, there is language in this treaty that acknowledges that there are other distinct collectivities and groups.

Government Orders

Given some of the precedent that has been set, I am certainly aware that the Canadian Energy Regulator is doing consultations with the Manitoba Métis Federation and arguably the jurisdiction of the B.C. Métis Nation. Those things are ambiguous and clearly not spelled out. I think the space for that dialogue needs to happen and those things need to be overcome before taking a serious run at the next steps of this bill.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are so lucky in the House to have my colleague's expertise. There are a lot of people watching from across the country who may not quite understand, because the bill is very complicated.

If he were to choose one thing in the bill that we should be focusing on that concerns him, could he mention what it is and what needs to change before we would be supportive of the bill?

Billy Morin: Mr. Speaker, currently, in 2026, as of today, I see a real concern when it comes to property rights and, in the bigger picture, when it comes to reconciliation. I would like to see some consideration of the Canadian-Métis relationship, every other Canadian considered in this and a protection of property rights, quite frankly.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

I want to pick up on a couple of points that my colleague and friend from the Conservatives raised. I believe we are at a very significant moment in time. Just yesterday, we were talking about modern treaties. We were talking about how important it is that we advance modern treaties. We have before us a modern treaty that would go a long way in dealing with an issue that has been outstanding for generations.

The member raised the issue of consultations. I have been a parliamentarian, both here in Ottawa and in the province of Manitoba, for well over three decades, close to four decades now, and I can say first-hand that, in the discussions and consultations, a great amount of effort, passion and tears have gone into trying to get the recognition. I remember during the early 1990s when Louis Riel was finally recognized as a founding father of Manitoba. Louis Riel, just two years ago, was recognized as Manitoba's first premier. The province of Manitoba is what it is today in good part because of the impact of the Métis people.

We do not have to have an absolutely perfect bill that passes today. We have the opportunity to allow the legislation to pass. Through the consultations, whether it was the Prime Minister or members of cabinet who put so much effort into what we have before us today, if there was an interest in looking into this or that and amendments were put forward to make it a healthier, stronger treaty, I can assure members that minds were open. I think the worst thing we could do would be to draw a conclusion and say it is not perfect so we will just have to wait and see. I have seen that happen in the past, which can really cause problems for legislation, and I do not want to see that with this particular piece of legislation.

I heard concerns about other Métis nations across the country. The Red River Métis Nation, from my perspective, has done its homework. Members should come to the province of Manitoba and

look at downtown Winnipeg, where there is child and family services, child care, housing and education. They are there in a very real way for the people of the Red River Métis Nation and beyond.

I was at a day care opening where individuals from the Ukrainian settlement community were contributing. The Métis Nation in Manitoba recognizes it is a better Canada if we have a strong and healthy Métis Nation. All people need to do is drive around and they will witness it first-hand, not only in the city of Winnipeg but also in the many different communities throughout the province. It is one of the great prides, and it is a growing pride within our community.

I see the legislation as a wonderful example of a modern treaty that could potentially be emulated by other first nations and Métis. It has great potential, at the very least, for Métis. I suggest that we have to look at the uniqueness of indigenous people and make adjustments, because we cannot make one fit all. At the very least, we could recognize the true value of what we are talking about today with this particular treaty and Bill C-21.

● (1735)

As I have pointed out, if we want to get a real sense of some of the things that have gone exceptionally well in the city of Winnipeg, it is there. It is tangible. I made reference to this earlier. When I think of the Red River Métis, I think of Louis Riel. He was a member of Parliament. I do not believe he was ever allowed to take his seat in Parliament. He has been an inspiration for Métis and non-Métis alike. In mid-November, November 16, I believe it was, we had the Prime Minister of Canada visit the gravesite of Louis Riel with the Métis Federation. It was a very memorable moment.

Members can think of what Louis Riel had to go through to try to get a seat in Parliament, even though he was voted in for that seat, to be able to sit in Parliament, and we have a sitting Prime Minister going to the gravesite.

I think that we are going to be able to do that, whether it is things of that nature or that recognition from the province, the hanging of his portrait as Manitoba's first premier or just recognizing the many different aspects that are here today that are tangible, where they are reforming and changing lives.

Little Stars Playhouse on Selkirk Avenue is one of the child care facilities. I was talking about getting some federal dollars, and it was having a difficult time. That was when the president made contact with Gerrie, and it was ultimately virtually resolved overnight. We can see that there are children being provided with first-class care as a result of MMF's direct involvement working with the federal government and, no doubt, the provincial government.

Government Orders

I would suggest to members that there are endless examples of what I just cited. That is why, when I take a look at the legislation, and I am very familiar with the process, as we would well know, we have an opportunity to see this potentially go to committee as early as next week. That could happen. It does not mean that one has to support the legislation. We can see it into the standing committee stage. If one has ideas that one believes could improve the legislation, I encourage members, by all means, to make those suggestions. If members feel there were not enough consultations done, let us have the standing committee invite guests to come and address the standing committee, so they can ask them the questions and get the presentations.

It would be a very significant accomplishment to be able to have the legislation passed before the end of the month. I realize it is a tall order, but it would be a nice thing to see. At the very least, what we can do is ensure that it gets to a standing committee, where we can get representatives outside of the chamber to be able to provide their thoughts on what I believe is something that is necessary, a modern treaty with the Red River Métis.

• (1740)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, I would like to thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his speech. He mentions he has been doing this for about four decades. From this side of the House, it feels like it has been eight decades of him speaking.

To get back to the issue at hand, the Liberals seem to want to push this idea that nothing should be debated in this House and everything should go right to committee. They are pushing this again and asking us to let debate collapse. I understand the sentiment of this bill, but we have seen that the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Dakota, Treaty 5 and, from Edmonton, the Otipemisiwak Métis nation have lots of issues with this bill.

Does the member for Winnipeg North not believe that those voices should be heard by way of their representatives in this House, or does he only believe in the Liberal way of pushing the bill right to committee without those voices being heard?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member brings up a valid point in terms of making sure that voices on all sides of the issue are being heard. The point I am getting at is that we are all very familiar with the finite amount of time here on the floor of the House. In allowing the bill to go to committee, we have more time for members to express themselves. The individuals that the member referenced would potentially be able to come before a committee.

There are all sorts of opportunities to provide feedback, and there is still a report stage and a third reading stage. It is not like we are surrendering a great deal in order to allow legislation to go to committee. I am not saying that we have to pass the third reading—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member in order to continue with questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

The member for Joliette—Manawan.

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to an historical issue regarding the impact on the Métis population and on Manitoba today.

The Manitoba Act established the province of Manitoba in 1870, but it was limited to a very small territory and did not get control over its natural resources, unlike British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, which both joined Confederation around the same time. Manitoba and Ontario then got into a boundary dispute over the forest. The Privy Council in London granted a large forested area to Ontario. The Privy Council would later state that it is Ontario, not Ottawa, that holds the rights to its natural resources.

What concerns does this raise for the Métis Nation and the people of Manitoba to this day?

• (1745)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I think there are many individuals, possibly even in the House, who would be better equipped to answer that specific question.

I was quite impressed with the amount of knowledge the member had on the issue in his speech, and I compliment him on that. For me, it is about recognizing the value of the legislation that we have before us on a modern treaty and advancing something that should have been advanced many years ago.

Pauline Rochefort (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's comments regarding the modern-day treaty that has been 150 years in the making. I especially appreciated hearing him describe how it has shaped the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba.

I would like to hear him speak on the sentiment from the general population in the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba regarding this modern-day treaty.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, a modern treaty, from my personal perspective, is so important because I love my city, my province and my country. In order for us to move forward and reach our potential, we need to get modern treaties in place.

All we need to do is look at the footprint. A lot of the growth and a lot of the positive things that are happening in communities today are rooted in the MMF. If we are ever going to hit our potential, these modern treaties are absolutely critical.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by congratulating President Chartrand and the Manitoba Métis Federation for all of their efforts, and the Métis community of Manitoba.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-21, an act to give effect to the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty. At its core, the bill is about something fundamental. It is about whether we, in this House, are prepared to respect what should never have been denied in the first place: the inherent right of indigenous peoples to govern themselves.

For generations, indigenous peoples in this country have fought for recognition, dignity and the ability to make decisions about our own communities, our own laws and our own futures. These are not demands. These are rights protected by the Constitution. These rights are recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. They are rights that are inherent and do not come from the Crown.

Bill C-21 seeks to give legal force to the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty. It recognizes the Manitoba Métis Federation as the government of the Red River Métis and affirms the people's authority to govern their own internal matters; to determine their citizenship; and to structure their leadership in a way that reflects their customs, traditions and priorities. This is significant. It builds on decades of advocacy, resilience and leadership by Métis people. It is part of a longer journey towards justice, recognition and the restoration of self-determination. Let me be clear: The NDP supports this journey.

We support this bill at second reading because we believe in the right to self-determination and indigenous people's ability to define our own futures. We believe that modern treaties, when done right, can be powerful tools to affirm rights, to clarify jurisdiction and to strengthen indigenous governance. However, support does not mean silence or ignoring concerns. Support does not mean we abandon our responsibility to ensure the rights of all indigenous peoples are upheld because, alongside that promise of the bill, there are also serious questions that must be addressed.

We have heard concerns from first nations, including many first nations in Manitoba, about how this treaty may impact their rights. There are concerns about land, resources, hunting, fishing and harvesting. There are concerns that decisions made here could affect relationships and responsibilities that existed long before Parliament. These concerns cannot be dismissed or rushed. They must be heard. That is why I support my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North's assertion to get this bill to the standing committee for further study.

We are proposing an amendment to the bill as well, to ensure that nothing could be construed as denying the rights of other indigenous people nor abrogating or derogating from them. This proposed amendment is justified by article 95 of the treaty, which would force indigenous peoples who believe their rights are adversely affected by the treaty to have to exhaust all appeals before the conflict can be addressed. Is it the goal of the government to hold up indigenous peoples in the courts, all the way to the Supreme Court?

If we are truly committed to reconciliation, then we must be equally committed to doing this work properly. This means listening. That means engaging in good faith. That means ensuring that one nation's recognition does not come at the expense of another's rights. Reconciliation is not a check box. It is not a slogan. It is a process rooted in respect, accountability and truth. Truth requires us to acknowledge sometimes things that are uncomfortable.

• (1750)

The government has far too often failed to uphold indigenous rights when it matters most. We have seen legislation put forward without the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples. We have seen decisions made that undermine sovereignty rather

Government Orders

than strengthen it. We have seen promises of partnership followed by actions that erode trust. When the government tells indigenous peoples to trust them on the bill before us, it is not an abstract question, it is grounded in lived experience. Trust is not given, it is earned, and it must be earned again and again through action. That is why the committee study will be crucial.

We must hear directly from indigenous people, Métis citizens, first nations and those who support this treaty, but also those who have concerns. We must create space for those voices to shape this legislation, to identify risks and to propose solutions, because getting this right matters. Getting this right will impact relationships, either positively or negatively. It matters not just for the Red River Métis, but for the broader framework of indigenous rights in this country. It matters for how treaties are understood, how jurisdictions are respected and how relationships between indigenous nations are upheld.

We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past, where decisions were imposed rather than co-developed, and where rights were ignored rather than respected. We have an opportunity here to do better and to move forward in a way that honours the inherent right to self-government, to strengthen the legal recognition of Métis governance and to ensure that the rights of all indigenous peoples are upheld, not just in principle, but in practice.

Yes, we will support the bill at second reading. We will support it, because we believe in self-determination. In fact, we believe in the right of self-determination of all peoples. We will support it because we recognize the long-standing struggle of the Red River Métis for recognition, but we also have to do our job as legislators. We have to ask hard questions. We will listen carefully. We will work to ensure this legislation reflects the voices of those it impacts.

Reconciliation demands more than words. It demands that we act with integrity, humility and honesty. It demands that we act with a clear commitment to justice. The path forward must be guided by one principle above all else: The rights, dignity and sovereignty of indigenous peoples are not negotiable. Let us move forward with that understanding. Let us do the work properly and let us ensure, when we pass legislation like Bill C-21, that we are not only recognizing rights, but truly upholding them.

Government Orders

• (1755)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the NDP's position on validating the need to allow the legislation to get to committee. I think that is a very strong, encouraging and positive word, which does not preclude everything in the legislation being ironclad.

I look forward to seeing the amendments. I encourage the member to speak within the department, and maybe do other consultations in advance, so that we get as much notice as possible in regards to her thoughts.

This was more of a comment than a question.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, no legislation ever goes to committee without critique. Committees are important to make sure we get things right, get other opinions, get expert testimony and make sure that, when the bill is actually signed off and passes royal assent, we do not end up in the courts. We need to make sure this is ironclad.

This is a big deal for Winnipeg. As the hon. member mentioned, the Manitoba Métis Federation and many other indigenous peoples in Winnipeg are building our city. We need to make sure that goes forward smoothly and without a hitch.

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in this House on behalf of the people of London—Fanshawe. There is a small indigenous population living in London—Fanshawe.

Regarding Bill C-21, there are jurisdiction concerns that the treaty lacks clear geographic limits. Would the member opposite please explain how this will affect other first nations throughout Canada?

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I think it is really clear. No legislation going forward, certainly not this treaty and certainly not the implementation bill, is without issue. All bills have amendments when they go to committee, and that would give us an opportunity to provide the clarity that is needed to help other nations, or even other Métis nations that are having difficulties with the bill, to have more assurance.

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, with whom I have had the opportunity to serve on several committees, including the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

In her speech, she noted that certain communities had concerns, particularly regarding resource development. She seemed to be saying that they still need to be listened to and still have concerns. At the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, we have often talked about the fact that indigenous and Métis women are disproportionately affected by so many issues.

How will this bill actually help indigenous and Métis women? What can my colleague propose to truly ensure that their rights are respected?

[*English*]

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, it was such a pleasure working with my hon. colleague in the status of women committee. I certainly miss being on that committee.

Part of the reason why modern treaties, when they are done right, are so important is that nations are able to determine how they wish to deal with those matters, and that includes the safety of their members. That includes women within their nation. Let us not forget that prior to colonization, we did not have a crisis of murdered and missing indigenous women, girls and diverse-gendered folks. That happened since colonization. Our communities were healthy. Asserting our sovereignty, asserting our self-determination, is a way to support healthy communities and healthy families.

• (1800)

David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in the House and speak on behalf of the citizens and residents of Calgary Signal Hill.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-21, legislation that seeks to give effect to the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty.

Let me be clear at the outset. Conservatives support reconciliation. We support the inherent rights of indigenous peoples, including Métis, first nations and Inuit communities, to self-government. We support the recognition of those rights in a manner that is respectful, inclusive and grounded in law. However, supporting reconciliation does not mean abandoning responsibility. It does not mean rushing forward with flawed legislation. It certainly does not mean ignoring the voices of those indigenous communities that are raising serious and legitimate concerns.

That is precisely what is happening with Bill C-21. This bill asks Parliament to ratify a treaty of enormous consequence, one that establishes for the first time a Métis self-government agreement of this scale. It recognizes the Manitoba Métis Federation as the exclusive representative of the Red River Métis and grants it law-making authority over matters such as citizenship, governance and internal administration. On its face, that may sound like progress, but when we examine the details, serious problems emerge, problems that cannot and must not be ignored.

First and foremost, there has been a clear and undeniable failure to consult. This treaty does not exist in a vacuum. It has implications far beyond Manitoba. The language contained within it, particularly in the preamble and key provisions, extends its potential reach across western Canada and even beyond. We see this in provisions that explicitly state that the geographic scope of the Red River Métis is not defined. We see it in language that acknowledges that Red River Métis citizens may be “located within what is now Manitoba as well as elsewhere inside and outside of Canada.” We see it in provisions that prevent any other indigenous organization from representing individuals who may be considered Red River Métis. Taken together, these clauses create ambiguity, ambiguity that has real-world consequences.

Government Orders

What has been the response from other Métis governments? They are sounding the alarm.

The Métis Nation of Ontario has warned that this treaty uses deliberate ambiguities to justify intervention in matters far outside Manitoba. It points to instances where the Manitoba Métis Federation has already sought consultation on projects in British Columbia, thousands of kilometres from the Red River.

The Métis Nation Saskatchewan has expressed concern that the treaty could allow the Manitoba Métis Federation to supersede its authority within Saskatchewan.

The Métis Nation of Alberta has gone even further, alleging that the agreement could enable the Manitoba federation to actively recruit members within Alberta, undermining existing Métis governance structures.

These are not minor disagreements. These are fundamental disputes over identity, jurisdiction and rights, yet the government is asking us to proceed as though these concerns do not exist. Reconciliation cannot be built on division. If multiple Métis governments across this country are telling us that they were not properly consulted, that their rights may be impacted and that this treaty risks overriding their authority, then we have a duty to listen.

We also have a legal duty. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and affirms the rights of indigenous peoples. The Supreme Court of Canada has made it clear that these rights are held by distinct communities, not by a single, centralized entity claiming to speak for all. In the Powley decision of that court, the court emphasized that Métis communities are diverse, with distinct histories and traditions across different regions. That principle is essential, yet this treaty risks collapsing that diversity into a single narrative, one that elevates the Red River Métis as the defining authority, potentially at the expense of other legitimate Métis communities. That is not reconciliation. That is exclusion.

• (1805)

The concerns are not limited to Métis groups alone. First nations have also raised serious objections. The Dakota Tipi First Nation and the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation have gone to court, arguing that they were not consulted and that the treaty infringes upon their rights. They have made it clear that they never ceded their ancestral lands and that any agreement affecting those lands must involve them. The Treaty 5 nations have expressed “serious concerns” about the inclusion of the Manitoba Métis Federation in decision-making processes within their territory, calling it a direct affront to their sovereignty.

These are not abstract concerns. These are constitutional issues, issues that go to the heart of the Crown's duty to consult and to accommodate, and if those duties have not been met, this treaty is vulnerable to legal challenge. In fact, it is not a question of whether there will be litigation; it is a question of how much. We have already seen similar agreements challenged in court. The Federal Court's decision in *Metis Settlements General Council v. Canada* raised concerns about overly expansive recognition that limits the Crown's ability to negotiate with other indigenous groups.

Bill C-21 appears to repeat those same mistakes. By granting exclusive recognition to the Manitoba Métis Federation and embedding that recognition within a constitutionally protected treaty, the government would effectively lock in a framework that may disadvantage other Métis communities and do so in a way that cannot easily be undone or even corrected. Once ratified, this treaty will have constitutional status under sections 25 and 35. That means it could not be unilaterally amended or revoked. Any flaws, any oversights and any failures in consultation would be frozen in place. That is not careful governance. That is recklessness.

There are also serious concerns about the scope of authority that would be granted under this treaty. The Manitoba Métis Federation would be empowered to create laws, establish institutions and even impose sanctions, including fines and imprisonment, for violations of those laws. While there are provisions that attempt to reconcile conflicts with federal law, the reality is that this would create a complex and potentially conflicting legal landscape.

Even more concerning is the implication that these laws could apply beyond Manitoba, given the treaty's refusal to define geographic boundaries and its recognition of citizens located across Canada. This raises fundamental questions about jurisdiction, enforcement and the rule of law. Could a government created under this treaty exercise authority over individuals in another province? How would conflicts between provincial laws and Métis laws be resolved? What mechanisms would ensure accountability and consistency? These questions remain unanswered.

There are also fiscal implications that deserve scrutiny. The treaty would commit Canada to ensuring that the Manitoba Métis Federation has the financial capacity to meet its expenditure needs. It contemplates ongoing transfer payments and future agreements on taxation, yet we have little clarity on the long-term costs, the accountability mechanisms or the impact on other indigenous communities seeking similar arrangements. At a time when Canadians are already facing economic uncertainty and headwinds, Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that any new fiscal commitments are transparent, sustainable and fair. That has not been demonstrated here.

Finally, I want to address a broader concern, one that goes to the legitimacy of this agreement. The Manitoba Métis Federation is incorporated as a legal entity, MMF Inc. While that may be appropriate for administrative purposes, it raises important questions about the nature of this treaty. A treaty in the constitutional sense is meant to be a nation-to-nation agreement. It reflects a relationship between distinct peoples, not between the Crown and a corporate body. By structuring this agreement through an incorporated entity, the government risks blurring that distinction and undermining the very principles it claims to uphold.

Government Orders

• (1810)

None of this is to deny the importance of recognizing Métis self-government, a goal we all share in the House, but recognition must be implemented effectively. It must be inclusive, be legally sound and reflect the rights and voices of all affected communities. Bill C-21 as currently drafted would fail on all three counts. It would exclude key stakeholders, introduce legal ambiguity, and risk deepening divisions within and between indigenous communities. That is why Conservatives cannot support the bill in its current form.

We are calling on the government to do the responsible thing: to pause, listen and engage in meaningful consultation with all affected parties. Let us bring this bill to committee; hear from Métis governments across the country, first nation leaders, legal experts and those whose rights may be impacted; and do the hard work of getting this right, because reconciliation is not achieved through short-cuts. It is built through trust, dialogue and respect. Canadians expect us to uphold these principles. Indigenous communities deserve nothing less.

For those reasons, I urge all members of the House to oppose Bill C-21 in its current form.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said to let us get it to committee. That is one encouraging remark I heard in his comments.

The issue of membership comes up. I think of someone who is very proud of his or her Red River Métis nation heritage and, in fact, of their core identity. In order to identify themselves as Red River Métis, a proud man or woman, they do not have to live in the city of Winnipeg or in rural Manitoba. There are individuals who live outside those areas but want citizenship in the MMF.

The reason I say this is that if members have issues surrounding things of that nature, the best place for us to be able to deal with them is at committee, and the member said he would be open to the bill's going to committee. That is why I say that aspect is encouraging. We are not saying that it has to pass second reading unanimously. We are suggesting that we allow it to get to committee so we can hear feedback and get answers

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the advantages of getting the bill to a standing committee sooner rather than later.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, fundamentally, of course, our committee process in the House is for doing that, to take the opportunity to hear from individuals who can provide experience, expertise and knowledge. The process is intended to refine and improve legislation. Certainly I think that is a requirement in this case.

I express only my disappointment that the initial bill as presented to the House has not incorporated more of that consideration, more of those voices. When we in the opposition can locate those parties that say they have expressed these things to the government yet they are not reflected in legislation, it moves the starting point that much farther back. Can this be improved in committee as we support the general goal? Yes, there is a lot of work to be done there, and I look forward to the House's accomplishing its objectives.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech.

From what I understood from his speech, there was not enough consultation to really ensure that the agreement does not take rights away from other Métis communities or other first nations.

Does my colleague not think that the bill could be amended to leave room for future agreements in order to respect the rights of all Métis communities?

[*English*]

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, it certainly does appear that there are voices that have stated that they have not been consulted, so whatever exact process was undertaken, it appears to have come up short at this point in time.

To the extent that additional voices need to be heard, it is up to the proponents of the bill to determine the best way to do that, to bring information to the House and to satisfy the House that those parties have been duly and appropriately consulted, not just out of legal and moral obligations but also out of the obligation of sound judgment that the House must use to bring legislation to our country as a whole.

When a group such the Manitoba Métis Federation is to enter into a historic agreement with the Government of Canada with far-reaching, important implications, we have to get it right.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very concerning when a bill such as this one comes forward and there is so much dissent against it, yet government representatives, MPs, are wondering why we are bringing forward concerns. That is definitely why we are here.

Again, there have been first nations and Métis governments raising concerns, including the Dakota nation, arguing that a failure to consult violates constitutional duties. Treaty 5 nations object, and some first nations say that the MMF participation in government oversteps jurisdiction.

I could keep reading the list, but basically I want to ask this of my fellow MP: What needs to change? It seems as though a lot needs to change. What should we be worrying about when there is so much dissent against the bill?

Private Members' Business

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, undoubtedly, the issue of consultation is extremely important. Again, the greater the magnitude is of the legislation, its impacts and the changes it would effect, the greater the necessity for broad consultation is. I think this would be obvious to anyone giving it some consideration. Clearly, consultation cannot be selective. It is not a process of calling the people who may support one's position, those with whom one is friendly, and seeking only that input. Consultation needs to be broad, and it needs to consider the various parties that would be affected by the legislation that is proposed.

As I said earlier, when we in the opposition have been able to identify groups that have spoken out in opposition to this legislation on the basis of a failure to effectively consult, it is difficult for us to understand how the government could be satisfied with the work it has done to bring the legislation forward. It seems obvious to me that when groups speak out to say they have not been consulted on this, the obvious answer would be to consult with them, to hear what their perspectives are, to understand why they feel they would be impacted, and then to undertake the duty to consult.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a friend pointed out to me that there is no provision in Bill C-21 to safeguard the constitutional rights of other peoples that may be compromised. What are my hon. colleague's thoughts on this?

[*English*]

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, that is definitely a question of concern. It is one of the problems with the legislation in its current form: simply that the extent of the impacts the legislation would have are not completely understood. As I mentioned, once this were enshrined as a Government of Canada treaty, any kind of changes or adjustments would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make, so we need to understand.

It is not always easy to look into the future. If anybody in the House today has a good crystal ball, I would be happy to borrow it from time to time, but legal scholars, people in government and people with expertise in certain areas are entrusted with that task all the time. It would be the purpose of committee to get information from people who can project what the impact of the legislation would be, based on their own experiences and on their knowledge. We need to draw on that.

It is our view, as the Conservative Party, that the task was not undertaken fully and completely. Instead, we have been left with a bill that is not fully ready for passage before the House. To return to some of those processes to improve the legislation is our goal.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1820)

[*English*]

LIVING DONOR RECOGNITION MEDAL ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-234, An Act respecting the establishment and award of a Living Donor Recognition Medal, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: 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.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that it pass on division.

(Motion agreed to)

Ziad Aboultaif moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today for the final time in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-234. When passed, this bill will pave the way for the creation of the living donor recognition medal within the Canadian honours system. This bill has been supported by all parties, and I am extremely grateful for the unanimous and strong support. I know there is significant interest in getting this initiative under way. The sooner we can get this bill to the Senate, the better. The good news is what we have heard tonight. I thank members for all the support on all the sides, especially the government side.

I am extremely grateful to the following members of Parliament who graciously traded their coveted spots in the lineup so that I could move this debate up six weeks to this day. I thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George, the member for Lanark—Frontenac and the member for Newmarket—Aurora for making these critical trades with me. We now have the opportunity to get this bill to the Senate before the summer. Like donors, they received nothing in return for their gift except the knowledge that they did the right thing. They took action that will save a life and send a strong signal to those around them that organ and tissue donation is a significant and altruistic gift. I cannot thank them enough.

This bill is jointly seconded by members from all provinces across Canada and demonstrates the need for life-saving transplants in all corners of this great nation. I have spoken about the importance of living donors many times, and I know others have too, but I want to make some remarks about how these life-saving transplants impact those around the recipients.

Private Members' Business

When we waited for nine years for my son Tyler to get his transplant, it transformed our lives and his, and I know it was especially difficult for his brother. I know it is the same for thousands of other families awaiting that special phone call to say they have an organ to transplant. To ensure patients are available for a transplant, they must remain within an hour of the hospital at all times. This is much harder than it sounds. It is almost like house arrest. Families cannot take vacations together. Families cannot travel to other cities over the holidays to see relatives. Kids cannot join sports teams that play outside the city. In our case, Tyler could not visit his grandparents overseas for a decade, and we had to forget about overnight camps, out-of-town school trips or even sleepovers. There was constant fear that the call would come and we could not get there in time.

In this situation, every night, parents go to bed making sure the phone is ready. Every morning, they wake up making sure that they did not miss a call. The accumulative stress is unimaginable. It determines where one works or if one accepts a job because travel may be involved. Parents must forget about a few glasses of wine at dinner because they may have to drive to the hospital. It has an impact on every part of the life of the parents and their families.

All parents strive to treat their kids equally and give them all the same opportunities, but when someone in the family needs a transplant, it makes it so difficult. The days and weeks parents spend at the hospital with one child means they are not always there for the others. It is tough on everyone, but it has to be done. When the transplant comes, it is a new lease on life for the recipient and the family as a whole. Everyone gets to start living again.

We need to bring that relief and joy to more families more often. This is why the living donor recognition medal is so important. It is to raise awareness and education, in the hopes that more people get those transplants sooner.

The bill has returned from committee stage when it received a number of friendly amendments. The amendments proposed by the government enhance the bill, strengthen its objective and make the intentions of Parliament clear. I thank the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada for his efforts to make this bill a reality. I also want to thank Terence Scheltema for his professional approach and hard work with great communication skills in working across party lines to get this bill to this stage. Terence showed unique skills in handling this private member's bill from the beginning, when this was an idea, to become a reality now.

This is National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week across Canada. This designation made by Parliament was the result of the efforts of Liberal member of Parliament Dan McTeague in 1997, 29 years ago. Can members imagine if we could get this medal ready for presentation on the 30th anniversary next year?

• (1825)

Next week, the deadline for taxes comes for Canadians across Canada. For that first time, in Alberta and British Columbia, tax filers will be able to indicate that they want to become an organ and tissue donor through their tax forms. This was made possible because of my former Conservative colleague Len Webber's efforts in 2021. When Ontario added the question to its tax forms in 2022, it resulted in 2.45 million people saying they wanted to be a donor. I

expect a couple of million more Canadians will add their names in Alberta and British Columbia this year.

We can all make a difference in the lives of others. We can all leave this place better than we found it, and we can all help our fellow Canadians. It is in this spirit that I put this bill forward, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

As this is the last time I get to rise on my bill, I want to thank everyone again for their incredible support and encouragement. It truly means a lot to me and those awaiting a life-saving transplant.

I know there have been discussions about this bill in the past. I am thankful for the support. I welcome continuing working on these efforts in the Senate to make this a reality.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member for the manner in which he has identified an issue, he has stuck with the issue and he has garnered the support of virtually every member of the House of Commons.

I know, no matter what region of the nation we are in, people are genuinely concerned about organ donation. It is more of a comment than a question. I want to thank all those who were involved in making this particular legislation possible.

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I also thank the hon. member for his help and co-operation. The minister and the minister's team were so helpful in getting this common-sense bill through. It is about Canadians. It is about helping every Canadian. My family had to live through this for 20 years, and we know how much of a difference that makes. The bottom line here is that when we work together, we can make the impossible possible. This why we are here tonight.

• (1830)

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his work on this matter. I had the opportunity to speak at an earlier stage of his bill and took the chance to highlight Quebec's pioneering role in organ donation. More specifically, I outlined the history of Transplant Québec.

How does my colleague view this alignment and the fact that people outside Quebec will finally be able to share in Quebec's experience, enabling them to benefit from the improvements in these life-saving transplants?

[English]

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her speech at the second reading stage, as well as for reminding me about Quebec. As a family, we benefited in 2003 when we got a last-minute organ transplant from Quebec. I say that with a lot of pride, and I say that because I am very thankful for that opportunity. Quebec showed us the right example at the right time and will continue to do so.

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for introducing this bill. I had the pleasure of speaking to the bill through its stages and supporting it. I looked forward to seeing it come through the committee stage. What really took me aback during this whole process was how many people reached out to me to say that this was so long overdue.

I really do want to thank the member for introducing this bill, for sticking with it and carrying this through. It is encouraging to hear that, from across the aisle, there is overall support in the House. It is kind of a good day in this Parliament.

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my hon. colleague. He is the shadow minister for health on the Conservative side. His guidance, his help, his wisdom and his direction helped me a lot to navigate this bill through. I am thankful for both his effort and his team's effort.

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really want to say that I commend the member's approach. I know how passionate he is. I worked through it the last time with a previous Liberal member who was working very hard on this bill. It has come a long way and I am happy to see this.

I want to ask the member a question. This is also an awareness point of view, that all Canadians can now contribute to saving lives. Can you elaborate on that a bit?

The Deputy Speaker: I cannot elaborate on it, but I will let the member for Edmonton Manning elaborate on it.

Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with the hon. member. We travelled together on an international development mission to Nicaragua.

Yes, she is right. Awareness is the whole spirit of this bill. If we keep this in front of Canadians every day, that opportunity is going to encourage Canadians and educate them more on it. Not every family has to live through this to be able to learn how important it is to have a transplant and to have the organ at the right time. We are doing everything in our capacity to make this a reality, to bring that in front of Canadians, not just once every year or two, but sometimes on a daily basis. This bill will probably bring those opportunities in front of every Canadian to make sure we learn and we know about organ donation every day.

Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-234, the living donor recognition medal act, and I am so honoured to do so at its

Private Members' Business

third reading here in the chamber before it moves to the Senate and, hopefully, soon becomes law in this land. It is with great honour that I stand here today to speak to an issue that continues to impact Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Across boundaries, cities, provinces and parties, Canadians know the importance of helping each other.

I want to begin by acknowledging the member for Edmonton Manning. This bill is not a political exercise for my colleague; it is personal. It is the legislative expression of a father's love, a family's faith and many years of walking hospital hallways and learning first-hand what it means to wait for the call that may or may not come. I thank my colleague for his advocacy of this bill.

In 2003, the member for Edmonton Manning entered an operating room and gave part of his own liver so that his son could live. It is not a small thing. It is an act of extraordinary courage, of a father who looked at the risk of his own life and decided without hesitation that his son's life would come first. Thanks to that gift, in part, and subsequent transplants, his son is alive today. That is what living donation looks like. That is who this medal would be for.

I want to speak today not only in support of the bill in abstract but also on behalf of a constituent in my riding whose story reminds me every day why legislation like this matters. My constituent's name is Jason. Jason is 54 years old and lives in Georgetown with his loving wife Angela and their three rambunctious dogs. He is a pipe welder. He loves hockey and pickleball, but he has not been able to play for a while.

Despite no known health issues and living a healthy lifestyle, Jason was first diagnosed with a fatty liver about 10 years ago. It progressively worsened year after year. When he developed cirrhosis of the liver some four years ago, it was verified from blood work that he had PSC, primary sclerosing cholangitis. PSC is an infection that attacks the inner and outer liver bile ducts, causing a blockage of bile to form inside the liver. With each occurrence, this weakens the liver, leading to severe liver damage.

When Jason told me about his PSC, I was struck by a rare coincidence, as my good friend and colleague, and long-time lawyer in my hometown of Milton, Ontario, Lorne Greenwood, also suffered from this rare condition. Lorne was fortunate to receive a full liver transplant from a deceased donor over 20 years ago. Lorne is a proud advocate of organ donation, since the gift of his donor saved his life and kept him here and healthy to raise his two daughters, as well as continue to serve his community through his professional work and volunteerism. In short, the donor gave not only to Lorne but also to our entire community. I told Lorne about my constituent Jason. It brought Lorne back to that time of uncertainty that, thanks to his donor, became a time of indescribable gratitude.

Private Members' Business

Just last October, Jason was placed on the liver transplant list. He is searching for a living donor who can give him the gift of time, of more mornings, of more seasons and of more years with the people he loves. I have spoken with Jason. I have sat with his family. Through them, I have learned that the question of whether Canada should do more to honour living donors is not an abstract policy question. It is a moral one. This bill answers that question with a clear and resolute response.

Let us look at what the data tell us. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, as of December 31, 2024, there were 4,044 Canadians on transplant wait-lists. Of the 691 Canadians removed from the transplant wait-list in 2024, nearly one-third had died while waiting.

Just a few weeks ago, on April 7, we observed Green Shirt Day in honour of Logan Boulet, the Humboldt Bronco who tragically lost his life in that terrible bus crash in 2018, but his parents donated his organs so that six lives could live on. They did so because Logan told them that he was registering as an organ donor and that he was inspired by his coach and mentor, Ric Suggitt, who had died the previous year and was also an organ donor, saving six lives.

We are currently in the midst of National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week, which honours Canadians who have chosen to donate life-saving organs and tissue and recognizes transplant recipients embracing their second chance at life. By observing Organ Donation Awareness Month in April, communities nationwide come together to celebrate the generosity of donors and encourage more people to make the life-saving decision to register.

In Canada, almost 90% of Canadians say they support organ donation, but only 32% have actually registered the intent to donate. Living donation, where an individual can donate a kidney, part of a liver or part of a lung while they are still very much alive, has the potential to close the gap significantly. The ability of a healthy body to regenerate its liver, function fully with a single kidney or short a portion of a lung is nothing short of miraculous. However, to think that so few people seriously consider giving this life-giving gift is tragic. In the case of a liver donor, after they donate a portion of their liver, the remaining liver regenerates, grows back to nearly its original size and performs its usual functions.

• (1835)

There may be those of us who would contemplate becoming a living donor, recognizing that undertaking this act of altruism reduces the wait time for patients in need of a life-saving organ, like a kidney, partial liver or partial lung, but we may be apprehensive about the process, the financial burden through time off work or very practical things. For example, by agreeing to become a living organ donor, donors travel to and from a transplant hospital for a variety of tests and surgery, which may result in financial loss. However, some provinces offer a living organ donor expense reimbursement program, which reimburses some out-of-pocket expenses and makes it possible to be a living donor even when living far away from the recipient. The program is designed to remove financial barriers and increase the number of potential donors.

While Canada's provinces run our organ donation system, there is a role for federal government as well. From 2018 to 2024, Health Canada and its partners led and successfully completed the Organ

Donation and Transplantation Collaborative, with implementation of the pan-Canadian governance body for organ donation and transplantation. This initiative continues to make improvements to system performance for better patient outcomes.

The member for Edmonton Manning said it plainly in his sponsor speech: Most of the people on wait-lists today could be saved by a living donor. That is a profound statement. It means that the answer is not only in our hospitals; it is in our communities, our neighbourhoods, our families and our co-workers. It is in the decision that an ordinary Canadian makes, after learning about living donation, to ask, "Could I be someone's second chance? Maybe I am someone's only chance." That is exactly why recognition matters. It is why this medal matters.

Canada has a long and proud tradition of using national honours to signal to citizens what we value as a society. We give medals for bravery. We give medals for service. We give medals for artistic achievement and athletic excellence, but until now, we have had no formal recognition for someone who undergoes surgery voluntarily, at personal risk, with no expectation of compensation, to give another human being the organ they need to survive.

Bill C-234 would change that. The living donor recognition medal would be a national honour awarded to Canadians who donate an organ to a fellow Canadian while still living. If the bill passes, Canada would become only the second country in the world to formally include living donors in its national honours system. That is something to be proud of. That is a nation-building issue in the truest sense.

A medal tells a story. It changes a culture. It makes living donation visible in a way that has not yet been seen. It says to every Canadian, "This is something extraordinary people do. This is something you can do. You can be extraordinary through selflessly sharing a vital part of yourself with someone who needs it direly." The bill generates conversation simply by existing.

I also want to commend the member for Edmonton Manning for the way he has pursued this work. He has done so with patience, with persistence and with a generosity of spirit that is characteristic of his approach to public life. He has noted on the record that he believes in working across party lines whenever possible and that when we work together, we get more done for Canadians. This bill is a testament to that belief. It has received support from multiple parties in this chamber, because the cause of saving lives does not belong to any one political tradition.

I think about my colleague across the aisle, who walked into that hospital in 2003 and gave a part of himself so his son could grow up. I think about the unnamed donors who followed, strangers who could not have known about the member's son but whose families made the decision in a time of grief to give part of their loved one so that others may go on. I think about the hundreds of living donors who make the same choice every single year in every province, town and riding, with no fanfare, no recognition and no medal, but we can help. A medal is a small gesture in one sense, but what it represents, the gratitude of a nation and the recognition of something rare and precious in the human spirit, is not small at all.

Jason tells me that once his health improves, after the donor and transplant that he prays for make him healthy again, he hopes to return to the hockey rink, to the pickleball court and to walking those dogs with his wife, and to get back to his work. The person who can make that happen for Jason is out there. That person could be watching this speech. That person could be the first recipient of the living donor medal that my colleague has conceptualized and now presents to this House. For Jason, and for every Canadian sitting by the phone tonight waiting for a call, every day that we delay is a day that matters.

I urge all members to vote in favour of this bill, which truly emanates the Canadian spirit of selflessness.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-234, which seeks to create a living donor recognition medal.

I want to start by calling attention to my colleague from Edmonton Manning, who donated part of his liver to his son. An act of such profound compassion commands respect. For a living person to donate an organ is a big deal. It is rare, demanding and most of all, it can change a life.

The Bloc Québécois will vote for this bill. However, certain things need to be put into perspective. Long before this bill came along, Quebec had already taken the lead in organ donations and transplants. The first kidney transplant in Canada was performed in Montreal way back in 1958. In 1968, the country's first heart transplant was also performed in Montreal. Quebec is therefore a pioneer in the field and continues to play an important role to this day.

This role does not only involve medical advances. It is also about collective choices, a desire to organize its society and establish strong institutions. Take, for example, Transplant Québec. This organization was born out of a very real need. As transplants became more common, there was a need to improve the coordination of organ donation, removal and allocation. The work was done over time. It was built up. It was structured. Today, Transplant Québec plays a key role in coordinating organ donation and managing the wait list. That is an essential role. This is diligent work, carried out with compassion and with expertise developed here at home. In other words, Quebec did not just innovate. It built a successful model.

Private Members' Business

That is why the Bloc Québécois finds it unfortunate that the bill fails to mention Quebec's contribution in this regard. We can support a measure of recognition like this one, while remembering one simple thing: Donations can now be made within an organized framework because a system was built patiently over the years.

We must not lose sight of what is important. Behind all this, there are still people who are waiting for transplants. There are families living in uncertainty, and very often, difficult decisions are made in extremely trying times.

Organ donation is not just a medical issue. It is a matter of trust, support and organization. Indeed, a medal is a fine token of recognition. It is perfectly legitimate to want to highlight such exceptional acts. However, it is important to look at the bigger picture. We need to recognize the work of all those who make this possible on a daily basis: medical teams, coordinators and organizations. I am thinking of Transplant Québec, Héma-Québec, Canadian Blood Services and all those who often work far from the spotlight but whose role is essential. They are the ones who make it possible to save lives. That is why it will be important to hear from these organizations in committee to ensure that this initiative reflects the reality on the ground and supports what already exists.

Ultimately, the question is simple. Do we want to recognize the gesture or do we want to encourage more people to participate?

The Bloc Québécois will support this bill, but we want to remind the House of the following: Recognizing donors is important. Recognizing the role of Quebec and its institutions is also important. Ensuring that more donations are made and more lives are saved is even more important. Let us not forget that this can happen to anyone and any family.

On a more personal note, I have signed my organ donor card. I urge my colleagues to do the same. It is a simple gesture, but it can save a life.

• (1845)

[*English*]

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today in support of Bill C-234, introduced by my colleague and friend from Edmonton Manning. This is a bill I often speak about when I am home in Long Range Mountains and I am asked to share about my work in Ottawa, not only because it concerns heroic Canadians, but also because it demonstrates what can be achieved when members work collaboratively for the benefit of remarkable Canadians we have the honour of representing, individuals who make tremendous sacrifices for others.

It highlights Canadians who make an extraordinary decision to give a part of themselves so that someone else can live. It also brings awareness about the importance of living organ donation.

Today, I would like to begin with a story about two of these incredible Canadians that begins with a close family friend, Robin.

Private Members' Business

Robin's journey began when he was in his twenties. He was diagnosed with diabetes and, years later, learned that his kidneys were beginning to fail. Robin's illness was severe. For as long as I knew him, he spent much of his life unwell before eventually passing away. However, what always stood out to me was that, despite his illness, he remained the funniest person I knew. He never focused on his illness but instead lived his life to the fullest.

When our families would visit, we would all be crowded around him, waiting for the next funny story he would tell us. We hung on to his every word. He loved to laugh. In addition to his remarkable sense of humour, during his journey, like many Canadians with complex health challenges, he did not stop. He always kept going. He pushed through fatigue. He continued running the family business and focused on providing for his family.

Over time, it became clear he would need dialysis. For a year, Robin travelled back and forth to the hospital for treatment. Anyone who has experienced or witnessed dialysis knows how demanding it is physically, emotionally and mentally. It was during that time that his brother Dan stepped forward. Dan went through testing, hoping he might be a match, and he was. Without hesitation, he made the decision to donate one of his kidneys to his brother. That decision changed Robin's life but, as we know, transplantation is not without risk.

After a few months, the transplanted kidney began to fail. It was not rejection, something many are familiar with, but instead the reactivation of a virus that had been dormant. Within less than a year, the transplant had failed entirely. Robin was forced to return to dialysis, this time at home, using a hemodialysis unit.

His story does not end there. Seven years later, another person stepped forward, his sister, Mollie. Like her brother before her, Mollie went through testing. Like Dan, she made the decision to give a part of herself so that her brother could live a fuller, healthier life.

Both Dan and Mollie put their lives on hold: Their work, their routines and their responsibilities all took a back seat. They underwent major surgery and accepted real risks. They faced recovery periods that were not easy and yet they never described what they did as a sacrifice. They saw it as an act of love for their brother.

That is what living organ donation is. It is selflessness in its purest form, choosing to put someone else's life ahead of one's own comfort.

Thanks to his sister's donation, Robin was given a new lease on life. He was able to travel and spend time camping with his grandchildren. He was able to enjoy the moments that matter most, moments that might not have been possible otherwise. He remained deeply grateful, and his family remains deeply grateful, not just for the outcome but for the generosity that made it possible. The transplant gave Robin years of his life without dialysis, and that meant a much fuller life.

Robin's story is powerful but, unfortunately, it is not unique. Across Canada, there are thousands of similar stories of families, friends and even strangers stepping forward to give the gift of life, and yet, despite the profound impact of these acts, we do not have a formal national way to recognize living donors.

• (1850)

That is what Bill C-234 seeks to change. It proposes the creation of a living donor recognition medal to be included within Canada's honours system. It is not about reward, but about raising awareness and acknowledgement, saying in a meaningful and lasting way that what these individuals have done matters not just to the recipients, but to all of us as parliamentarians and Canadians. When someone steps forward as a living donor, they are not only saving a life, but also strengthening families, supporting communities and easing the burden on our health care system. They are quite simply giving a gift that cannot be measured.

Next week is National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week in Canada, a time to reflect on the importance of donation, to have conversations with loved ones and to consider how each one of us can make a difference. It is also a time to recognize those who already have.

Bill C-234 allows us to do that tangibly. It allows us as parliamentarians to come together and affirm something important, that acts of extraordinary generosity should not go unnoticed. It would be deeply meaningful to the Canadians who give so much of themselves to be recognized by the country they have helped strengthen.

Robin's story and the actions of his brother Dan and his sister Mollie remind us of what is possible when compassion leads the way. This bill is about honouring that compassion, ensuring that stories like theirs are not only told but remembered, and encouraging more Canadians to consider how they too might one day give the gift of life.

I am proud to support this bill and have this opportunity.

• (1855)

[*Translation*]

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of Bill C-234, the living donor recognition medal act. This bill recognizes the courage, generosity and profound humanity of Canadians who choose to donate an organ during their lifetime. It is truly the gift of life.

I would like to begin by thanking the member for Edmonton Manning for his bill. Among other things, it is an important example of MPs working together across party lines. It shows that, when we set partisanship aside, we can work together to honour the best of Canada. I was particularly touched by this bill on a personal level. It reminds us that behind every donation lies a human story; a decision marked by courage, altruism and a deep commitment to others.

Private Members' Business

Every year, thousands of Canadians who are dealing with a potentially life-threatening illness are waiting for an organ transplant. Too many of them will not get one in time. The preamble of Bill C-234 clearly describes this reality. It says that “thousands of Canadians are currently awaiting life-saving organ transplants” and that living donors make these transplants possible.

[*English*]

Organ and tissue donation is one of the most selfless acts a person can undertake. It is not compelled, does not offer material reward and often carries medical risk. Living donors step forward not for recognition, not for reward, but because they believe in the value of another human life. As the bill notes, they often do so at personal risk and with no expectation of reward. Their actions save lives and strengthen our communities by reminding us of the compassion and solidarity that define Canada at its best.

These are not small virtues, but the very qualities that strengthen our social fabric. When a Canadian chooses to donate an organ, they are saving a life. They are also helping families stay whole. They remind us and communities across the country of what is possible when people act with extraordinary kindness. Their actions really inspire us. They set an example for all of us in this House and for all Canadians.

Canadians are rightly proud of those who perform these acts of extraordinary generosity. To better demonstrate this pride, Bill C-234 proposes a formal mechanism, a national honour, to ensure their contributions are publicly recognized and celebrated.

[*Translation*]

This is a thoughtful and meaningful initiative. I want to thank the sponsor for bringing forward a bill that shines a light on the silent heroes among us.

Medals play an important role in our society. They are not merely symbolic objects. They represent incredible stories, sacrifices and contributions. They unite people by creating a shared sense of recognition and pride. They also shine a spotlight on actions that often take place in the shadows. By publicly honouring these contributions, they promote a sense of collective belonging. They inspire other Canadians to get involved, showing that every action, no matter how humble, can have a profound and lasting impact.

[*English*]

The King Charles III Coronation Medal was worn with pride by many Canadians. I even received a King Charles III Coronation Medal. It served not only as a recognition of service but also as a unifying symbol, bringing together individuals from different regions, backgrounds and professions under a shared sense of national appreciation.

These honours create a shared moment of pride, not just for recipients but also for their families, their communities and the country as a whole. They reinforce a collective identity grounded in generosity, service and compassion, and they remind us that acts of selflessness are not only worthy of recognition but are also foundational to who we are as a society.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

I support the objectives of this bill, and I am pleased with the amendments that were drafted in collaboration with the bill's sponsor and adopted by the Standing Committee on Health.

The bill uses a very broad definition of “organ”. This definition explicitly includes all human tissue and encourages us to think more broadly about the spectrum of donation in Canada. Today, living donors provide not only organs, but also blood and bone marrow. That is why I am pleased that this committee review has also expanded the pool of eligible recipients for this medal to include bone marrow donors as well as blood donors who have demonstrated a significant and long-standing commitment to blood donation.

[*English*]

Consider bone marrow donation for a Canadian diagnosed with leukemia or other blood cancer. I must give a shout-out to my old best friend from undergrad, who passed away from leukemia at the young age of 25 and should have been in the House of Commons. We were studying political science together. This speech goes out to Damon Hartung and to all other victims of leukemia. Finding a match is often extraordinarily difficult. Canadians who step forward are volunteering to help a stranger survive. Those donors also give the gift of life, yet awareness remains very low. Many Canadians do not realize how pressing the need for bone marrow donors truly is, nor do they realize how straightforward the process of registering as a potential donor can be.

Similarly, blood donation, especially regular, repeat donation, is essential to the health of Canadians. We think of the Canadian Blood Services, which recognizes the selfless act of donation through the donor recognition medal, which is offered upon request and highlights the generosity and sacrifice of donors while also creating an opportunity to celebrate life-saving contributions. The Canadian Blood Services also acknowledges this altruistic commitment.

However, the bill would go further by making this recognition official at the national level, affirming that these acts are not only appreciated but are also essential to our society. These donors are also unsung heroes. Their contributions may be quieter, occurring many times over many years. Some people choose to donate plasma or platelets on a schedule that requires ongoing commitment and sacrifice. While blood donors do not face the same medical risks as organ donors, the cumulative impact on regular blood and plasma donors is immeasurable.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[Translation]*

I recognize the non-partisan spirit that animates the sponsor of Bill C-234, and I am glad that we were able to make the bill stronger together. It is kicking off a national conversation on how to honour the many donors who are saving lives. It will raise public awareness, support donor recruitment efforts and ultimately increase the number of Canadians who decide to donate organs.

This bill is a tribute to the people who voluntarily make organ donations to help others when they need help the most. It shows that Parliament and all Canadians value the contributions of living donors. Through non-partisan collaboration, we can ensure that this bill passes and that the important role of so many Canadians who choose to make organ donations gets recognition.

In conclusion, I support the objectives of Bill C-234, and I encourage all members of the House to do the same. Let us honour the people who show up when times are tough, who represent the best of what we are and who remind us that compassion is one of this country's greatest strengths for good. The time has come to honour the people who give the gift of life.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Manning has up to five minutes for his right of reply.

Ziad Aboutaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for all the speeches. They have added so much value to the conversation on an important bill. Beyond how much this bill means to me personally, I think it is going to mean a lot to many Canadians now and in the future. This is what we are trying to do here tonight.

I am thankful for all the co-operation from all sides, from all provinces and from all MPs. This effort belongs to everyone who helped facilitate this bill getting to this stage. Hopefully, we will pass it tonight and let it go to the Senate. That would be the greatest gift and the greatest achievement of my almost 11 years here.

I thank everyone.

● (1905)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the 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.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that it pass unanimously.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I presented the health minister with peer-reviewed evidence that showed drug consumption sites do nothing to fix the addictions crisis. In fact, ditching them leads to better outcomes for those suffering from addictions, yet the minister is doubling down on a policy that is not delivering results.

Will the minister admit that this approach is failing and commit today to a clear plan, with timelines, that prioritizes treatment and recovery over maintaining the status quo?

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's drug crisis continues to take far too many lives, and it is having devastating impacts on families and communities across the country. It is a complex public health and public safety challenge that requires working with those directly impacted to achieve a comprehensive and evidence-based response that includes prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery.

[Translation]

Since 2017, the federal government has taken significant steps and invested more than \$1.2 billion to support a wide range of initiatives aimed at addressing the drug crisis. Through the Canadian drugs and substances strategy and the Government of Canada's border plan, Canada is implementing a comprehensive approach to reduce substance use and related harm, prioritizing public health while protecting public safety.

As part of the strategy, Health Canada provides funding to governments and community organizations across Canada through the substance use and addictions program. This program supports innovative, evidence-based initiatives in the areas of substance use prevention, harm reduction and treatment tailored to local needs.

[English]

Communities and organizations that are approved for funding under SUAP's terms and conditions and eligible expenditures deliver project activities to respond to their specific local needs and circumstances.

It is important to note that harm reduction is just one component of our comprehensive approach to saving lives and keeping communities safe. It complements prevention, treatment and recovery projects to address substance-use issues.

Our government supports harm reduction initiatives when these activities are part of evidence-based projects aimed at reducing substance-related harms, such as overdose and disease transmission.

[Translation]

Indeed, evidence shows that harm reduction measures help reduce infections and injuries associated with the sharing or use of dangerous substances. These measures save lives by reducing the risk of fatal overdoses and limiting the transmission of infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C. These local projects also serve as essential points of contact with health services, treatment and social supports.

● (1910)

[English]

We will continue to take a balanced and evidence-based approach that saves lives, supports pathways to treatment and recovery, and keeps communities safe across Canada.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the member across the way did not answer my question, so I will I ask a very simple question.

Does the member opposite think that smoking fentanyl next to a day care is safe, yes or no?

Annie Koutrakis: Mr. Speaker, our response to the drug crisis is grounded in evidence, compassion and a commitment to saving lives. Through the substance use and addictions program, we empower those on the front lines, such as the provinces, municipalities, indigenous governments and community leaders, to implement a balanced approach that includes prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery. While the federal government provides funding, it does not deliver these services directly.

Decisions about specific local initiatives are made by the communities and local organizations that best understand their unique realities. Canadians expect an approach that addresses the root causes of addiction while also preventing immediate harm such as fatal overdoses and the spread of disease.

This comprehensive approach helps ensure that public funds are used effectively to support safer, healthier outcomes for Canadians struggling with substance use.

THE ECONOMY

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the state of our Canadian economy. Let me first state that the entrepreneurial spirit of Canadians will never dim. As someone who came to Canada to help build businesses, I know how thriving an economy this country can have. In 2014, newspapers around the world declared that the middle class in Canada had surpassed that of the United States.

Fast-forward to today and the median household income in Canada is thousands of dollars less in real dollars than in the United States. Even the poorest American states, like Alabama, now have a higher GDP than our richest provinces. Among Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S., the Liberal government now oversees the highest household debt, the most unaffordable housing and the highest food price inflation in the entire G7.

There is no other country where my colleagues and I would rather live, work or start a business than in Canada. I know that. However, Parliament should not be a place where we sugar-coat uncomfortable facts or try to drive reality away with rhetoric. As a

Adjournment Proceedings

former small business owner, I was horrified to see the CFIB's most recent report. Fifty-five per cent of small business operators would not recommend starting a small business. According to that report, Canada is “in an entrepreneurial drought”.

Since 2024, more people have been shutting down small businesses than starting them. We all need to buy more locally, but we also need the economic conditions for local businesses to thrive. Canada is losing economic potential in industries of the future, such as AI, robotics and fintech. Canadians are founding new companies in these sectors, but they are founding them south of the border.

Statistics Canada shows that net emigration, those who are leaving Canada, just hit an all-time peak. Canadian emigrants are predominantly young professionals, with 67% aged 20 to 44.

According to the Leaders Fund, nearly half of Canadian founders or entrepreneurs who raised \$1 million in 2024 were based in the United States, versus one-third who were based in Canada, including other nations. Nearly 70% of Canadian founders are starting companies elsewhere. A decade ago, 70% of Canadian founders were founding companies in Canada. Canadians with ambition are seeing their future horizons narrowed here at home.

With my time remaining, I ask my colleague this: Given the support for the Liberals' economic plan, by what year will these cross-border gaps in real income and net emigration shrink instead of grow?

● (1915)

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the serious concerns she raised on behalf of her constituents, which underscore the importance of addressing child poverty and affordability issues facing families. It is a concern shared by all members of the House. This is why the government is committed to building a better future for all Canadians, and that means bringing down costs to make life more affordable. The government is responding by taking action through a number of initiatives to improve outcomes, reduce barriers and support children and youth in reaching their full potential.

[Translation]

For nearly 10 years, the Canada child benefit has helped ensure that Canadian families can support their children and plan for the future.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

Since 2016, the Canada child benefit has been a cornerstone in the effort to reduce child poverty. The benefit currently supports approximately 3.5 million families and reaches six million children, putting roughly \$30 billion annually into tax-free support to families across the country.

Most families receiving the maximum CCB are single-parent families, with approximately 90% of them headed by single women. Plus, the benefit is indexed every year to help families keep up with increases in the cost of living. To help with the additional costs of caring for a child with disabilities, as a supplement to the CCB, the child disability benefit provides up to \$3,480 for each eligible child. We know the CCB has contributed to lifting hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

[Translation]

More recently, the national school food program has provided close to 400,000 children per year with access to food programs in their communities, saving parents \$800 or more per year.

[English]

Budget 2025 introduced legislation to make the national school food program permanent, with an investment of \$216.6 million per year starting in 2029-30. As announced on March 26, the National School Food Program Act received royal assent and is now enshrined in law.

There is more. We introduced a phenomenally successful dental care program for Canadians without private insurance. It is helping to address this issue by covering more than 6.3 million eligible Canadian residents, including almost 760,000 children in 2025-26. It saves members, on average, more than \$900 annually.

[Translation]

We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. This will save a dual-income family up to \$840 per year in 2026.

[English]

We are building an affordable, high-quality early learning and child care system that is already saving families thousands of dollars per child per year across the country. We enhanced the GST credit, now the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, by increasing it 25% for five years starting in July and providing a one-time 50% top-up this year to help with everyday costs.

[Translation]

There is even more. Budget 2025 introduced automatic federal benefits starting in tax year 2026 to make it easier for low-income Canadians to access benefits.

[English]

In short, the government will continue to look for ways to bring down costs to make life more affordable. Because of all these programs in place, Canadians have a higher median of wealth than people in the United States.

Helena Konanz: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the member did not listen to my question. It is about entrepreneurs leaving Canada because they cannot seem to make it here.

All members of the House find the behaviour of the President of the United States insulting. Our sovereignty is non-negotiable, and we will not be held to ransom. At the same time, though, our reliance on the United States is imperative at this point, especially in a riding like mine that has six border crossings. For example, in communities like Grand Forks, north-to-south trade is embedded in the rail line that goes directly from the Interfor mill to U.S. customs.

We are reliant on the United States, and given that the Prime Minister called these kinds of ties a weakness, can the member opposite explain what this means for local communities in my riding, like Grand Forks, and the 2.6 million Canadian jobs that depend on U.S. trade?

● (1920)

Annie Koutrakis: Mr. Speaker, we are putting together many different programs to make sure we are there for all Canadians, including small business owners. As my colleague across the way knows, we are in the process. We will be starting to talk to the United States. That has always been the case. We will find the solutions. We will be there for small businesses and for all Canadians to make sure that we get through this difficult time together.

HOUSING

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “It takes too long and costs too much”. That was the message this week from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, which met with many of us. Of course, when it was saying, “It takes too long and costs too much”, it was talking about the government.

Just yesterday, Ratehub's affordability report came out, and it confirms the consequences of what the home builders told us. The consequences are that home prices continue to rise and sales continue to decline. In fact, home prices have risen in 10 of the 13 metro areas the report looked at, including Toronto, which is the largest metro area for me.

The cost of an average home continues to rise. As I have said in this place before, in my area, in Durham and York regions, the price-to-income ratio is about 10 times, so it is essentially unaffordable for any new homebuyer to get into the market.

I am glad that our work as an effective opposition has dragged the government, somewhat kicking and screaming, to agree with our policies with respect to GST and homebuilding taxes. That is a start.

What we need now is accountability. We need to understand what accountability measures the government will impose on municipalities for the money that would be provided to defray the costs of infrastructure. The Liberals say this will bring down the price of housing. Maybe it will, maybe it will not. What I want is some KPIs. I want accountability. Could the parliamentary secretary tell me what success looks like here, and how we shall measure whether their policies actually bring down the cost of a home?

Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and reply to my friend from York—Durham.

Yes, we know that too many Canadians are struggling to find homes they can afford. That is why the government is taking action on multiple fronts to increase the rate of home construction, restore affordability and reduce homelessness, not through a single program but with a comprehensive approach that brings every partner to the table.

On February 5, the government tabled legislation to establish Build Canada Homes as a Crown corporation to scale up the supply of affordable homes for lower- and middle-income Canadians. Build Canada Homes will partner across the housing ecosystem, deploying flexible financing tools, leveraging public lands and using modern methods of construction to build more affordable homes for Canadians. It will help build homes more quickly, more efficiently and at scale.

Across this country, the Government of Canada is working with provinces, territories and municipalities to remove local barriers that slow new supply. We are helping to support faster, more predictable approvals and aligning rules so that good projects can get built.

We have introduced targeted tax measures that make purpose-built rental projects more financially viable, because renters need more options that they can afford. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation programs, such as the apartment construction loan program and mortgage loan insurance, are helping builders access the financing necessary to move projects from concept to construction. This continues the progress made by the national housing strategy.

To date, over 741,000 households have been reduced or eliminated from housing needs. More than 195,000 new housing units were created or committed. That progress matters, because solving the housing crisis requires steady, sustained effort over time. For young Canadians working toward their first home, federal supports, such as the first home savings account, will allow them to save up to \$40,000 tax-free. This is done with contributions that reduce their taxable income and withdrawals that are entirely tax-free when they buy their first home.

Adjournment Proceedings

To lower the upfront cost of buying a new home for young Canadians, we introduced the first-time homebuyers' GST rebate to allow first-time homebuyers to save up to \$50,000 on a new home. The government is eliminating the goods and services tax on new homes up to \$1 million and reducing the same GST on new homes between \$1 million and \$1.5 million for first-time homebuyers.

We are also working to reduce the cost of home building. The first of these partnerships was announced on March 30 with the Government of Ontario. It will help lower development charges and reduce taxes and fees for a home in Ontario up to \$200,000. We look forward to working with other partners to reach similar agreements.

The Government of Canada is taking action so all Canadians have access to an affordable place to live.

● (1925)

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I have heard the sales pitch before. We have all heard it, but what we are looking for are goalposts, accountability and KPIs. How will we measure this success? I did not hear any explanation of that.

My follow-up question is about accountability. The government's promise was 500,000 new homes each year. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could give us an update this evening on how many homes have been built to date in 2026.

Wade Grant: Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that the federal government is empowering Canadians to get ahead, through budget 2025. Build Canada Homes and a range of housing measures are part of our national effort to increase housing construction, restore affordability and reduce homelessness. Budget 2025 is making generational investments of \$25 billion over five years for housing, and \$115 billion over five years for infrastructure. These strategic investments will create lasting prosperity by building homes and major infrastructure projects. Together with our partners across government and the housing industry, we are building homes, creating jobs and growing our economy.

The Government of Canada is strengthening its capacity to address Canada's housing crisis, improving housing supply and accelerating innovation in homebuilding. We are taking action to lower housing costs for Canadians so everyone has a place to call home.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:27 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS			
Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières Patriotes		Paul-Hus	7269
Desrochers	7265	Lightbound	7269
Red Bridge		Paul-Hus	7270
Caputo	7265	Lightbound	7270
Earth Day		Climate Change	
St-Pierre	7265	Normandin	7270
Arctic Gateway		Provost	7270
Bezan	7266	Normandin	7270
First Build Canada Homes Project in Quebec		Provost	7270
Duclos	7266	Bonin	7270
Kerry McManus		Provost	7270
Nater	7266	The Economy	
Student Grants in Ontario		Stubbs	7271
Khalid	7266	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	7271
Tragedy at Lapu-Lapu Day Festival		Stubbs	7271
Richards	7266	Gainey	7271
Anniversary Wishes		Jansen	7271
DeBellefeuille	7267	McKnight	7271
Earth Day		Jansen	7271
Miedema	7267	McKnight	7271
The Economy		Jackson	7272
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	7267	Valdez	7272
Howard E. Grant		Jackson	7272
Grant	7267	MacDonald (Malpeque)	7272
International Trade		Tochor	7272
Seeback	7267	Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)	7272
Freedom Day in Portugal		International Trade	
Leitão	7268	Champoux	7272
Fuel Taxes		LeBlanc	7272
Lawton	7268	Champoux	7273
Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada		Miller	7273
Fanjoy	7268	The Economy	
ORAL QUESTIONS		Berthold	7273
The Economy		MacKinnon	7273
Scheer	7268	Berthold	7273
Hajdu	7268	MacKinnon	7273
Scheer	7269	Deltell	7273
van Koeverden	7269	Lightbound	7273
Uppal	7269	Deltell	7274
MacKinnon	7269	Lightbound	7274
Uppal	7269	Martel	7274
Long	7269	Miller	7274
		Science and Innovation	
		Chagger	7274
		Sarai	7274
		Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
		Menegakis	7274
		Anandasangaree	7274
		Ho	7274
		Fraser	7275

Ho.....	7275
Fraser.....	7275
Rempel Garner.....	7275
Fraser.....	7275
Rempel Garner.....	7275
Fraser.....	7275
Public Safety	
Brock.....	7276
Sahota.....	7276
Brock.....	7276
Sahota.....	7276
Caputo.....	7276
Sahota.....	7276
Kronis.....	7276
Anandasangaree.....	7277
The Environment	
Watchorn.....	7277
Provost.....	7277
International Trade	
Chambers.....	7277
LeBlanc.....	7277
Zimmer.....	7277
Hodgson.....	7277
Baldinelli.....	7277
Solomon.....	7278
National Defence	
d'Entremont.....	7278
McGuinty.....	7278
Public Safety	
Gill (Brampton West).....	7278
Sahota.....	7278
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
McPherson.....	7278
Diab.....	7278

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Framework on Sports Betting Advertising Act	
Bill S-211. Second reading.....	7278
Motion agreed to.....	7280
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) ..	7280
Criminal Code	
Bill C-238. Second reading.....	7280
Motion agreed to.....	7281
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) ..	7281
National Framework for Food Price Transparency Act	
Bill C-226. Second reading.....	7281
Motion agreed to.....	7283
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee).....	7283
Use of Federal Lands for Veterans	
Motion.....	7283
Motion agreed to.....	7284

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Lamoureux.....	7284
Interparliamentary Delegations	
Bragdon.....	7284
Committees of the House	
Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities	
Morrissey.....	7285
National Strategy for Soil Health Act	
O'Rourke.....	7285
Bill S-230. Introduction and first reading.....	7285
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed).....	7285
Petitions	
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Oliphant.....	7285
Public Safety	
Mazier.....	7285
Religious Freedom	
Allison.....	7285
Human Rights	
May.....	7286
Questions Passed as Orders for Return	
Lamoureux.....	7286
Motions for Papers	
Lamoureux.....	7286

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty Act	
Alty.....	7286
Bill C-21. Second reading.....	7286
McCaughey.....	7288
Beaulieu.....	7289
Carr.....	7289
Morin.....	7289
Gazan.....	7289
Duguid.....	7290
Ste-Marie.....	7290
Lamoureux.....	7293
Morin.....	7293
Larouche.....	7294
Alty.....	7294
Morin.....	7294
Alty.....	7297
Beaulieu.....	7297
Holman.....	7298
Gazan.....	7298
Lamoureux.....	7298
Van Popta.....	7298

Konanz	7299
Lamoureux	7299
McCauley	7300
Ste-Marie	7300
Rochefort	7300
Gazan	7300
Lamoureux	7302
Holman	7302
Larouche	7302
McKenzie	7302
Lamoureux	7304
Beaulieu	7304
Konanz	7304
Ste-Marie	7305

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Living Donor Recognition Medal Act

Bill C-234. Report stage	7305
Aboultaif	7305
Motion for concurrence	7305
(Motion agreed to)	7305
Third reading	7305

Lamoureux	7306
Larouche	7306
Mazier	7307
Sidhu (Brampton South)	7307
Tesser Derksen	7307
Blanchette-Joncas	7309
Anstey	7309
St-Pierre	7310
Aboultaif	7312
(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed) ...	7312

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Mental Health and Addictions

Mazier	7312
Koutrakis	7312

The Economy

Konanz	7313
Koutrakis	7313

Housing

Mantle	7314
Grant	7315

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