



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

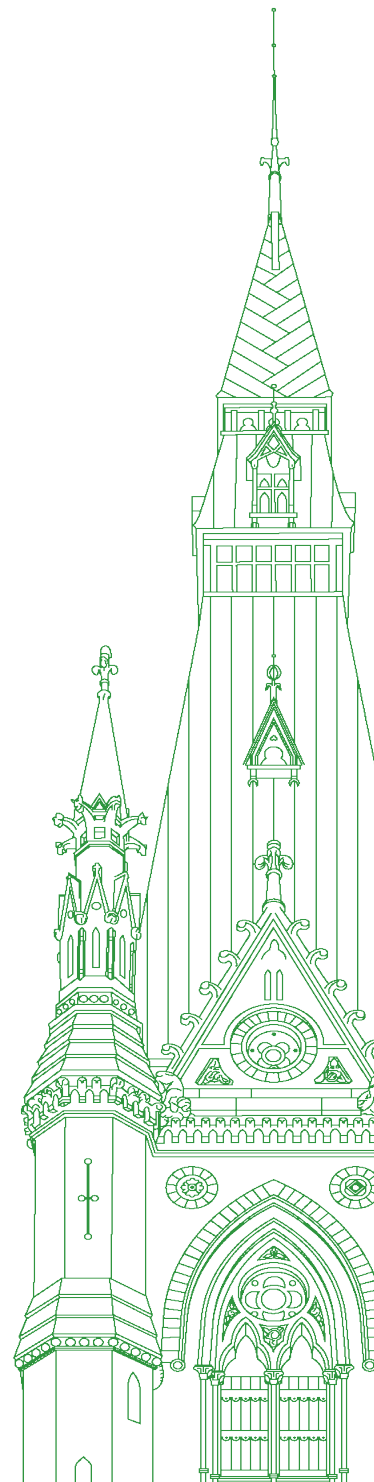
# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

**Volume 152 No. 112**

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[Translation]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, entitled “Proposals from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages Regarding the Proposed Official Languages Administrative Monetary Penalties Regulations”.

[English]

#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, in relation to the motion adopted Wednesday, April 15, 2026, regarding Canada's immigration system.

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### CRIMINAL CODE

**Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-275, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault material).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce Melanie's law, my first private member's bill, to bring justice for victims of sexual assault.

The inspiration for the bill unfortunately arises from a feeling of dread. When a resident of Red Deer, someone I consider a friend, reached out to tell me about a network of abusers in Canada who drug their intimate partners, sexually assault them, film the assaults and distribute the videos online, I was shocked, not only because I learned that this is happening but also because it happened to my friend, the constituent's wife, in a previous relationship.

Imagine the anguish a loving husband feels upon discovering that his wife, the most important person in his life, was victimized without her knowledge, a profound violation that leaves justice feeling painfully out of reach. At the same time, his heart breaks for the unimaginable pain she endured, her peace of mind and sense of safety stolen from her.

Hearing their story, I felt compelled to help bring justice for Melanie and to do whatever I can to help heal their hurt. Melanie's law would put victims' rights first. It would create a definition of sexual assault material in the Criminal Code and make it a criminal offence to create, distribute or possess such material. We have a duty to ensure that people who commit these horrific crimes face real consequences and that victims are never treated as secondary to their abusers.

I urge all members of the House to support Melanie's law and deliver justice for Melanie and for the many others who have suffered in silence.

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

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### PETITIONS

#### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the House will begin debate on Bill C-260, the care not coercion act.

Reports, including many media stories, as well as evidence heard by parliamentary committees, have indicated the serious problem of seniors, veterans, people living with disabilities and those living in poverty being offered MAID, facilitated death, by bureaucrats when they are trying to access unrelated public services. These unprompted offers can cause serious distress, be coercive in nature and make it more difficult for people to access public services in the future. In fact the CEO of Inclusion Canada, Krista Carr, has testified that she hears weekly complaints from people with disabilities about this problem.

The petition highlights various other cases, including that of Christine Gauthier, a veteran living with disabilities who spent five years trying to get funding for a wheelchair stairlift from Veterans Affairs Canada. A caseworker offered her facilitated death instead. This is one of many instances of cases involving Veterans Affairs Canada.

### Government Orders

Bill C-260, the care not coercion act, to prevent coercion of persons not seeking medical assistance in dying, would prevent these instances of coercion in which a bureaucrat offers medically facilitated death to people who are not seeking it.

The people who signed the petition want the House to support Bill C-260, the care not coercion act, as it begins debate tomorrow, and they want more action to combat the problem of MAID coercion.

• (1005)

### BIRTH INJURY

**Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition with respect to catastrophic birth injuries. The petitioners and signatories want to stand up for accountability and for the rights of people who have been affected by catastrophic birth injuries.

### IRAN

**Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of Canadians and residents of Canada to present a petition in the House of Commons calling upon the federal government and the House of Commons to recognize the efforts of the free people of Iran to establish an open, free democracy and to stand with the good people of Iran who have been longing, for 47 years, for freedom from the oppressive regime they have been under.

It gives me great honour to present this petition today on their behalf.

### DENTAL CARE

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present three petitions.

The first petition is from the Mission Self Advocacy Group. Petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to significantly reduce administrative and paperwork requirements regarding the Canada dental benefit. They want the program to be more accessible and effective for low- and modest-income Canadians and those who have difficulty filling out the enormous amount of paperwork associated with the program.

### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present on behalf of my constituents is regarding Bill C-218 and MAID. My constituents are deeply concerned about the proposed expansion of medical assistance in dying to individuals whose sole underlying condition is a mental illness.

Petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to support Bill C-218 and halt the expansion of MAID for people with only mental illness as their underlying condition.

### PACIFIC SALMON

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition I would like to present is on behalf of the Miami River Streamkeepers. They are calling for sustained funding for conservation efforts at the local level to support British Columbia's iconic salmon species.

### GUARANTEED INCOME

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petition e-6898, a petition on social affairs and equality, initiated by Tanner Bergsma, a constituent of the riding of Waterloo.

Petitioners recognize that there are benefits within the country, but they feel that these benefits do not go far enough for the challenges they are facing.

Petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to establish a national living benefit to ensure that all Canadians with disabilities and seniors receive a guaranteed income above the official poverty line. They would like it to be indexed to inflation, and they want to also ensure that it is protected from provincial clawbacks.

\* \* \*

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### CANADIAN SPACE LAUNCH ACT

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great day for Canada to debate this bill. As we know, Canada has a long history of space exploration, a history of which we should be very proud. From Alouette 1, which made us only the third country in the world to launch a satellite into orbit, to the Canadarm, to the achievements of our astronauts, Canadians have always led the way to the stars.

We have built a reputation as a trusted partner in space exploration. We are recognized for our excellence in robotics, earth observation, satellite communications and bold science missions. However, history alone will not secure our future. Countries around the world are in a mad dash to secure their share in a rapidly expanding space industry. Businesses are investing billions of dollars and demand for launch services is skyrocketing, while governments, researchers and private companies are deploying satellites at an unprecedented pace. Canada cannot afford to sit on the sidelines.

• (1010)

[English]

Today, Canada is the only G7 country without its own sovereign space launch and re-entry capabilities. Right now, Canada has to rely on other countries to launch our satellites into orbit, even though the satellites support our infrastructure, our defence and about 20% of our economy. Canadian expertise, investments and jobs in this rapidly growing and important sector are leaving to go elsewhere, but today this would change, with the Canada space launch act.

The legislation would deliver sovereign launch capabilities for Canada, attracting billions of dollars in investments, creating good-paying jobs, strengthening our sovereignty and building on Canada's proud history of innovations in space. The global space economy is currently undergoing a rapid transformation and expansion. In just the next six years, the global space economy will grow by more than 215% and be worth \$1.5 trillion. We must urgently act to advance the legislation, because if we delay, Canadians will miss out on this enormous economic opportunity. With the passage of the legislation, we could create thousands of jobs and build our own domestic industry that is projected to be worth \$40 billion.

Sovereign space launch capabilities are not a partisan issue. They are a nation-building opportunity. I encourage all parties and all members of the House to support the Canadian space launch act, not just for our sovereignty and not just for our economy but for every Canadian who relies on the technologies and services that space enables.

The truth is simple. In 2026, space is no longer a distant frontier. It is an important part of our daily lives, our economy and our national security. Space is essential for our future. When Canadians tap their phone for directions, satellites guide them. When farmers optimize their crops, satellites provide the data. When we monitor wildfires, track marine traffic or respond to natural disasters, satellites are the backbone of our response. When planes cross the North Atlantic, satellites keep them connected and safe. When remote communities access broadband, satellites increasingly bridge the gap. When our armed forces operate at home or abroad, satellites provide the communications, navigation and intelligence they rely on.

Satellites are critical infrastructure. They are as essential to our economy and our well-being as roads, ports and power grids, but satellites are only as reliable as our ability to launch, maintain, defend and replace them.

### *Government Orders*

[Translation]

This is why it is essential to have sovereign launch capability. By taking the appropriate steps, Canada will become a country capable of conducting commercial space launches, which will serve our national interests and support our allies.

An important first step is to implement the Canadian space launch act. This legislation is urgently needed to support new economic growth, acquire a sovereign launch capability and prevent Canada from being left behind. Without launch capability, our country and our space industries will remain dependent on foreign nations for access to space. This increases costs, lengthens timelines and creates greater uncertainty for the sector.

If we do not establish a modern and comprehensive framework for launches and re-entry, we risk losing investment, talent and our competitive advantage. We risk seeing Canadian companies exporting their innovations abroad because they cannot launch them here at home. We risk becoming dependent on foreign launches at a time when access to space is becoming a matter of national security. We cannot let this happen any longer.

• (1015)

[English]

The Canadian space launch bill is about ensuring that Canada can seize the economic opportunity, while also keeping our investments at home and repatriating our world-leading Canadian expertise. It is about strengthening our competitiveness, our economy and our national security.

Now, some would ask: Why launch from Canada? The answer is simple, Canada has unique strengths that the world increasingly values. We have a long coastline that allows for safe launch corridors over open water. We have a stable political system, a predictable regulatory environment and, indeed, a highly skilled workforce.

As existing global launch infrastructure approaches capacity, international companies are actively seeking alternative launch sites in stable, trusted countries. Canadian space launches are a competitive advantage that we must capitalize on now. Other countries are already moving to develop their own capabilities. If we do not act now, we risk watching investment flow elsewhere, to jurisdictions that move faster, with clearer rules and stronger incentives.

### *Government Orders*

Space is no longer a benign environment. It is increasingly contested, and our allies are investing heavily in space-based defence capabilities. They are strengthening their resilience against threats to satellites and ground infrastructure. They are ensuring they can quickly replace damaged assets, if required. Canada must do the same. A sovereign launch capability would strengthen Arctic domain awareness, support NORAD modernization, enhance our ability to monitor wildfires, floods and maritime activity, and ensure continuity of critical satellite services. It would contribute to NATO investment-sharing and capability targets.

[Translation]

It would also allow Canada to support its allies' launches, thereby strengthening our security partnerships and reinforcing our role as a reliable partner.

This bill lays the essential groundwork for safe, secure and responsible commercial space launches and re-entries directly from Canada. It establishes a modern framework that accounts for risks, aligns with international best practices and is backed by robust oversight.

This bill also recognizes that responsible authorization for space launch and re-entry operations requires that potential financial liabilities be properly managed and safeguards be established before they are needed. These amendments will establish an insurance and indemnification system tailored to the specific risks associated with space launches and atmospheric re-entry. This system would require operators to demonstrate financial accountability in order to protect Canadians and would reinforce Canada's commitment to act as a responsible space-faring nation. This bill allows us to establish such a framework in a manner consistent with international best practices and in a way that provides our space sector with the clarity and certainty it has long sought.

[English]

The Canadian space launch bill is built, therefore, on six core pillars: number one, clear authority to regulate launch and re-entry; number two, a modern licensing framework that reduces duplication and closes regulatory gaps; number three, safety and security requirements tailored to launch and re-entry activities; number four, a financial responsibility and indemnification regime aligned with international norms; number five, structured land use and site authorization processes; and six, oversight, compliance and enforcement tools to maintain public confidence.

Together, these pillars form the foundation of a safe, competitive and future-ready launch sector. Across the country, Canadian innovators are already stepping up. NordSpace, based in Ontario and expanding into Newfoundland and Labrador, is developing one of Canada's first commercial space ports, creating jobs, attracting investment and inspiring the next generation.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Reaction Dynamics, a Quebec-based company, is developing cutting-edge launch vehicles that require limited infrastructure, which could place Canada at the forefront of launch technologies.

[English]

For Telesat, a domestic launch capability would offer an additional reliable pathway to orbit for their lightspeed constellation, which aims to deliver high-speed Internet access to remote areas in Canada and around the world by 2030. These companies, and many others, are ready to grow in Canada and to compete globally. What they need is a modern legal framework that supports their ambitions, and that is what this legislation would deliver.

Again, this is not a partisan issue. It is a nation-building opportunity. Supporting this legislation means supporting economic growth, job creation, innovation, national security and sovereignty. It means ensuring that Canadian companies can compete on a level playing field. It means giving our researchers, our entrepreneurs and our armed forces the tools they need to succeed. It means positioning Canada as a space-faring nation, one of only a handful in the world. It means telling the world that when it comes to the new space economy, Canada intends to be a builder, a partner and a leader.

[Translation]

I encourage all parties to support this bill so that Canada can seize the unique opportunity that we have before us and strengthen our sovereignty in an increasingly complex world. Once the bill is passed, we will be able to develop detailed regulations and work with the provinces and industry to coordinate our efforts to support the development of launch sites and related infrastructure. This is the next chapter in Canada's space history and we cannot miss it.

[English]

Canada has a proud history in space, but history alone will not secure our future. We must act. We must modernize. We must seize the opportunity before us. The Canadian space launch act is our chance to do exactly that to build a stronger economy, a more resilient country and a more sovereign future. Let us take this step together.

[Translation]

Let us go down that road together. Let us be ambitious. Let us provide scientific and economic opportunities to young people who dream about space.

[English]

Let us ensure that, when Canadians look to the stars, they see a future built right here by Canadians, for Canadians and for the world.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives agree that Canada has a proud history in space and that we have great talent and great opportunities in space. However, we have to set aside the past and future in terms of our idealism because what the minister was speaking about was sovereignty. We must be real. We must look at the bill as it is, right here and right now.

In the bill, the minister has not even defined what launch and re-launch are. The minister has not introduced a bill that would protect our sovereignty. There is no national security screening of payloads. A firm from another country could use any rocket launch as an ability to put a dual-use satellite into orbit, undermining our sovereignty, particularly when satellites are looking at the north. I would like the minister to address these subjects.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, where am I to begin?

I suppose if we wanted to contemplate a number of things, like the member just did, we could. This bill would permit the establishment of a regulatory framework for space launches from Canada. I have outlined the scientific, the economic and, yes, the sovereignty rationale for putting in place this regulatory framework. What would follow are, indeed, rules.

Now, just to take but one example of what the member evokes, the Canadian Space Agency would be involved in examining payloads. I think the member underestimates the role of our own Canadian Armed Forces in launching satellites and enabling their launches from Canada, launching Canadian security material from Canadian spaceports. That is an important part of it. I will have the ability to go on further as we continue with questions.

• (1025)

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the minister on his speech and on introducing this bill. I do not know whether he drafted it himself, but in any case, I believe it was something that needed to be done. As we know, humans have been exploring space for 60 years now, yet Canada still did not have any framework legislation on this matter. Now that gap will be filled.

With this bill, the minister is aiming to exempt projects from being subject to certain laws, including the Canadian Transportation Agency Act, which would not regulate space travel. While I can understand that not that many people will be travelling into space, that does not change the fact that this is part of a trend where the government is constantly trying to exempt certain projects or initiatives from certain laws.

In the future, it may be necessary to reinstate the role of the Canadian Transportation Agency if space travel becomes very popular and there are a significant number of travellers. Does the minister see this as something that is intended to be permanent?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, I think it is important to point out that the safety of our communities, the safety surrounding space launches, is central to our process. We propose to create regulations specifically designed to reassure these communities that launches like these can occur safely.

### *Government Orders*

Of course, the transportation-related work of the Canadian Transportation Agency involves what we might term “conventional transportation”. However, we think that specific regulations ensuring everyone's safety under this bill would be the best solution.

No, I did not draft the bill, since we have a space industry in Canada that was able to assist in drafting this bill, and I am very proud to introduce it on its behalf.

[English]

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

Madam Speaker, a year ago today, Canadians elected a new Prime Minister, and that Prime Minister talked about the importance of securing Canada and making Canada a stronger, healthier country. I think it is significant that today we are going into an area in which Canada has not been before, which has the potential to create thousands of jobs. It would put us with other G7 countries, recognizing that the ability to launch is necessary.

I appreciate the legislation. I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts in terms of, when the Prime Minister talks about making Canada more secure, building jobs and creating opportunities, how the legislation plays into the agenda of the Prime Minister and the government.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, my colleague hits the nail right on the head. This is a part of building Canada strong. This is about carving out a place to serve Canadians using Canadian hands, Canadian minds, Canadian ambition, Canadian technology and a Canadian supply chain that stretches right across this country. This would give Canada the ability to control end to end. We are already world leaders in satellites, robotics and space. Let us take our space assets and get them to the stars on our own.

**Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, the minister needs to talk about exactly why he has chosen the bill to give himself so much power. He would be approving permits and re-entries, launches, etc. The list goes on. Indemnification is essentially where the taxpayer offers insurance to private operators for indemnifying their launches. The way the bill is written, the minister could give special treatment to one firm and a different set of rules for another.

How can the minister look at this Parliament in the eye and say that he is trying to attract capital with such an opaque system that would be so arbitrary in how it will be applied? If we want to do well in space, we need to have the rule of law, not the rule of one minister, where he can pick and choose winners and losers.

*Government Orders*

• (1030)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, I would encourage my hon. colleague to look around the world where space launches are permitted. Canada would do essentially what those other countries have done in terms of an insurance scheme and an insurance regulatory infrastructure. I would stress that private companies that are looking to launch satellites or other payloads would be required to have insurance that would protect from risks. The Government of Canada would, of course, assess their insurance and their coverage as it assesses the appropriateness of all of these launches.

The Minister of Transport regulates a lot of things in this country. The number one thing that we regulate is safety. We are here to protect Canadians, and the powers we deploy are specifically and principally in service of that objective of keeping Canadians safe.

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canadians are being told that this is about building a space industry for the future, and of course, we all want to see Canada succeed in that space. However, they are also looking at this and asking a very basic question: How does a government end up committing \$200 million of taxpayer money to lease a launch pad that is not even operational?

Is this what happens when we move away from a rules-based, accountable framework, like the one that was built under Stephen Harper, and toward a discretionary, cheque-writing approach that looks a lot more like a Liberal-style “enriching close friends” type of government?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, that is an interesting one. I want to acknowledge the member's, and perhaps that of other members of the opposition, devotion to following conspiracy theories online.

Let us talk about economic impact. In one of the great places in Canada, which is Nova Scotia, it could add 16,000 jobs and add \$300 million to our GDP alone. It is currently under construction and set to be completed in 2028.

I will read a quote: “We are proud that Nova Scotia is home to Canada’s first commercial spaceport and recognize the critical role Maritime Launch [Services] will play in offering a satellite launch facility to the global market.” That was Premier Tim Houston in 2023.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this place to participate in debate, particularly when the official opposition has the opportunity to apply serious scrutiny to legislation that asks Parliament to hand broad authority away from itself and to the executive.

Bill C-28 deals with space launch and re-entry. It is not ideological. Most Canadians support the idea of Canada having a domestic space capability. They understand its importance to innovation, economic growth and, increasingly, national security. I support that goal as well, but ambition does not excuse poor design. Supporting the objective does not mean giving the government a blank cheque, especially in a sector that involves public safety, national security and potentially significant taxpayer exposure.

We are entering a period of rapid growth in space-based activity. Satellite deployment, re-entry technologies and launch infrastruc-

ture are expanding quickly. Canada does not want to be left behind, and it should not be. The government argues that Bill C-28 is needed because Canada lacks a clear legislative framework for space launch and re-entry. That is true. These activities have been managed through aviation law and ad hoc decisions. That approach is no longer adequate.

What is troubling is that Bill C-28 would not replace uncertainty with a clear law. It would replace it with discretion. Rather than having Parliament define rules, the bill asks Parliament to approve a framework and trust that the real decisions would be made later through regulation and ministerial judgment. The hardest questions are deferred. The risks are obscured. Parliamentary control is weakened.

When one reads this bill carefully, the pattern is unmistakable. Launch permits, re-entry approvals, site certification, emergency stop powers, land use restrictions, financial responsibility requirements, exemptions from those requirements and the indemnification of private operators would all be placed within the discretion of the Minister of Transport. This is where the bill starts to drift from concerning to almost surreal. This entire regime assumes that the minister would personally oversee permits, exemptions, indemnification decisions, emergency stop orders, land use restrictions and national security judgments in one of the most complex and high-risk emerging sectors of the economy.

That might sound reassuring until we remember that as of this moment, Canada does not even have a full-time Minister of Transport. We are being asked to believe that a part-time minister already juggling multiple portfolios would somehow have the time, the capacity and the sustained focus to personally weigh launch permits, re-entry approvals, liability thresholds, indemnification decisions and national security considerations, sometimes under time pressure, sometimes under political pressure, while taxpayers carry the downside risk.

This is not a governance model. This is wishful thinking dressed up as legislation, which leads to a very practical question that the government has not answered and cannot avoid. When this industry scales up, and the government insists that it will, who exactly is supposed to manage all of this? Who is reviewing each permit? Who is assessing each re-entry? Who is recalibrating liability exposure? Who is deciding whether an operator qualifies for indemnification and when it does not? Under this bill, almost all the responsibility would flow upward to one political office, not to an independent regulator, not to a transparent statutory process, but to the discretion of the minister.

*Government Orders*

Good policy depends on systems, not personalities. Bill C-28 gives us neither. Nowhere in this design flaw is that more serious than in the indemnification and liability provisions of the bill. Bill C-28 would remove space launch and re-entry activities, which, by the way, are not even defined in the act. It would take those activities from a normal aviation insurance framework and replace them with a new concept called “financial responsibility”. Parliament would not be told what those minimum levels would be. They obviously would be left to regulation, to be answered by the minister and his officials at their discretion.

The bill then goes much further. It would allow the minister to reduce or waive those requirements and to indemnify private operators against third party liability, entirely at ministerial discretion. Let us be clear about exactly what that means. Indemnification is not a technical detail. It is government-backed insurance. It transfers risk from private companies onto taxpayers.

● (1035)

If one operator is indemnified and another is not, the indemnified operator enjoys a powerful competitive advantage. Its risk profile drops, its financing costs fall, and its tolerance for failure increases. Its competitor, facing full commercial exposure, is placed at a structural disadvantage. Nothing in this bill would require indemnification to be offered on equal terms. Nothing would require similar risks to receive similar treatment. Nothing would require advanced disclosure to Parliament. Nothing would require public reporting afterward. This is not flexibility. That is state-authorized market distortion.

The political consequences of that structure are enormous. We already have a company operating in this space that has demonstrated financial instability and operational uncertainty. Under Bill C-28, the same company could benefit enormously if indemnification is loosened or be severely harmed if that protection is tightened or withdrawn. In either case, the impact would be dramatic, but the decision would not be governed by rules set by Parliament. It would be by the politics of the day. If indemnification is loosened, taxpayers could be exposed to substantial and unquantified liability without ever knowing or realizing it. If it is withdrawn, a company could become commercially unviable almost overnight. In both cases, the consequences would be profound, yet the decision would occur behind closed doors.

Taxpayers would not know what risks they were carrying. Parliament would not know what exposure it had approved. Only the minister would know. This is not transparency and accountability, and it is not responsible governance in a strategic sector involving public safety, national security and public money. When indemnification decisions are left entirely to ministerial discretion, they inevitably become political decisions. They are influenced by timing, urgency, pressure and optics. None of those is a substitute for law.

This bill would effectively ask Parliament to assume that every minister under every political circumstance would exercise his or her power perfectly. History suggests otherwise. Laws exist precisely because judgment is imperfect and politics change. Taxpayers should never bear catastrophic risk as the result of decisions they cannot see, cannot measure and cannot challenge.

The weakness in this bill extends beyond indemnification. The government speaks often about sovereignty and security when promoting Bill C-28, yet the legislation fails to embed basic national security safeguards in statute. There would be no statutory requirement for foreign ownership or control screening of launch operators or payloads. There would be no requirement for beneficial ownership transparency. There would be no statutory test for payload mission profiles or end use. There would be no mandatory integration of intelligence or national security assessments into the approval process. Instead, these issues would be left to regulation or the discretion of the minister in the public interest.

I have served on the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, and we have seen, time after time, what happens when the use of the term “public interest” is exercised without any details from Parliament as to what is in the public interest in this narrow set of circumstances. What happens is uncertainty. What would happen under this bill? That uncertainty would be either a yes or a no from the minister, with no explanation given other than a denial. The minister could say, “It is not in the public interest to give you this permit. I’m revoking it.” We could ask what the public interest is, but the minister would not have any responsibility to say what it is.

Usually, in the Aeronautics Act, someone would go to an administrative tribunal that has a specialty in this, but guess what. The minister has exempted this act from that tribunal’s auspices. Essentially, a company would have a window, based on weather conditions, to get a payload through the atmosphere. Suddenly, it would have to go to court to challenge a decision, which would inevitably cost the taxpayer money because the justice department now would have to say what is in the public interest, but it is not defined by law. This is a recipe for uncertainty, and for the minister to say it would give certainty to a market that has yet to exist is a big warning sign flashing. I want to say, “Ottawa, we have a problem here.”

● (1040)

The result here is a convergence of risk that includes broad executive power, opaque indemnification authority, reduced independent review, large financial commitments and no hard-wired national security screening. This, like space, is a vacuum, a vacuum of accountability. The reasons the minister could give to deny a permit would be as black as space. We would not be able to see transparently why it was denied. This is a problem, considering that there is so much to be said about the Liberal government’s penchant for insiders.

*Government Orders*

We know of the MLS launch. We know of the public record, which has been widely distributed, about it not being a going concern, then 158 conversations with the PMO and different ministers later and, wow, suddenly there is a \$200-million lease for a property that was previously leased from the Province of Nova Scotia for \$13,500 a year. It is now \$55,000 a day.

Again, opaque processes, uncertainty and the discretion of one individual are not a recipe for the rule of law. It is a recipe for inside activity. I have said a lot about these things because I am concerned and because I am a proud Canadian. I believe in innovation. I believe in progress. I believe we have Canadian know-how, and we have proven it, time and time again, but this is not a bill for our times. This is a bill for insiders.

Let me be very clear. I have not been speaking about Canadian space launch capacity. This is an argument against governing it badly. Canada needs domestic launch and re-entry infrastructure. I am sure we can all agree on that. We also need clear, predictable and competitive rules, or else we are only going to track businesses that we will end up identifying, and we will not innovate because there will not be a sphere of competition that drives innovation, reduces costs and sees new ways and approaches come forward. This is because, under this act, there would not be the incentive to do so.

It would be more incentive to get a better lobbyist than to get a better rocket. That is not the rocket fuel this industry needs or wants. We need taxpayers protected from unknowable exposure. We need national security safeguards that are automatic and non-negotiable. Once a satellite is in orbit and it does not use Canadian spectrum, the government has no responsibility or power over that satellite. That satellite, as I said, could be at the behest of a state actor and, let us be mindful, the People's Republic of China does require its companies, under its national security laws, to comply with whatever they are asked of by the authoritarian government in Beijing. The Russians also have an interest in the north and its surveillance of the north.

These are questions that the official opposition members are asking for some accountability on and some better answers. With what I heard today from the minister in his responses to me on national security and indemnification, it is clear that he has either not done the work or is silent on purpose.

We need Parliament, not a minister, setting the rules for this space. We do not need legislation that privatizes reward, nationalizes risk and leaves Canadians in the dark. Space policy, I would argue, is too important, too expensive and too sensitive to be governed this way. Again, capital flows to stability.

The minister is right that Canada has some wonderful attributes. We are a country that is politically stable. We have, most of the time, the rule of law, but if a large company were looking to make a strategic investment in Canada and seize this regime, and unless they have an inside track with a lobbyist who has the ability to get them what they want, I question that this is the right approach.

• (1045)

If the government is serious about our sovereignty, it should be serious about accountability. If it is serious about security, it should put it right into the statute, right into Bill C-28. If it is serious about

market activity, it should stop designing laws that reward discretion over discipline. Parliament should not approve a framework that asks Canadians to trust what they cannot see.

I would like to say that it is always a pleasure to be here and to debate these important topics on behalf of the good people of Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna. I urge my colleagues to take the time to look into Bill C-28 to see with their own eyes not only what is there, which is the fact that almost all of the power would be given to one person, but also the large gaps in the bill that this Parliament could and should address.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, no one could accuse the Conservatives of being visionary.

At the end of the day, this is substantive legislation in an area Canada needs to go into. We have a Prime Minister and a government that are focused on building and expanding our economy and ensuring that we get the type of security that is necessary, and then we have the Conservatives. I am not too sure exactly what it is they are hoping to achieve.

I do have hope, and the question I have for the member is, does the Conservative Party of Canada support the principle of Canada having a launch site?

• (1050)

**Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party of Canada believes in Canadians and their know-how.

We have a strong record, from Diefenbaker and the Alouette I, the first Canadian satellite to be launched. Brian Mulroney created the space act, which is the framework for much of the Canadian missions where we partnered with other countries, to the great success of Canadarm, among other projects. It was Stephen Harper, in 2014, who created a space sovereignty framework that this government, in this new legislation, seems to be ignoring completely.

When we talk about sovereignty, it is non-negotiable, yet under this particular bill, it is discretionary.

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, for the most part, we agree on implementing such a system, as we said earlier. However, my concern is that there seems to be a tendency to waive application of the law every time new measures are introduced. It is tiresome.

As we all know, Bill C-5 became an act that enables the government to designate projects of national interest. It allows the government to override all existing laws. We also know that Bill C-15 took away citizens' rights with respect to expropriation. The government also got rid of the environmental assessment for the high-speed rail project. Now it is pushing to exempt certain launch-related decisions from Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada review.

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I would like my colleague to comment on this. The government seems to view laws as obstacles to progress, but laws are the legislative framework we have established over decades to provide the public with safety and stability.

[English]

**Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate this member's intervention here today because it highlights that the government has a penchant for giving itself ultimate discretion at the expense of someone else.

There is no greater sign of this than the government's actually removing access to a tribunal. Tribunals are there for administrative fairness. Let me give an example. If a space firm that is operating legally in Canada is not favoured by the government for whatever reason, maybe they used the wrong lobbyist, had an application come in with a tight time window, or has a spelling or technical error that could easily be rectified, the minister could simply say, "Sorry". That launch would then be scuttled at great cost to that individual company.

Being able to go to a tribunal to be able to rectify these things gives people confidence that they can move forward. If they have to take the government to court over something as simple as an error on a permit, that is ridiculous.

One might ask why the government would want it this way. That is what we are asking. Why would the government be giving itself unfettered discretion unless it had a plan to do something with that?

**Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his visionary intervention, where he focused on the crux of the issue, which is poor legislation and accountability.

Yesterday at the defence committee, I questioned the new CEO of the Defence Investment Agency, previously of Goldman Sachs, who is a banker buddy of the Prime Minister. He stated that he has not been screened for national security conflicts of interest with his former high net worth clients who are connected to Chinese state-owned businesses.

I would like my colleague to expand on the parallels in this bill regarding both Liberal insiders and a failure to protect Canadian assets and IP from the intervention of the Chinese Communist Party.

**Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, it is important for us to acknowledge what the minister himself said. He said that the world will want what Canada could have here. Well, the world is a lot of people, and some of them do not align with our values or our goals as a nation, so it makes sense that, if there is a gap where there is no screening over who owns what technology and what that technology is used for, that could be circumvented.

Right now, which countries lead the world in rockets? We have the United States, Russia and China, all of whom would have some sort of interest in our north. Again, Canadian rockets are the fundamental part to making this sovereignty happen. We need a legislative framework, sure, but we also need to have Canadian rockets, or else this launch pad would just be a launch pad for other nations' rockets and, without the proper screening, for payloads that are for their objectives, not ours.

• (1055)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I believe the member needs to expand his thinking.

Just on that particular point, Magellan Aerospace in Winnipeg manufactures satellites and actually has satellites that are circling the earth today. We have an industry that is alive and has thousands of people employed. Having the ability to launch our own is good for Canada. It is good for the industry. The Conservative Party should come out very clearly to say that it supports the industry and wants to see a launch pad.

I would ask this of the member who represents the Conservative Party on this file: Will the Conservative Party today commit its support for Canada having a launch pad?

**Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, this is how far down the government has gone, that the members are referring to a launch pad. In a competitive market that is well-regulated, there could be multiple launch pads, but we have only one. We have only one because the government has given a \$200-million lease over 10 years, \$55,000 a day, to a company that had a lease for the same property from the Province of Nova Scotia for \$13,500 a year. In its own corporate notes, it states that this company was not a going concern, which means to the average person that it would be going out of business. Then, miraculously, the company got this lease after lobbying, and suddenly we are all supposed to pin our hopes on it.

The gentleman across the way mentioned a company in his riding. We are very supportive of that, but I will remind the member that, first, a properly functioning market would have probably more than one spaceport. Second, we would probably see individual money being brought in, which could create that. Last, those satellites do not miraculously sprout wings and fly off into the stratosphere from the space pad. They need rockets.

How can we support our industry, and how can we encourage industries to come here? Right now, if this thing were put to test right away, it would be other countries' rockets.

**Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned earlier that, in 2014, the Harper government released a framework that put Canadian sovereignty and national security at the forefront of space policy. Under the Liberal government, we have a bill that does not include a single explicit national security test for launches. The Liberal government is asking us to trust its discretion instead of putting a law in place to stop hostile foreign actors from launching satellites over our Arctic. Could my hon. colleague expand on the concerns about this?

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**Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I am going to paraphrase the New York Times saying that democracy dies under darkness. When we have darkness and opaque processes, and the discretion of one particular minister who has market-distorting—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I think the hon. member's microphone is not working properly.

The hon. member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna.

**Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, one might say the question is whether the speaker is working properly.

I would simply say that if we have a competitive market with a proper regulatory structure, good things will happen, but right now, insiders and those who would exploit our national security gaps put us at risk.

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this morning we are talking about Bill C-28, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and other acts.

Essentially, we are talking about this because the government wants to establish a legislative framework for satellite launches and space launches. Canada does not have a legislative framework for this type of activity. In addition, Canada is currently fully dependent on the Americans. They have been a historic partner we used to work with for this type of launch, relying on their facilities and expertise. That is why the government introduced this bill today.

Does the Bloc Québécois see this in a negative light? I would say that it depends. In fact, we see it as more positive than negative, but we still have some questions. Space exploration was a hot topic in the 1950s and 1960s. At the time, it was mainly the U.S.S.R. and the United States that were competing with one another. However, that does not change the fact that all countries around the world had a vested interest in thinking about this issue and building their capacity.

Today, we are seeing trends emerging on the international stage. Companies like SpaceX and Starlink are increasingly using earth's orbit for all kinds of communications, such as the Internet. It feels like we are heading more and more in that direction in the future. There will be more launches. Under these circumstances, it would be beneficial for us to have our own launch capabilities here. On that point, I do not think I have any objections.

The only question is, why is Canada 50 or 60 years behind? It is 2026. Today we are realizing that we are lagging behind the United States and the rest of the world. One might argue that the circumstances have changed. One could say that Canada was perhaps the most naive country in the world, because it is the only G7 country that does not have its own launch capabilities. That is quite surprising. Canada is waking up rather late.

That being said, since we have to start somewhere, let us begin with the bill before us. We will study it carefully and examine what is being proposed.

In essence, what does the bill do? It amends the Aeronautics Act. Obviously, spacecraft are not aircraft, but this legislation governs

the use of airspace. It determines how launch and re-entry activities work, and it establishes definitions. For example, it defines what launch vehicles and re-entry vehicles are. It also provides that certain definitions will be created through regulations.

However, it is extremely unfortunate that the bill contains so few definitions. There are few details on what purpose it all serves. It creates a legislative framework, but it gives the government maximum flexibility to decide how it will work, through regulations. This means that parliamentarians are not the ones who are going to study the issue. The minister's office will be able to decide the more specific rules behind closed doors and in secret. That allows more flexibility to adapt to future developments without needing to go through Parliament again. That much is obvious.

The downside, however, is that decisions can be made behind closed doors, without us parliamentarians being able to keep an eye on these matters and without the public and the media knowing what is going on. This can lead to abuses if there is no adequate oversight.

• (1100)

We will have to see in committee what the oversight mechanisms will look like if all the power to establish the rules is concentrated in the hands of the minister. This would create a situation where it would become pretty easy for certain organizations or companies to get special treatment through lobbying or influence campaigns. That is not what we want. We also do not want the government to be able to decide to prevent the best and brightest from reaching their full potential, so we will be keeping a close eye on this.

The bill also authorizes the minister:

...to indemnify owners and operators of launch or re-entry vehicles in certain circumstances, and when it is in the public interest, for their liability to third parties for loss or damage caused by their activities....

When someone wants to get into the space launch business and they go to see an insurer and say that they want to do business in this sector, the insurer will likely be extremely surprised and tell them that it will cost them a lot of money because very few people are in this business and the risks are quite significant. The bill enables the government to assume the risk, if it so desires, and to indemnify those who experience setbacks. That is not a terrible idea, because, if we want to encourage investment in extremely risky activities, if we want to encourage people to get involved in these sorts of activities when we do not have the expertise or companies that are as well established as those in the United States, for example, then it may help to tell them that the government will support them should any problems arise. However, here is the question: How will the government decide who to support and who not to support? Will that just be left up to the minister's discretion? We have a lot of questions about that.

*Government Orders*

There is also the whole issue of the public interest because some people will feel the effects of this. We need to ensure that we have proper protections in place for those who experience setbacks. We need to ensure that they are properly indemnified and that they are, at the very least, protected from the risks. I do not think that anyone will feel reassured if we tell them not to worry because we will buy them a new house if theirs burns down. People would rather we make sure that their house does not burn down in the first place.

The bill before us today still needs work, but we are coming at it with a very open mind because this legislation is necessary and Canada is lagging far behind. It will be very interesting to hear what the witnesses have to say at committee. This is a highly specialized subject, and their expertise will help us. I am certainly no aerospace engineer, but I do know a few of them. It will be helpful to get input from industry people and from people who live in places that are potential launch sites. How are these launch sites selected? Are there criteria? Are the criteria objective, or is it all at the minister's discretion again? There are a lot of unanswered questions at this point.

It is important to note that the bill would amend a bunch of acts: the Carriage by Air Act, the Canada Transportation Act and the Secure Air Travel Act. We will have to investigate the broader implications of amending those acts. Yes, the goal is to create a legislative framework, a space, a structure for the aerospace sector, but legislative amendments can have unexpected consequences, outcomes nobody anticipated because we do not necessarily have all the knowledge and expertise when the time comes to vote at second reading.

We are going to take this seriously and give the government the benefit of the doubt. I think the government is trying to do something commendable. The question is how it goes about it. Unfortunately, the devil is often in the details. We are used to the Liberals slipping in little poison pills here and there, or proposing somewhat hidden plans designed to favour or help their cronies. There is nothing leading me to believe that that will be the case this time. Still, we have become so accustomed to these kinds of Liberal manoeuvres that we will certainly keep that in mind as we move forward with the process.

• (1105)

Another issue we have questions about is the fact that there is currently only one launch site, located in Canso, Nova Scotia. Would it make sense to have others in the future? What exactly justifies the conclusion that this is the only place where one should be located? I have nothing against the existing site. I think we need more sites. At the very least, these are questions that need to be asked.

It also remains to be seen what amendments will be proposed by the other parties, whether by the Conservative Party, which is represented at committee, or by the NDP, which is not. I do not know whether the NDP members will have the time, energy and resources to take an interest in this bill. The same goes for the Green Party. I do not know what its intentions are in this regard. Since I am a member of the Bloc Québécois, I obviously think that the Bloc has the best ideas and the best vision, but the other parties sometimes have good ideas too. That is less true of the Liberals, but

we will still listen to what they have to say, especially since they are the ones in office and we do not have much choice in the matter.

Is it time for Canada to develop its capabilities? I would say yes, definitely. However, there is one thing that is not very clear in this legislation and that I look forward to learning more about, and that is the fact that this type of aerospace launch facility often also has military uses, not just civilian uses. It has scientific and commercial uses, and this framework will have to regulate all of that.

It would be nice to get an idea of the Liberals' interests. What are their intentions moving forward? How do they intend to capitalize on the legal framework that we will soon be working on? I think that the question of research interest is obvious. The question of commercial interest is being discussed more and more. Awareness of this issue is growing. However, the question of defence interest should not be overlooked. It does not seem like it is being discussed publicly at present, but I think it should not be forgotten. It seems obvious to me that National Defence will want to use these sites for military testing. What types of military tests would be conducted? Where do Canada's military capabilities currently stand, specifically in terms of defence autonomy?

We see this elsewhere in the world. Investments in the aerospace sector can often have military applications, just as many investments in the military sector can also have applications in the aerospace sector. Just think of ballistic missiles. Is the purpose of this bill to support certain sectors? As I mentioned, there is certainly a military interest, from a defence perspective, and a commercial interest, but it would be nice to know which specific sectors the government intends to support and how it plans to use these tools.

I believe that everyone deserves transparency, that everyone deserves to know the truth. Having as much transparency as possible will also allow us to move forward with as much confidence as possible. I do not think anyone wants to end up with nasty surprises in a few years because things were hidden from the public, because this was never properly debated and because the necessary legal framework was not established through the amendments this bill needed in case any blind spots were left unaddressed.

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We have important work to do on this bill, and we are going to approach it with the utmost seriousness. Obviously, we cannot fault the Canadian government for wanting to break free from its dependence on American facilities. However, the question that will always be asked, and that we must also always monitor, is who is going to invest in this? We are not divesting from American interests only to jump into the arms of other interests. Still, we have to take a serious approach if we sincerely want to achieve Canadian sovereignty and eventually Quebec sovereignty. That is what I want. We have emerging companies with potential. We have expertise in Canada. In fact, the Canadian Space Agency's headquarters is located in Saint-Hubert, just a stone's throw from my riding. The CSA has lots of expertise and great facilities. I am sure that its representatives will have things to say about this bill and interesting opinions to share.

• (1110)

Why not have a launch site in Quebec, given that the CSA is based there? Logistically speaking, it would be much closer than having to travel all the way to Canso, Nova Scotia. Is there potential to develop something in Quebec? I can see the value in that. I think that, as Quebecers, it is in our interest to have this type of expertise, even if it already exists here.

Quebec has an aerospace industry, as I mentioned, with the space centre in Saint-Hubert, but we also have plenty of aeronautics expertise and knowledge. A great deal of aeronautics knowledge and expertise is applicable to aerospace. We have Bombardier, which is an important player in Quebec, but we also have the Airbus and Bell Textron facilities. People in the aeronautics sector are interested in what is happening in the space sector, and their skills often come in handy. Given that Quebec has this strength, I hope the federal government will be willing to recognize that we already have assets and strengths in Quebec. Why not build on Quebec's strengths and assets rather than spreading our efforts all over the place and ultimately ending up with something that is less powerful, less interesting and less effective? Quebec has the expertise, and we must make the most of it.

Unfortunately, the federal government still does not have an aeronautics policy, even though aeronautics is a leading industry that is very lucrative for Quebec. It is a cutting-edge field, and yet Ottawa has no vision for it. I think that is unfortunate. The same goes for the aerospace sector, as we now see. This is 60 years overdue. It is high time we developed a vision, but is this really a vision? I do not think it is. This is a framework. If the government has a vision, then it would be good to know what it is. Right now, it is unclear whether the government has one.

Obviously, the current regulatory framework is inadequate. We will work on that, particularly with regard to rocket launches, satellite imagery and the full potential of satellites, which have a growing number of applications. We are discovering more every year, almost every month. We know that satellites are highly useful, including in the war in Ukraine. Were it not for these advantages, particularly those derived from the tools the Americans have put at its disposal, Ukraine would have already lost the war. That aspect is often underestimated. We often tend to overlook it, but it is very important. This has an impact in the military sphere, but there is also the issue of Internet access in the regions, in more remote areas.

In the future, will technological developments render the entire wired Internet system we have today obsolete? Will our communications and telecommunications systems become outdated? I cannot say. What I do know is that we are increasingly seeing a trend toward satellite technologies when it comes to investments and that there is a lot of potential there.

Earlier, I mentioned that Quebec is home to several companies in the aerospace industry. I am thinking about Héroux Devtek, which is in the landing gear business. We could also talk about Quebec companies that manufacture flight simulators. In addition, there is a new Quebec start-up company based in Longueuil, in my area. It plans to use the facility in Canso, Nova Scotia. This company is Reaction Dynamics, which is working on its own vehicle, the Aurora-8, which would be completely independent from what is being done in the United States. It is a great start-up that we want to encourage, because we think it has a lot of potential. We are proud of our homegrown expertise. We believe that the Canadian government must continue to have a vision. I say "continue", but the government did not have a vision until now, so in fact, it needs to develop a vision.

What matters to us is that Quebec's interests are taken into account. Expertise in the satellite industry is important. Apparently, 20% of our economic activity is tied to satellites. That is huge. With digitization playing an ever-increasing role in almost everything, satellites are the future. That is why it is important to get on board.

I have more to say, but I may get a chance to say it during the committee's study.

• (1115)

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, one of the aspects I want to highlight with regard to the legislation is the impact it would have on the industry as a whole after we see the legislation pass, go to committee and increase the amount of dialogue.

There are industries, such as our aerospace industry. Quebec has a very healthy, growing and vibrant aerospace industry, and so does the province of Manitoba. I made reference to Magellan and the fine work it does. We are talking about good, quality jobs. By having legislation of this nature, we would be establishing a framework.

My question for the member is, would he not agree that establishing a framework, so that we can do what we are doing with the legislation, will be good for our aerospace industry in particular?

• (1120)

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, to answer my colleague's question, yes, as we said, we welcome Bill C-28.

In Quebec, the aerospace industry accounts for more than 40,000 jobs—nearly 42,000 according to 2023 data. A lot of people work in this sector. I do not think Manitoba has 42,000 jobs in this sector. I am not saying there are no skilled people or people working on interesting things in Manitoba, but I do think Quebec has significant expertise that we have to retain. We have to leverage that, not spread our efforts thin. That is why I am concerned about putting so much discretionary power in the minister's hands. I want to make sure we have a fair system that rewards excellence, not whoever Ottawa chooses to reward.

**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his informative and enlightening speech.

I have two questions for him. Given the uncertainties in the commercial launch market, what level of risk does he think the government should accept when looking to develop a new industry?

Also, how can we ensure that taxpayers are well protected?

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague for asking her questions in French. We always appreciate it when people make the effort to speak French in the House. We do not hear that very often. The presence of French is often forgotten in Canada, if not denigrated and repressed. My colleague's question is like a burst of fresh air.

As for her questions, I would say that the matter is fairly broad. That is precisely why it would be necessary to hear from many witnesses during the committee study of Bill C-28 to ensure that we can properly address the concerns and questions my colleague has raised. At this time, I cannot claim to have all the answers to these questions.

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague and friend, the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, on his speech.

We talked about the fact that the government does not have an aerospace policy. In the past, we have seen a lack of federal investment in this industry. For example, even though Quebec invested everything it could, we lost out with the Bombardier C Series because the federal government did not want to invest.

Does my colleague think that things will be different for the aerospace industry? Could he elaborate on that?

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, I have absolutely no reason to trust Ottawa on this issue because history has shown that Ottawa does not serve Quebec well in any regard.

Let us look at a recent example, when relations with the U.S. were already strained and President Trump was already in office. Bombardier makes air surveillance aircraft that could have served our armed forces very well, and yet Canada decided to snub Bombardier's aircraft and buy American planes. The government could have bought its aircraft from Quebec and strengthened the capabilities of our local industry, but for whatever reason that is beyond my

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comprehension, it always ignores Quebec's talent. It is very frustrating.

That is why we think that an independent Quebec would be better off showcasing its own expertise, rather than being constantly looked down on by the rest of Canada.

• (1125)

[English]

**Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, given the broad discretion this legislation lends to regulations, would the member agree with me and our party that draft regulations should be published prior to the passing of this legislation?

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, that would be helpful because we are kind of in the dark at the moment. We are being told that regulations will be forthcoming. Do government members already know what will be in the regulations? If they know, why not put that in Bill C-28? If they think the regulations are not fit to be included in the bill, why not tell us more so we have a sense of the government's plans?

My concern here is that we have, on occasion, seen the government make all kinds of program announcements. It announces wonderful things in the budget, and then it takes years for things in the budget to materialize as actual programs. Sometimes the government announces things without knowing what it is going to do or where it is going to go with them. If we had a sense of where it wanted to go, we could work more effectively in committee going forward.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, it is estimated that with the passage of the legislation, we could see something actually taking place in Canada as early as 2028. It is an ambitious goal, but it can be achieved. The legislation, in itself, plays a critical role in hitting that particular goal.

I am wondering if the member from the Bloc could give an indication of how they see the legislation going through the House.

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, in response to my colleague's question about how I see this moving forward, I would say that I hope it will progress fairly quickly in the House. We often focus on the big picture in the House. We tend to pay less attention to the details and concentrate more, shall we say, on the broader issues. As for how things will proceed at the committee stage, that will depend on the witnesses who are called to appear and on what we learn.

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At the moment, I think we are at the stage of sorting out the details. The government has admitted this itself, given that this is the first bill of its kind to be introduced. In fact, there is no legal framework specifically for the aerospace sector. At the moment, we are simply relying on the laws that apply to air travel and aeronautics. As the government itself is still in its infancy, we cannot claim to be any further ahead than the government. At least, I hope that is the case.

[English]

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, what we see, yet again, from the Liberal government and the Liberal minister is another power grab giving more autonomy to the minister to make decisions, which, of course, leads to less transparency, less accountability and less parliamentary oversight.

Does the member opposite think it is a good thing to give more power to the ministers and to have less transparency, less parliamentary oversight and less debate for all parliamentarians?

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, I am not entirely convinced. I need to have all the information before I can answer that, but if the past is any indication, it does not look good. We know that we have a government that likes to do things behind closed doors.

To me, what matters is ensuring the highest possible level of accountability and transparency. I am hopeful that, during the committee review stage, amendments will be proposed that will allow us to ensure that going forward.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what a pleasure it is to be able to rise today to speak on significant legislation. Bill C-28 is legislation that I believe should inspire people to think big in terms of the opportunities that are there to build a stronger and healthier country for all. It is a wonderful anniversary piece of legislation, and I do not know if it was actually planned that way. It is great to be having this debate today. It was just one year ago that Canadians elected a new Prime Minister, and that Prime Minister and this government have made it very clear what we want to be able to do.

We talk about building Canada strong and building a sense of security for Canadians. When we take a look at what has taken place over the last year, we see a government that has taken many different initiatives to do exactly what we said we would do in the last election. Building Canada strong for all Canadians is the priority of this government.

The legislation we are dealing with today speaks to that point, I would ultimately argue. I would encourage members to take a look at what is before us and how this legislation would enable an industry in Canada that has done exceptionally well. This legislation speaks volumes in looking at how we can go beyond the type of markets we have and how we can complement what we have today.

As I pointed out, we could actually be sending, via rocket, satellites into orbit as early as 2028. This is a significant and ambitious goal set by the Prime Minister and government. I would love for us to be able to achieve that goal. Part of being able to do that is recognizing the value of the legislation.

I am encouraged by the Conservative, or rather, by the Bloc party's comments in regard to it.

**An hon. member:** Conservative Bloc?

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** That was more of a Freudian slip.

Madam Speaker, I was referring to the Bloc's position when I posed the question of how its members saw the legislation proceeding.

The principle of the legislation is sound. How can someone oppose the principle of what the Government of Canada is trying to do by presenting the legislation? To that end, the Bloc's position was that it could see the legislation going to committee, having some dialogue and having stakeholders come to the table and talk about the legislation and where it might be improved upon and so forth. Ultimately, in listening to the response to my question, I felt relatively optimistic that there is going to be collaboration coming from the Bloc.

Collaboration is an important thing. We want to see collaboration. It is one of the ways we can improve legislation. One of the things that this Prime Minister and government have done very clearly is show that if there are ways in which we can improve something, we are open to doing it.

A very good example of this occurred yesterday. Yesterday, we swore in three new members to the House of Commons, which gave us a majority government. The first action we had on the floor of the House of Commons was the passing of a private member's bill from the opposition that dealt with crime. That is collaboration. We want to see that collaboration with respect to Bill C-28. Bill C-28 is something that should make all of us, in principle, feel good and want to see it happen. Why not? That is actually not a bad question to pose: Why not?

• (1130)

This morning, I had the opportunity to ask the front person for the Conservative Party on this whole debate a very straightforward question, not once but twice: Do they support the principle? Should Canada's space industry have a launch pad here in Canada? That is the essence of what we are talking about today: the ability to launch, via rocket, things such as satellites into space. I was surprised and disappointed, but I think they will come around. They just need a little persuading. The Conservatives will come around to supporting the idea that Canada should have the ability to launch its own satellites.

**An hon. member:** Answer my questions.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I will get to answering some of the member's questions.

The nice thing is that, in listening to the Conservative member's speech, many of the questions he posed could actually be answered in great detail at the committee stage. I look forward to the legislation hitting the committee stage, where those answers will be provided. He might not like the content of the answer, but the government does want to facilitate communication that allows for the passage of this legislation. As I said, it is an ambitious goal that we have, to try to get things in place as early as 2028. I would suggest that we should be thinking about the industries affected.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I was just reminded by one of my friends across the way that we have a majority. However, whether we have a majority or not, I can assure members across the way that, as much as possible, when we see good legislation, we will say, let us get behind it, get it into a committee situation, have that dialogue and see where we can collaborate and whether there are ways in which we can improve the legislation. By all means, let us be open to that, whether it is government legislation or private members' legislation. I think the Prime Minister has been very clear on that particular point.

Having said that, which was a little off-topic but I'll get right back to it, let us talk about the industries that could be positively impacted by legislation of this nature. I made reference to an industry that is so important to the province of Manitoba, as it is for Quebec. Contrary to the Bloc member, I will not say negative things about the aerospace industry in Quebec. However, Manitoba, Quebec and Ontario have aerospace industries that provide thousands of jobs. In Manitoba directly, it is probably just under 10,000, or right around that mark, and I think it has great potential.

I highlighted Magellan Aerospace, which I had the opportunity to tour with ministers, most recently the Minister of Industry. It is an outstanding tour of a first-class, world-class aerospace industry that has developed, and continues to develop, satellites. Magellan has manufactured a satellite that is actually orbiting Earth today. There are hundreds of people who work for Magellan in the city of Winnipeg. When I think of the first-class workers and the good-quality middle-class jobs, I think how Magellan and Winnipeg will benefit because of this legislation. The nice thing is that it is not just Winnipeg. When we think in terms of the Canadian space industry, it is estimated that it could be worth as much as \$40 billion, because of this legislation, in the years ahead.

● (1135)

Today, the space industry directly employs in excess of 10,000 Canadians. In terms of the contribution to Canada's GDP, it is already in the billions of dollars. If we think strictly of the space industry and beyond and complement that with our aerospace industry, we are talking about a lot of good-quality jobs. There is a very powerful and strong economic argument as to why we should be getting behind this legislation, but there is also another aspect of the legislation that is really important for us to recognize.

When we talk about security and independence, we need to think of what we have vested in with respect to our military and the important and vital role that the military would play, both directly and indirectly, in this industry that we would be giving a boost to by bringing forward this legislation in anticipation that it will pass.

### *Government Orders*

What does making Canada secure mean? It means making us less reliant on other nations to do the work that is so important, that Canadians recognize and wanted the government to do in the last federal election one year ago.

I referred to the military and how that would complement the legislation. We need to think of the commitment the Prime Minister made in the last election, that 2% of our total GDP would go to the Canadian Forces, and we did that. It did not take us a full year. It was literally a number of months that had passed by when we were able to say that we had hit that 2% target. We invested in our military, in both personnel and hardware, from long-overdue pay increases to dealing with the development of equipment that we want to ensure those who serve in the forces are better positioned to utilize on whatever front because of the needs of the Government of Canada.

It was just in the last couple of weeks that a record number of Canadians applied to get into the Canadian Forces. I believe the highest number of Canadians applied in over 30 years. Just over 7,000 Canadians expressed an interest in joining the Canadian Forces. Think of the potential that our military has as we look at expanding the space industry. When we talk about the security of Canadians and the direct and indirect benefits, the Canadian Forces plays an absolutely critical role. That is what this legislation would do. It would further enhance those opportunities.

I suspect it is only a question of time before we see more people wanting to explore the space option, the rocket options. We do develop rockets here in Canada. When I toured Magellan Aerospace, they talked about the rocket components to some of their missiles. I suspect it would only take some significant modifications for us to expand upon rocket development here in Canada.

● (1140)

Speaking about Manitoba, there was a time in Manitoba's history when rockets were being launched at significant heights in Churchill, maybe not into orbit, but we were testing rockets in and around the community of Churchill. We have a government, a Prime Minister who says we want to look at ways to build that stronger and healthier economy for all. Well, Churchill could play a role in this, in some form or another into the future. I know the member for Churchill is a very strong and powerful advocate for the community of Churchill, in particular the port of Churchill. There are opportunities to be had by members of Parliament in virtually all regions of the country when we talk about the expansion and the level of expertise, the jobs and the potential that is there.

It was interesting. I was provided with a comment with regard to the U.K. The commercial space launch sector in the U.K. was really launched back in 2018. Today, it is now worth \$35 billion and employs 50,000 people. I would suggest that Canada is well-positioned to really grow in that industry.

We talk about difficult and challenging times, in good part because of what I classify as the three Ts: Trump, tariffs and trade. I can tell colleagues that we need to be doing what the Prime Minister has been talking about and acting on, in terms of looking for ways to become more independent from an economic point of view. This is an area where we can do that.

### *Government Orders*

We have been doing a lot in terms of looking for export opportunities and trade opportunities. We are using all forms of reaching out, while looking for other countries and wealth generators to invest in Canada. As a government over the last year, we have been exceptionally successful at doing that. However, there are other things that we could be doing. Bill C-28 is one of those other things that we could be advancing to build a stronger and healthier economy, to look at some specific industries, to complement our Canadian Forces, to build our space industry, and to complement and see the growth of our aerospace industry. All three of those would benefit with this legislation passing.

My ask to members, in particular within the Conservative Party, is to reflect on the answer that I was provided earlier by the Conservative Party. We should look at it as an opportunity. Yes, there is no doubt there are going to be questions about the legislation. It is the first of its kind that this government is bringing forward. However, let us not delay, indefinitely, legislation that can actually be a good point forward in developing and getting these types of jobs generated and providing that sense of security to Canadians.

A significant percentage of our economy, close to 15% to 20%, goes through satellites. We need to be in the game. What the Prime Minister of Canada, this cabinet and this Liberal caucus are bringing forward would enable Canada to be in the game in a very tangible way. I would hope that all members would support the principle of this legislation.

• (1145)

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North mentioned his admiration for what the U.K. has done, in terms of its space program. In fact, the outer space program act of 1986 established very clearly under the U.K. model that the licensing authority must be satisfied that an activity will not impact national security. There is no statutory duty to consult DND or CSIS in Bill C-28 and no defined national security clearance. This completely contrasts with what the U.K. has.

Does this member realize that there is a real existing gap that puts us at risk, compared to our G7 partners?

• (1150)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, what I would recognize is that Canada is the only G7 country that the member makes reference to that currently does not have its own space launch capabilities. Now we have a Prime Minister who has motivated the government as a whole to recognize the opportunity for us to enter this area.

As opposed to being completely fixated on why we should not bring forward the legislation, I would suggest to the Conservative Party that its fixation should be on how we could improve the legislation, recognize that the principle of having the legislation before us today is a very good thing and allow for the legislation to go through a process where the member and the Conservatives would have more input on how it could come back at third reading.

[Translation]

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is always fas-

cinating to listen to my colleague opposite talk about all of the bills tabled by the government in the House. I have to admit that he is a great public speaker.

That said, what surprised me about his speech is that he talked about how hard-working the Bloc Québécois is and about how the Bloc takes its work seriously. Over the past six years, we have said that the Bloc Québécois is the adult in the room, and I think everyone agrees with that. That is not surprising because we did not change our way of doing things and we will not change it, even if the government does have a majority in the House and in committee.

The Bloc Québécois wants to improve bills. Our guiding principle is that if a measure is good for Quebec, then we will support it, and all the better if it is good for the rest of Canada. We are rather proud of that because we are diligent and hard-working professionals.

My question for my colleague is this: The bill says that some definitions will be established by regulation, but it makes me rather uneasy to give the government the power to establish definitions by regulation. It gives the executive a lot of leeway to change the regulations as it sees fit, without parliamentary debate.

Could my colleague explain why the public servants who drafted this bill are insisting that some rather important definitions in the bill be established by regulation?

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the legislation establishes a very solid framework that would enable us to move forward on this file, which I think is absolutely critical. I articulated in my speech why it is so critical that we move forward.

Nothing prevents further dialogue from taking place at committee stage. At such a point in time, any amendments would strengthen the legislation and address some of the concerns, I am sure that the government would be, at the very least, open to that. Ultimately, we just want to see the legislation get through the process because we have a very ambitious goal in terms of 2028. It would be nice to see something launched.

**Tim Louis (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy (Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we are talking about legislation and the Canadian space launch act. My colleague is from Manitoba, so he will be happy to know that I just recently met with a group called Manitoba Advantage from the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, industry and the Business Council of Manitoba, which are all behind growing our aerospace industries.

We heard from a colleague from Quebec saying that Quebec is poised to grow our aerospace industries. I want to support Ontario, specifically the Waterloo region, for our strong tech sector. We are also poised to grow in the aerospace industries.

We have two universities and a community college in Waterloo region. Can my colleague from Manitoba explain the importance of the aerospace industry in connecting with our post-secondary institutions?

• (1155)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I wish I had thought of making the direct link to that in my comments.

At the end of the day, and I have said this in the past, Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba have very strong, healthy aerospace industries. One of the reasons is because of postgraduate educational facilities that have so much to contribute. We have some of the smartest intellectual individuals and hard workers who make up our communities, whether in Waterloo, Winnipeg or Montreal and the surrounding areas. There is so much that can be contributed to aerospace and the space agency. That is one of the reasons why it is so important that we get this legislation off the ground.

**Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 2% GDP, NATO spending compliant, successful recruiting and now a 2028 rocket launch are all Liberal illusions. It is a ridiculous promise unless they are referring to a model rocket. I have heard enough hot air to launch a rocket.

My question is specific to the components of this legislation. What parts would allow parliamentary review for security screening to protect from foreign interference, hostile state use and the theft of Canadian IP? There is none of that in there. This is all critical. Also, there are components that are missing from the legislation around defence. Could member speak to that?

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member starts off giving out misinformation. He makes a mockery of the 2%, saying that we have not hit the 2%.

Here is a wake-up call for the member opposite: He does not have to believe everything the Conservative back room tells him. We actually hit the 2% months ago. If you get the back room to tell you a bit, what you will find is that we got 2%, the new Prime Minister—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I would remind the hon. member to address his comments through the Chair.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice earlier when one of my Liberal colleagues shouted the famous Buzz Lightyear line, "To infinity and beyond" in response to today's space bill.

That seems to be the level of seriousness this Liberal government has when it comes to such an important issue. This sort of trivialization raises a serious question. When Canadians see this kind of attitude, they wonder whether our legislation is being approached with the rigour it deserves.

### *Government Orders*

Why are we seeing, in this bill, a shift away from disciplined, rules-based decision-making toward something far more secretive and heavy-handed under this Liberal government?

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, let me use the word "excitement."

There is a great deal of excitement when we have an industry that has so much potential and we bring forward legislation that would have a profoundly positive impact, not only on one industry, but on multiple industries. It has just been pointed out how post-secondary facilities themselves would benefit from this. Canadians as a whole, in terms of the overall growth, would generate contributions to the GDP and improve our conditions.

We are talking about thousands of good jobs, plus so many—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Order. We have time for a brief question.

The hon. member for Waterloo.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member's comments and the level of discourse and debate taking place on this legislation.

We saw a Canadian from southwestern Ontario be part of the mission of people going the farthest that we have seen in our lifetime. It has been pretty impressive. It is really encouraging, and initiates the desire for the private sector to grow and for opportunities to grow, where academia meets the private sector and so forth.

Is there anything else the member would like to expand on? I know that constituents in the riding of Waterloo are really looking forward to seeing this debate advance.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, Waterloo, Winnipeg, Montreal and all of Canada will benefit from the passage of this legislation.

**Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying I will be splitting my time with the spectacular member for Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North.

I have to move on to a brief but very sad note. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the tragic incident that happened in my riding in the town of Cobourg yesterday. An OPP officer in my community died in the line of duty in a tragic accident. I want to take a moment to remember Sergeant Brandon Malcolm's memory and send our thoughts and prayers to his family. Godspeed, my friend.

I will start the speech in earnest. Canada has a proud space past. We have numerous accomplishments. Look at the satellites we have built and put into space. There is the Magellan company, which the member for Winnipeg North mentioned. We are all very proud of that. We are proud of great astronauts like Chris Hadfield and Roberta Bondar, and Jeremy Hansen most recently.

### *Government Orders*

I am a “space-phile”. I love two academic subjects. One is space and the other is politics. I was glued to the television, watching Jeremy Hansen. I had the Artemis II app as they made it all the way around the moon. It is the farthest humans have ever been. A Canadian was not just a part of that, but a big part of that. He was leading the charge.

I will warn that criticism of the legislation is coming forward, but let there be no doubt that Conservatives are full-throated supporters of Canadians taking their rightful position in the lead in the next space race.

Let me talk a little about some of the concerns that come from this legislation. It purports to create a legislative framework for the launching of rockets into space from Canada. That is a notable and laudable objective, and it is something we all should aspire to. The challenge is what is actually in the legislation or, more accurately put, what is not in the legislation.

If I can, I will go over some of the things that are not in this legislation. When we look at a piece of legislation that purports to create a framework for the launching of rockets into space, one would think a key term included in it is the word “launch”. It is not included. “Launch vehicle” is also something one would think we would want to define in the legislation. It is not included. “Re-entry vehicle” is another important piece. It is a descriptor and another important definition that one might want to include in that legislation.

Let us go over some of the broad topics now that are not included in the legislation, such as permitting an authorization system, the certification and operation of launch and re-entry sites, safety requirements, financial responsibility and insurance, liability and indemnification, zoning and land use, the application of international agreements and standards, emergency powers and stop orders, administrative enforcement matters, exemptions and exclusions.

I know the members across will ask Conservatives how we are going to vote on this. My question is, what are we going to vote on? Where is the beef, as they say? The legislation might as well be two lines, saying the minister shall grant, on the terms that they wish, a launch pad wherever they want, whenever they want, and we shall just trust them.

I have something I would like to share with all Canadians. If a politician comes up to them, regardless of whether they are a Liberal, a Conservative, from the NDP, a Green or from whatever party, and says to just trust them, do not do it.

Here is a real challenge that comes from the uncertainty and the overreliance on regulation in the legislation. The challenge is the two Cs. One is certainty and the other is corruption.

• (1200)

When we are looking to invest in an economy, when we are looking to invest in a business and when we are looking to buy anything, we want certainty. When an investor is looking from around the world and the trillions of dollars that float around in the global economy, they ask where they are going to put that money. They could put it into a country that has a defined regulatory system and prescribed legislation that allow people to understand with full certainty how their money will be utilized and whether or not a launch

will be permitted, or they could invest in Canada, where, at some point, there will be some regulations about something regarding a launch that will, no doubt, help Liberal insiders.

If I am sitting outside of Canada and I have billions of dollars to invest, I am thinking, “Canada has many great things.” We have some of the leading research scientists in the world. We have great people. We have great resources and great universities, like Waterloo, that are leading the charge. What we do not have from this legislation is certainty, and without certainty, we really do not have anything. It is a challenge, because we do not know how that is going to be interpreted and what the minister is going to do.

The minister, in response to my colleague's question, actually said he just copied his homework, and in the U.S., they do the same. When he says that about the U.S., I hope he is not copying Russia or China. That would be troublesome for its own reasons, but he said they are copying the homework. That is not even entirely true, because in the U.S., the licensing of launch pads is actually done by independent professionals that operate at arm's length from the government, such as the FAA and other professionals. In Canada, with this legislation, we would put it directly under the minister, which then opens us up to the other troublesome C, which is corruption.

When given absolute power, it corrupts absolutely. That was said many years ago. We have certainly seen it over the last 10 years. Whether we are talking about the WE scandal, SNC-Lavalin, the billions of dollars blown on consultants or the Canada Infrastructure Bank, these ministers have a penchant for making bad decisions. As I said earlier, if any politician of any stripe comes up to a Canadian and says, “Just trust me,” that is the key for all Canadians to know not to trust them. There is a reason why we put the rule of law in place. It is that it creates a level, equal playing field for all Canadians.

There is perhaps a reason that we have seen \$1 trillion of capital flowing out from our country during the Trudeau and Carney eras of government. This is challenging.

• (1205)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I think the member knows what he did wrong. He cannot use members' names in the House. I will let him continue.

**Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I should say “the Prime Minister”.

It is 10 years of Liberal rule, and I appreciate the ability to underline that. It is another Liberal, one might say. In the last decade, we have seen \$1 trillion of capital flowing out. It is precisely what this legislation would embody that is the problem.

*Government Orders*

Here we are. Now we are sitting here and we have to make a legislative decision. We have to decide whether or not we support this. What Conservatives are really asking for is to know what we are voting for. Nancy Pelosi famously once said they will pass the bill and then read the bill. The Conservatives believe the opposite should be true. We need to know what is in this legislation. My hon. colleague has posed a number of great questions about security and the screening of the payloads that will go up. We need to know what is in the legislation.

I have two constructive suggestions for the members opposite. One is to include necessary things, such as a definition of a launch vehicle in the legislation. Amend it so that we know what is in the legislation.

The second, if they really wish to go forward with regulations, is that there is nothing in law to stop them from publishing today draft regulations that would demonstrate to all Canadians exactly what their intent is going forward. Take some of the ministerial discretion and put it onto the people who are the professionals who are able to objectively review it and provide us with objective decisions on it.

Those are a couple of things that would certainly help Conservatives make a decision.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am a bit more encouraged now than I was when the Conservative critic stood up, because the current Conservative seems to be open to the idea that it is a good thing for Canada to have a launch pad.

At the end of the day, if we could see the legislation go through the process, it would be a positive step forward. The government has a very ambitious goal. We would like to see something launched as early as 2028. That is doable, but we require the legislation.

I am curious to know whether the member opposite agrees that we should try to get something sooner so that we are in a better position—

• (1210)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The member for Northumberland—Clarke.

**Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I think in this case, it would make a ton of sense to go slow to go fast. We need to walk this legislation back to provide certainty going forward.

To give an idea to those folks who are watching out there, the government did not even create a new piece of legislation. It is amending the Aeronautics Act, which is really there to regulate airplanes. When the government understands that there is a difference between airplanes and rockets, we will be well ahead.

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Canadians hear “space launches”, they think of rockets and satellites, but what they should really be thinking about is security, who is launching, what they are launching and who is behind it. This where the bill falls short. There is no clear national security

test written into law. Instead, we are told to trust the ministers. They will figure it out later, behind closed doors.

This is an object being launched into orbit over Canadian territory, over our Arctic and over our infrastructure in our communities. Why is the government asking Canadians to trust discretion, instead of putting clear and enforceable security laws into rules that would guarantee that foreign adversaries cannot exploit Canada's space sector?

**Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, having the ability to launch rockets into space is incredibly important for our Canadian economy. This is why it is that much more critical that it be done correctly.

I do not understand why the government has created this slapdash job of legislation. It really would not have been difficult to create a separate piece of legislation that would have understood and contemplated the complexities of space travel and put Canada on the right foot going forward.

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working on the bill with my colleague when we get to committee stage. My question for him is the following. We have a bill that is about 10 pages long and has almost no details on the government's real intentions. We are being told that everything will come through regulations. Does my colleague find that reassuring and does he think that is enough to turn this bill into a real law?

[English]

**Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I find it troubling, but more importantly, so do many Canadians, including those who control the capital that would ultimately be used to build space launches and invest in rockets here in Canada. Because of this uncertainty, they would not know whether their investment will be returned to them.

I agree 110%. A piece of legislation on something as complex as space travel should not be a couple of pages in length.

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not going to get into the semantics of whether it is a couple of pages long or a lot of pages long, but I am hearing that there is a need for Canada to be in this space.

Is the member suggesting that not doing anything is the answer, or is he suggesting that perhaps we could find a way to move forward and make sure that Canada is part of this game?

**Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, when I talk to my son about doing his homework, I repeat a line that has been used for hundreds of years. Every job has two things in common: It has to be done, and it has to be done well. We have only the first accomplished here.

**Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House and speak on behalf of the great people of Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North.

*Government Orders*

There are some subjects that still have the power to inspire wonder, and certainly space is one of them. For generations, it has sparked curiosity, discovery and the belief that the next great breakthrough may still be ahead of us. It reminds us that progress is not automatic but must be chosen, must be built and must be earned. Canada has long had the talent, the ingenuity and the industrial capacity to contribute to the space economy. Our laws have not kept pace with the opportunities before us.

Canada is not a stranger to excellence in space, far from it. We gave the world the Canadarm. We became leaders in robotics, satellite technology, remote sensing, communications and advanced aerospace engineering. Canadian innovators have helped shape missions that reached orbit, the International Space Station, Mars and beyond. Our workers, engineers, technicians, researchers and manufacturers have earned global respect, and just recently, Canadians had another reason to feel proud: Commander Jeremy Hansen from southwestern Ontario, a Canadian astronaut, recently returned home as part of the Artemis II mission. That mission carried humans to the moon for the first time in more than 50 years and farther from earth than any people in human history.

Think about that. A Canadian helping lead humanity's return to deep space exploration is not only symbolic. It is a reminder that Canadian talent belongs at the front edge of great endeavours. The question before us is simple: Will our laws, policies and economic climate allow Canada to participate fully in the next era of space development, or will we once again watch opportunity leave our shores, as has happened too often after 10 years of the Liberals?

The global space economy is no longer theoretical. It is real, and it is growing rapidly. It includes launch services, satellite deployment, communications, earth observation, defence applications, navigation, research, manufacturing, data services and technologies that we have not yet even imagined. The global space economy is expected to contribute in excess of a trillion dollars in just a few years and \$1.8 trillion within a decade. It is an industry growing at nearly 10% a year. Countries around the world understand this, and they are competing for this investment. They are building launch capacity, they are creating clear regulatory pathways and they are moving with urgency.

Canada also possesses natural advantages that many other countries do not. We are a vast nation with northern geography; we have access to remote corridors, coastal opportunities, strong aerospace clusters and world-class research institutions such as universities that have been mentioned in the debate thus far; and we have the ingredients many countries would envy. The question is whether we have the policy environment to make use of them.

Canada must understand this as well. When investors face uncertainty, as my colleague from Northumberland—Clarke just talked about, they go elsewhere. When approvals take too long, they go elsewhere. If governments confuse announcements with outcomes, they also go elsewhere. That is why regulatory certainty matters, and that is why it is puzzling that Bill C-28 would give the Liberal minister all the power to make decisions on what goes into space from behind closed doors. This would undermine transparency, and Parliament has every reason to be concerned.

However, there are certainly positive elements in Bill C-28. It recognizes that launch and re-entry activities require a dedicated framework. What we are asking for is a draft of those details around that. The bill would address safety, liability, site certification and emergency powers, but legislation is only a beginning, and that is where there are gaping holes.

The true test is execution, and that is a concern when the legislation would give all the power to one individual, the minister. Where is the regulatory framework? Can Canada approve projects in a timely manner? Can we attract private capital? Can we ensure public confidence? Can Canada build a reputation for competence and reliability? Those questions remain unanswered by the legislation.

● (1215)

Another principle that must guide us from the beginning is transparency. Whenever governments are involved in strategically emerging sectors, and whenever public funds, public lands or public approvals are at stake, Canadians must know that decisions are being made fairly, openly and on merit. That principle matters all the more when recent contracts and infrastructure decisions have raised legitimate concerns, and when political connections and insider proximity to power seem to have trumped a framework brought about by professionals.

Canadians are ambitious people. They support private sector growth, they support innovation and they do not want favouritism. A new industry must not become an old story. If Canada is serious about building leadership in the space economy, then procurement must be clean, selection processes must be credible and accountability must be absolute. Conservatives are in favour of enhancing Canada's sovereignty and space capabilities, but we are not in favour of any framework that could become a blank cheque for Liberal insiders or foreign agents.

Canadians have recently seen major public decisions raise legitimate questions. In Nova Scotia, the government announced a \$200-million agreement tied to the planned spaceport project, but it should be noted that the project's proponent has publicly listed former Nova Scotia Liberal premier Stephen McNeil on its advisory board. At the transport committee, we also examined the Canada Infrastructure Bank loan connected to the Mersey River wind project and the concerns surrounding that process and its uneasy connection to Liberal insiders.

These examples are exactly why emerging strategic sectors must begin the right way. Canadians should be confident that contracts are awarded on merit, public money is protected and proximity to power never outweighs public interest.

This debate is also about something larger. It is about national confidence. Too often, Canada has grown comfortable thinking small. We should be a country that builds major projects, and certainly notwithstanding the record of the Liberal government, so let us not allow Bill C-28 to become a missed opportunity because it is too dependent on political will and not proper regulatory processes, administrative tribunals and the needed oversights.

We should be a country that has the tax regulatory climate to set up a healthy private sector that invests in advanced industries. We should be a country that rewards innovators, engineers, tradespeople, entrepreneurs and workers who turn ideas into reality. We should be a country that looks forward. In communities like mine, we know what advanced industry looks like. We know the value of steel, precision manufacturing, logistics, defence, engineering and skilled trades. Those same capabilities can and should help power Canada's next growth sectors, including aerospace and space technologies. That applies to ports, transportation corridors, energy and manufacturing as well.

Bill C-28 now comes before Parliament with its gaping holes. It deserves careful study and thoughtful consideration at committee, because it needs much more detail. It deserves witness testimony from industry, regulators, legal experts, security experts, provincial partners and innovators on the ground. We should examine competitiveness. We should examine liability exposure. We should examine timelines. We should examine transparency safeguards. We should ensure that the final product would help Canada succeed in practice, not merely in press releases.

Canada has the people, Canada has the talent, Canada has the geography, Canada has the industrial base and Canada has the history. What we need now is the seriousness to match it. I look forward to seeing the bill studied at committee, strengthened and judged by whether it helps Canada compete, build and lead in the years ahead.

• (1220)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recognizing that now is the time, the government is focused on building Canada strong for all of us in different ways.

When we think of securing our future and of the economic potential, the thousands of jobs and the contributions to the GDP, it is not just about the space industry but also involves our aerospace industries and post-secondary facilities, with both direct and indirect jobs. We are talking about tens of thousands of lives. All of us get impacted by it. The legislation is a critical step in moving forward.

I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts on why it is important that, as a House, we deal with this issue at this time so we can create—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North.

**Dan Muys:** Mr. Speaker, we agree. There is incredible economic opportunity in the space economy and in sectors related to it. Con-

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servatives have always agreed with that. I know that my colleague from Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna identified in his thoughts in the House, going back to Diefenbaker, Mulroney and Harper, how we have helped advance that.

What we are saying and have said consistently in only the first two hours of debate on this piece of legislation is that there are the gaping holes in Bill C-28 that would rest all the power with the minister to make those decisions. That causes grave concerns around Liberal insider access. It certainly is not a matter of transparency. Where are the rules, where—

• (1225)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is an industrious member of the transport committee. I learn more each time I speak with him.

Earlier today, the Minister of Transport told me in response to a question that the people at the Canadian Space Agency would help him make sure that payloads have national security screening. There would be no statutory duty to consult DND or CSIS. The Canadian Space Agency is not a security or intelligence body. It has no statutory mandate to conduct national security investigations. It has expertise but zero authority.

Is the member concerned that the minister would depend on an agency to do something it is not meant to do?

**Dan Muys:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the vice-chair of the transport, infrastructure and communities committee, for his great work on this project and on so many others.

The member raises excellent points. The CSA is not the expert on defence, and that is why we need to hear from experts at committee, such as CSIS, as the member mentioned, and others, that can address it. If we are going to invest this kind of money into a project such as the one that is being proposed, where are the safeguards against foreign interference? Where are the safeguards against influence by others? Those questions have not been asked, nor does the legislation address how that would happen.

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**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the new Liberal space bill reads like yet another one-sided deal. Taxpayers would cover the risk, while Liberal friends and wealthy private investors would collect the reward. If launches fail, Canada pays. If they succeed, the profits are privatized.

Why is the government proposing building a space program where the public carries the liability but the benefits are reserved for a select few?

**Dan Muys:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. That is the crux of this. Why would all the liability be on the taxpayer if things do not go right? Those are the questions we want to ask as the bill is studied at committee. Those are the oversights, rules and transparency that need to be added.

Do not get me wrong; there is obviously a role for the private sector. Conservatives have always believed there is a great role for the private sector. That has certainly been proven in the space economy throughout the years and in our leadership on the Canadarm and so many other programs, but there needs to be an equal weighting because the private sector will invest where there is certainty and regulatory oversight. That is what needs to happen.

[Translation]

**Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Sydney—Glance Bay.

I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-28, which represents a significant step forward for Canada's economic and strategic future.

To begin, I would like to point out that I was elected a year ago today. I want to thank the people of Beauport—Limoilou for putting their trust in me, and I hope that they have been proud of the work that I have accomplished for them in this first year. I also want to take a moment to wish all of my colleagues a happy first anniversary.

I would also like to thank the people who work every day, with diligence and dedication, to serve the people of Beauport—Limoilou. I thank Souraya, who welcomes all visitors to the office with warmth, empathy, and professionalism. I thank her for her daily commitment and her reassuring presence. I thank Aboubacar, who assists newcomers and residents who need help with the Canada Revenue Agency. I thank him for his attentiveness, patience and kindness. I thank Nicholas, who builds valuable relationships with organizations in the riding and accompanies me to community events. I thank him for his unwavering commitment to the residents and his professionalism. I would like to thank Myriam, who supports me every day here in Ottawa and who works tirelessly to ensure that everything runs smoothly. I thank her for her support, her dedication and her efficiency. Finally, I would like to thank Nancy, who manages the constituency office remarkably well, with a masterful touch. I thank her once again for her invaluable support in this wonderful and crazy adventure. Serving the constituents is a team effort, and I am fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional people. I thank them all.

Finally, I would be remiss if I failed to thank my partner and my children for their support. Without Mélanie, I would not be here to-

day. She has been by my side since I first started thinking about this, right from the very beginning of this journey. She told me she would always be there for me, and she is, every single day. Without her, none of this would be possible. This work is demanding. It requires a great deal of time, energy and sacrifice. Without the support of our families, it is very difficult to succeed and stay the course. I thank her for being that pillar of strength, that quiet strength and that indispensable presence in my life.

Last week, the day after Bill C-28 was tabled in the House, we marked Earth Day. It is a day that reminds us that we share the same planet, with shared responsibilities. Often, when we take a step back and look a little further afield, this reality becomes even more clear. We got a glimpse of this recently with the Artemis II mission. The images of earth captured during the mission and broadcast by NASA were striking. Seen from space, our planet appears both vast and fragile, without borders or divisions. Even though we have had images of earth for over 60 years, we never tire of them; they are still as magnificent as ever, as if we were seeing them for the first time.

Millions of people around the world watched that mission with fascination. For a moment, borders became blurred. Differences gave way to a shared sense of pride, curiosity and wonder. Space exploration has this unique power. It reminds us that, when we work together, when we rely on knowledge, innovation and collaboration, there is virtually no limit to what we can accomplish. It also reminds us that, even in a world that is undergoing rapid and often complex and uncertain changes, we still have the ability to come together around promising and ambitious projects for the good of humanity.

Canada must not be a mere observer on the sidelines of this great adventure. In fact, Canada has always been at the forefront of the great advancements in space. We were one of the first countries to send a satellite into orbit. We developed technologies that are recognized around the world. In 1962, Canada became the third country in the world, after the U.S. and Soviet superpowers, to design and build its own satellite. That is a testament to the historic leadership and ambition that have always driven Canada's space program. Even now, Canadians are still directly involved in the most ambitious missions of our time.

● (1230)

These achievements are a reflection of exceptional expertise, a steadfast commitment to innovation and a forward-looking vision. Above all, they remind us of one essential thing: potential; the potential of Canada, the potential of our businesses, the potential of our researchers and engineers, and the potential of the younger generations who look to these accomplishments and see endless possibilities. Behind every mission, behind every technological breakthrough, there are young people with dreams, young people who choose to pursue careers in science, engineering, aeronautics and space exploration, because they know these fields hold the promise of a bright future. That is why we have a responsibility to create the conditions necessary for this potential to be fully realized here.

Today, despite our recognized expertise and our long-standing contributions, Canada remains the only G7 country without a sovereign space launch capability. As we can see, several other countries have already achieved this. Take the United Kingdom for example, which established its space sector in 2018 and has since developed a \$35-billion industry employing more than 50,000 people. In practical terms, this means that our companies, our institutions, and even our government must rely on other countries to launch their satellites into orbit.

This dependence results in costly delays, diverts investment that could be made right here in Canada and exposes our critical infrastructure to decisions beyond our control. Nearly 20% of the Canadian economy relies on satellite connectivity, whether for telecommunications, agriculture, marine navigation, supply chain information, mining projects in remote areas, science, government operations or Canadian defence. This dependence is only going to increase.

The global space industry is booming, with projections exceeding \$1.5 trillion by 2032. Bill C-28 reflects that reality. This bill enables us to transform our expertise into a genuine driver of economic growth. It represents a concrete opportunity to create wealth, support our businesses and secure Canada's place in the global economy of tomorrow. It aims to provide Canada with the necessary framework to develop a sovereign space launch capability right here, on our own soil.

It will also help attract investment, create high-quality jobs and position Canada as a key player in the space economy of the future. By passing this bill, we have an opportunity to take this industry to a whole new level, with the potential to generate up to \$40 billion in total revenue in Canada. Behind those numbers lie very real benefits for Canadians. For example, a spaceport project in Nova Scotia could create up to 16,000 jobs and boost the economy of an entire region, while adding \$300 million to Canada's GDP.

Most importantly, this bill allows us to move from merely recognizing our potential to taking concrete steps to realize it. By developing space launch capabilities in Canada, we are strengthening both our sovereignty and our competitiveness in an industry poised for tremendous growth. Since the new government took office, it has made a number of decisions with this sovereignty in mind, including on economic diversification, investments in our infrastructure and yesterday's announcement regarding the sovereign wealth fund that Canada is setting up.

If the past few weeks have taught us anything, it is this: When we look beyond the immediate, when we work together and when we believe in our abilities, we can achieve great things, and Canada is no exception.

• (1235)

[English]

**Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talks about transforming the great potential of the space economy into action.

One of the things that we as Conservatives believe is that this bill has massive, gaping holes, in terms of no regulatory framework. It is certainly a blank cheque to the minister to make decisions. That

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lack of regulatory certainty is going to drive private sector investment in the space economy away.

How do we attract private sector investment when there is no certainty? The private sector needs regulatory certainty in order to invest. Would the member care to comment on that?

[Translation]

**Steeve Lavoie:** Mr. Speaker, with this bill, we are providing certainty and predictability. We want investments to be made here in Canada. These are investments for future generations.

During my speech, I talked about the young people who watched Artemis II. I am well aware that some things are expenditures and others are investments. In this case, we are talking about long-term investments. We need to pass this bill now to bring those investments here. This is a sector that is growing rapidly and exponentially. Decisions need to be made now and quickly. That is what Canadians expect from us. They expect us to make decisions and ensure that Canada is ready for the future.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments my colleague has put on the record this afternoon. I really want to amplify that Quebec, Manitoba and Ontario have very strong and healthy aerospace industries. In many ways, Quebec leads space development, and the aerospace industry in particular, and there would be, through the passage of this legislation, the opportunity to expand those critical industries.

I wonder if my colleague could provide his perspective, because I know he is very opinionated on the aerospace industry in Quebec, on how that industry would benefit through this legislation.

• (1240)

[Translation]

**Steeve Lavoie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. Yes, in the past, we were not quick enough to invest in certain sectors. Our decisions did not come fast enough. Now is the right time to make this kind of decision.

The whole world is watching us, and Canada is the only G7 country that is not autonomous. Twenty per cent of Canada's economy relies on satellites, yet we have no autonomous launch capabilities. We have been talking a lot about sovereignty over the past year. People see what is going on with the global uncertainty. This is highly relevant to the government's actions. There are short-, medium- and long-term actions.

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[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the government and the Prime Minister have established a fairly ambitious goal. Hopefully, sometime in 2028, we will actually be able to launch something from Canada, which would be a first. Part of that is ensuring that we get this legislation in place.

I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts on why this legislation would do a lot of what we have been talking about: securing Canada's future and creating good-quality jobs into the future.

[Translation]

**Steeve Lavoie:** Mr. Speaker, this sector will create jobs for the future. We are talking about innovation and engineering. It is a developing sector with incredible potential that puts Canada front and centre. These are decisions that have to be made today. In practical terms, investments are already being made, but right now, we need to speed up the process and take the right steps.

[English]

**Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today with pride and with purpose to speak in support of Bill C-28, the Canadian space launch act. As a proud Nova Scotian, the member of Parliament for Sydney—Glace Bay and someone who has previously had the honour of representing Cape Breton—Canso, I know this project. I know the people behind it. I know the communities that have believed in it and I know exactly what is at stake, because this is not just a bill, but a decision. It is a decision about whether Canada will be a country that launches or a country that watches from the sidelines.

Bill C-28 is about whether Canada becomes a sovereign, space-faring nation, one that launches from its own soil, builds its own capabilities and competes in one of the fastest-growing sectors on earth or whether we continue to rely on others. Right now, despite all of our talent, all of our innovation and all of our history, Canada is the only G7 country without domestic launch capability. This is not a position we should accept, and it is not a position Nova Scotia is willing to accept.

I was proud to stand alongside the Minister of Justice and the CEO of the Maritime Launch Services when we announced the Canada-U.S. Technological Safeguards Agreement. That agreement cleared the path, and it made commercial space launch in Canada possible, but possibility is not enough. Bill C-28 would turn the possibility into reality. It would provide a legal and regulatory framework, and the certainty that allows companies to invest, to build and to launch from Canadian soil. Without it, the opportunity does not disappear, but it simply goes somewhere else.

I hope colleagues across the aisle will support the bill, but if they do not, they should be prepared to explain some things to Nova Scotians. Why is it that the federal Conservatives keep opposing the very projects that the Progressive Conservative governments in Nova Scotia are proudly championing? Let us be very clear about the facts. A Progressive Conservative premier supports the project. A Progressive Conservative finance minister supports the project. A Progressive Conservative minister of economics supports this

project. They have said so publicly. They have invested in it, and they are building it. However, federal Conservatives stand in this House and question it. This just does not add up.

Premier Tim Houston has been clear. Nova Scotia is proud to be home to Canada's first commercial spaceport, and its government did not just say that; it backed that up with real investment, real policy and real leadership. It understands exactly what this project represents. It is jobs, growth, opportunity and a future. This is not an isolated case. Nova Scotians have seen this pattern before. Here are three examples. Offshore wind, developed in partnership with the same Progressive Conservative government, was opposed by the federal Conservatives. It was mentioned today. The Mersey River Wind project, a \$206-million investment powering 50,000 homes, was opposed by the federal Conservatives. Now, a spaceport supported by a Progressive Conservative premier is questioned once again by the federal Conservatives.

Nova Scotians to whom I talk are asking a very simple question: Why does the federal Conservative Party keep saying “no” to Nova Scotia? Here is the reality. This is not theoretical. It is not hypothetical. This is happening right now in Nova Scotia. On November 20, 2025, a rocket launched from Nova Scotia, from Canadian soil, for the first time in 27 years. A rocket has already launched, so let us be honest about what this debate is. This is not about whether the industry could exist; it already does. The question is whether Canada will lead it or lose it.

This is about investment in Canadian industry, workers and communities that have been told too many times to wait their turn. It is about creating good-paying jobs during construction and in the long term, but it is much more than that. It is about people. It is about whether young Canadians can build careers in aerospace, advanced manufacturing, robotics and innovation without having to leave Nova Scotia to do it. For far too long, the story in Atlantic Canada has been about out-migration, young people leaving for opportunities somewhere else.

Bill C-28 is about changing that story. It is about building something new, something that has never existed in this country before. That requires vision, leadership and investment before the finish line, because that is how industries are built. We do not wait until an industry is complete to support it; we support it so it can exist. It is not a flaw in the policy, but that is the policy.

• (1245)

Canada has a proud history in space. We built the Canadarm. We sent astronauts into orbit. We are part of lunar missions. Jeremy Hansen is part of the Artemis program to return to the moon. We have the talent. We have the innovation. We have the credibility. When it comes to launching from our own country, we rely on others right now, on foreign infrastructure and on foreign timelines. Strong partners matter, but so does standing on our own two feet. A country like Canada should not have to ask for permission to launch its satellites. That gap, quite frankly, needs to be closed, and Nova Scotia is where we close it.

Nova Scotia is uniquely positioned for this with its geography, its coastal location and its Atlantic launch trajectory. These are not theoretical advantages. These are real competitive advantages in the global space economy. This is why Maritime Launch Services chose Canso. This is why international partners from Europe to Asia are already lining up for Nova Scotia. This is why this is not just a regional project, but a national asset rooted in my province of Nova Scotia, serving all of Canada.

The project also represents partnership with the municipalities involved, in particular Guysborough County, indigenous communities engaged in this economic opportunity, workers, tradespeople, engineers and innovators across this country. This is what building a nation looks like. It is ambitious, forward-looking and grounded in real communities in Nova Scotia. Again, I ask what the alternative is. Is it to step back, to hesitate or to let other countries take the lead? This is what is at stake without Bill C-28: Investments, jobs and opportunities go elsewhere, and Canada falls behind.

Nova Scotia is not asking for permission to build the future. We are already building it. A rocket has already launched. The infrastructure is being built. The partnerships are in place and the momentum is real. The only question is whether the House will match that ambition. The federal Conservatives can continue to say no to Nova Scotia, but our government and in fact the Progressive Conservative provincial government in Nova Scotia are saying yes to jobs, innovation, economic growth, Canadian sovereignty and a country that builds.

Bill C-28 would make Canada a space-faring nation. It would strengthen our sovereignty. It would create real opportunity for Canadians and send a clear message to Canadians and to the world: Canada is not standing on the sidelines anymore. We are stepping forward, we are building and we are launching.

• (1250)

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary may or may not be aware, but the Minister of Transport, when I questioned him today about the glaring gaps in national security screening, said not to worry because we have the Canadian Space Agency. Well, the Canadian Space Agency has no national security mandate. In fact, the bill itself, Bill C-28, is completely silent on CSIS or any other national security review.

If the Canadian Space Agency has expertise, maybe on a technological basis, but no authority when it comes to national security, who is in charge of making sure that our system is not going to be compromised? We can look at the United Kingdom and the United

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States: They have clear national security to make sure there are not dual-use technologies that can be applied against their people. There is nothing in this bill on that.

**Mike Kelloway:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member and I do enjoy our time together on the transport committee. Let me look at this from a certain perspective. We are here today to talk about a legislative framework for processes that follow international standards and that keep security first and foremost in mind. Right now, we are putting that legislative framework to session, but we have a very talented transportation committee. I hope at some point we get a chance to study this project and offer solutions and opportunities, ones that I know that we will look to take seriously.

[Translation]

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I note that the member opposite is an MP for Nova Scotia and that he is also the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport for the Liberal government.

I am stating that information because the bill we are currently debating, Bill C-28, addresses the need for Canada to develop its satellite launch and aerospace capabilities, among other things. I think this is a laudable objective, but in his speech, the MP spoke almost exclusively about how important this is for Canada and for Nova Scotia. He completely ignored the fact that more than 40,000 people work in the aerospace sector in Quebec and that Quebec is truly a leader in this cutting-edge technology.

I would like to know whether I should be concerned about my colleague's speech, and I would like to know if there is a place for Quebec in all of this.

[English]

**Mike Kelloway:** Mr. Speaker, the member makes some solid points.

I used Nova Scotia as an example, but I could have easily used Quebec as an example, in terms of the innovation and the collective intelligence when it comes to space, aviation and things of that nature. I think this regulatory framework touches all provinces, all opportunities, the skills and abilities, and the political and collective will of the Quebec people. I think that good things will be happening in Quebec as well as a result of this regulatory framework.

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**Hon. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague, who is also from Nova Scotia, for his passion for our province. I share that passion. I have often used the example that many young people had to leave Nova Scotia and go to some of the bigger cities in Canada to find their way, and now they would no longer have to.

Could the hon. parliamentary secretary describe the genesis of this project? Why this location? What is the strategic advantage of this project in this location in Nova Scotia?

• (1255)

**Mike Kelloway:** Mr. Speaker, Canso meets all the standards by which it is more productive and easier to bring product to space via a variety of means, in particular, satellites and whatnot. I appreciate the member bringing it up.

Many folks in the municipal district of Guysborough and adjacent communities, municipalities, first nations and the private sector support this for all the advantages that Canso brings. Time and time again, we hear from the Conservatives that it is not possible, as well as more negatives.

**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in communities like mine there is a lot of ambition around space launches.

Communities like mine are still waiting to know when we are going to get a chance to clean up derelict vessels around the coastline. I have proponents in my communities who want to remove the boats, but the Liberals defunded and closed the program. When are you going to reopen it and deliver relief to my communities?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Again, please speak through the chair.

**Mike Kelloway:** Mr Speaker, I am not sure when there is going to be time to do that, but I will say it is a very important issue. I was with fisheries as the parliamentary secretary. In terms of the Pacific Coast, we know that there are challenges there, but we are working and, as a member close to me says, we are laser-focused on that.

When it comes to Canada establishing sovereignty and working on space, this bill is the right way—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to discuss this important bill. It is a real opportunity to talk about issues that are important to our communities.

The government has been incredibly ambitious with this bill, talking about the possibility of launching rockets into space from Canada and developing a national space program by 2028. Yet, in front of us we have a bill that is very easy reading because, at only 10 pages, it sketches out the briefest of details around what that program might look like. It is going to be a challenge for the transport committee to think about how to operationalize this and how to think about asking the government where it is heading on this.

One of the characteristics that is emerging from this government, which we really see in this bill, is a trend towards creating a new

organization, putting together very thin details around it and then leaving it to the executive branch of government to sort out, with an incredible amount of discretion. What that does under these circumstances is create a real conundrum. It creates a situation where, as constructive members of a loyal opposition, we want to work with this government to realize the ambitions of Canada and to build Canada into the kind of country that we can all be proud of.

However, we find ourselves facing these situations without a lot of guidance from the government about where it wants to go. The ambitions associated with this bill are galactic, but the realities are closer to an abandoned—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna is rising on a point of order.

**Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, we do not have translation.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I understand that there may not be translation.

Is translation working in French?

I understand that interpretation is working, so I am going to invite the member to resume her comments.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

**Tamara Kronis:** Mr. Speaker, this is actually a wonderful opportunity to indicate that I will be splitting my time with the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix.

I was starting to talk about the fact that the bill is incredibly ambitious. It has ambitions of galactic proportions, in fact, looking to be able to launch Canadian rockets into space and to enhance our ability to participate in a space program. However, one of the challenges is that right now, the program looks like a gravel pit or a gravel-covered lot in Nova Scotia. I am sure the site was selected for a good reason. I am sure it provides an optimal location to be able to launch from, but I think it is going to be important from an oversight perspective to be able to look at and examine the economics of this deal.

We have a very unusual set of circumstances. In this particular case, there was no need, it looks like, from the reports, to actually expropriate this great location. It looks like there was in fact an entity that got there. This was originally, I believe, Crown land and was in fact being leased out to someone who has made what might be a deal of galactic proportions, to be able to lease that space back to the government for a very large amount of money.

What I struggle with under these circumstances is that the need to examine this transaction comes at a time when the Liberal government has actually taken steps in the House, in the last 24 hours, to make it harder to do that. I was in the ethics committee last night for several hours, listening to some of my colleagues from across the aisle speak at great length and with incredible lung capacity to the reasons the committee should not, in fact, get access to documents that the members of the committee were seeking in order to examine matters related to the Prime Minister's schedule, to conflicts of interest and to other matters that Canadians really deserve to be able to see into.

Under the conditions we are in, in this country, if we really are, as the Prime Minister says, in a time of rupture, it is so important for the best ideas to rise to the top. There is only one way for us to get the best ideas, and that is to subject them to detailed questioning and analysis.

It is in that spirit that we approach our duties with respect to the ethics committee. Of course, everyone knows the government wants to live up to its expectations, but the reason that conflict of interest screens exist and committees like the ethics committee exist is that we are all human. This oversight, and the knowledge that this oversight is there, enables us to be crisp in our adherence to the law and to really have it on our minds all the time, which is so important when we are dealing with taxpayer dollars.

That takes me back to the bill and to the fact that already, within hours, frankly, of the initiative being announced, we have some questions as to the financial circumstances around the selection and lease of the site. On top of that, what we layer onto that is a bill that is really and truly quite thin in terms of its regulation. It does not answer some really important questions around how decisions are made, preferring instead to leave them to the discretion of the executive branch of the government.

The thing about the executive branch of the government is that it does not operate in this place. It operates across the street and in various other buildings around the parliamentary precinct. It is so important to have that parliamentary oversight, as we think about questions around the safety and security of something as important as a space program, and as we think about the intelligence implications and the other matters that need to be taken into account when we are launching an ambitious program such as this.

● (1300)

We are examining the bill at a time when the government has taken some steps, in the last 24 hours, to establish sort of an iron control over committees, which it would be able to use to, quite frankly, stifle debate on these issues.

Earlier, one of my colleagues pointed out that in answer to a question about this act, one of the government members involved in transport, I think it might have even been one of the parliamentary secretaries, was discussing how they would be getting information like this. They would be working things out with the Canadian Space Agency. That is of great concern to us because the Canadian Space Agency, while a very important organization, is not an organization that has its focus on security and intelligence matters.

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There are defence implications to a space program like this. There are commercial implications. There are procurement implications. It really is one of those areas where the more I think about it, the more I see the need for a whole-of-government approach. That is not to create additional bureaucracies but to make sure the legislation is precise and clear enough that different parts of the government, different agencies, understand what their roles and responsibilities are and so that regulations around this program can be developed in a sensible and efficient way that would make sure Canada gets the most out of this program at this very important time.

If we are going to build our country in a way that creates good jobs for the next generation, then it is so important to handle this initiative in a responsible way. It is going to be up to the transport committee, and I know my colleagues will do a good job in thinking the bill through.

With that, I thank all of my colleagues, from both sides of the aisle, who have contributed to making this important program launch in a good way. I look forward to answering questions about my remarks.

● (1305)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the legislation speaks for itself in the sense that we recognize the potential to build Canada strong for all by looking at how the space industry, our aerospace industry, our military industrial industries and post-secondary facilities would all, in one way or another, be directly impacted. We have an opportunity here to potentially generate thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in additional GDP contributions over the coming years. What we need is the framework within this legislation.

Is the member committed to seeing the principle of the legislation pass through?

**Tamara Kronis:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for both his ambition and his optimism around this.

If the bill does speak for itself, it does so very quietly, because it is quite thin on detail.

Yes, we agree with the members across the aisle that there is an opportunity here, and we look forward to probing that opportunity in committee and being able to put some substance on the bill.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has said multiple times that this would align Canada with other G7 countries, like the U.K. and the United States.

The legislation in the U.K., the Outer Space Act 1986, literally says that the licensing authority must be satisfied that an activity will not impede national security. In the United States, Congress decided that the giving of indemnification to participants in the space industry should be decided by Congress and not by the administration itself. Why would this legislation do neither?

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**Tamara Kronis:** Mr. Speaker, when I was a little girl, I thought these spaceships went to the moon and beyond through magic and that it was a wonderful, amazing illusion. As I look at this bill, I see yet another example of bills that are magic and illusion in the sense that they purport to put us on even ground with the G7 and to do wonderful and amazing things to propel Canada ahead in the world, but there is an awful lot missing when we look under the covers, including the kind of regulation and detail my colleague just outlined.

• (1310)

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we see here is yet another attempt by a Liberal minister, and the Liberal government, to consolidate power around the office of the minister in giving full discretion to the minister and overlooking the importance of parliamentary oversight, debate and listening to other opinions, which, of course, leads to questions of transparency.

I wonder if the member could comment on whether she thinks it is a good idea to consolidate power in the hands of the minister and not allow parliamentarians to have a fulsome debate on an important issue like this.

**Tamara Kronis:** Mr. Speaker, do not get me wrong. I really respect the fact that the government and my colleagues across the way are struggling to meet the world where it is and to find a good response for Canada in that context.

However, there is a disturbing trend, and it does not just come through Bill C-28. It has also shown up in other legislation, like in the acts enabling the Major Projects Office or Build Canada Homes, where there is an ambitious, big, splashy announcement made and promises made that are pie in the sky, sky-high and into orbit, but when we look at the details, the message is, “Just trust us. We have your back.” In a circumstance where the government is undeniably popular right now, that is one thing, but I hope Canadians do not end up with buyer's remorse down the road when they find out that power has been consolidated in a group of people who do not know how to wield it wisely.

[Translation]

**Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today we are looking at Bill C-28, an act to amend the Aeronautics Act and other acts. Before I even get into this bill on Canadian space launches, I would say that things may already be going off track. Let me explain.

On March 21, Marie Lumsden, who lives in the small community of Canso, Nova Scotia, woke up early. She lives three kilometres from the famous launch site, which is, I imagine, the first of the major projects we are looking at today. She put on her boots and grabbed her camera to go see what had been announced with such great fanfare. There was talk of a \$200-million investment and a site that the government was so proud of. It was the dawn of a new era.

When Marie Lumsden arrived at the site, what she found was a gravel road, two sea cans, and a concrete pad measuring 25 feet by 35 feet, which is roughly the size of a campsite for a 21-foot trailer. All of this cost the government \$200 million, as it so proudly announced.

I am not talking about this here to be oppositional or to create a narrative. I am talking about this because Quebecers and Canadians deserve to know how their money is being spent. When \$200 million is spent on a concrete slab, that raises questions. For many weeks now, citizens, journalists, financial analysts and, now, parliamentary committee members have been asking the same questions.

What we saw yesterday in the House was quite something. We have questions. Canadians have questions. Government Motion No. 9 was adopted, curtailing our ability to ask the government these questions and hold it accountable. Once again, we have a fine example of what is coming our way over the next few years. The questions are serious and they deserve answers. Canadians pay taxes, and they are seeing the government spending their money on projects like this, to the tune of \$200 million for a trailer pad. I think Canadians deserve answers.

Today, I am just going to present some facts and ask the government if it has anything to say in response.

Let us talk about Maritime Launch Services, the publicly traded company responsible for this \$200-million launch site. The financial statements are public, so we are not making this up. This information is public, and the company is registered with SEDAR+. For those tuning in who would like to check it out, SEDAR+ is Canada's official securities registry.

The financial statements tell us three things.

First, in 2025, Maritime Launch Services generated \$14,900 in revenue—not \$14 million in revenue, but \$14,900, with no extra zeros. We are talking about nearly \$15,000. That is a figure that, I think, is highly significant. Second, that same year, the company posted a loss of \$47 million. It had nearly \$70,000 in cash. Those figures are not exactly impressive. These facts are public knowledge, and I think that is what is drawing attention to the issues. Third, and I believe this is the most important point, the company's auditors, the accountants who conduct the analysis and are tasked with auditing the books, said that there is material uncertainty as to whether the company will have the financial ability to continue as a going concern.

That tells me this is not a company in great financial shape. I am not the one saying it is on the brink of bankruptcy; the company's own accountants are saying that. Despite this seemingly precarious situation, our colleagues opposite, the members of the Liberal federal government, decided to invest \$200 million in this company. They decided it made sense. That is \$20 million for 10 years.

To pick up where I left off with Marie Lumsden, her experience that morning and the photos she took blew the story wide open. She has spent the past seven years trying to talk to the community, asking questions, and sifting through piles of data and pages of ATIP requests. She contacted the municipal, provincial and federal governments. She even contacted the Minister of Justice, who would later make the announcement with great fanfare in Nova Scotia.

She has spent seven years asking questions, but no one seemed interested in listening. However, she found something astounding in the documents, something that I think should raise some important questions. This infamous launch site is the future of Bill C-28. The government wants us to trust it on this bill. The thing is, Maritime Launch Services leases the land from the provincial government. It is a lease. It does not belong to the company; it is leased.

• (1315)

How much does the company pay the government to lease this land? That is the question. The company pays \$13,500 a year plus taxes because, of course, there are always taxes. The company leases the land from the provincial government for \$13,500 a year and then subleases it to the federal government for \$20 million a year. The company does not own the land. Think about it. If the company does this for 10 years, that amounts to \$200 million dollars. The company leases the land from the province for \$13,500 and then subleases it to the federal government for \$20 million.

Some might say that the opposition parties are always complaining, that they are always opposing everything, that surely there is a return on the investment and that the Liberals made a logical and informed decision, but that does not seem to be the case. The government did not get any shares in the company in return for its investment. It has no ownership rights to the land. It has no equipment. It has nothing. We are talking about \$20 million per year for 10 years, or \$200 million, and Canada has nothing to show for it except a concrete slab about the size of a trailer pad. Marie Lumsden has spent seven years trying to tell elected officials that. She has spent seven years trying to make her voice heard. Today, I can say that, here in Parliament, we talking about what she discovered and about the work she has done.

To be fair, I recognize that Canadian space sovereignty is a legitimate objective. It is important. I recognize that Canada needs to develop its own domestic launch capabilities. That is not what I am criticizing. Canada has a rich history of space exploration. What I am criticizing is the fact that the government is going to use this as a pretext to help well-connected people instead of using it to build on that rich history.

We will have to see, because the sovereign wealth fund was just announced yesterday. The Liberals are drawing inspiration from some very flashy buzzwords and are following Norway's example in particular. Does the Liberal plan exist anywhere else? Let us look at what Norway did. Andøya Space, based in Norway, has the infrastructure needed to carry out successful launches. It cost the equivalent of \$46 million Canadian. The Norwegian government owns 90% of the company. That is a quarter of what the government is spending here, and 90% of it is owned by the Norwegian government. That is not the case here. We own 0%, and it is costing us \$200 million. We are talking about public funds here. There have

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been successful launches in Norway. It is working. We should look to this model for inspiration. I am not saying this as a complaint. That is not it at all. I am simply suggesting what should be done.

Ultimately, what should be done? First, the government has to publicly disclose all the contracts. We want to know how bids were made, what criteria were applied, and whether other candidates were in the running for the much-touted launch facility or whether this was the only location the Canadian government could access.

Second, the government has to explain why Canada received zero equity in return for 200 million taxpayer dollars. Norway has a 90% ownership stake in the Norwegian company. Canada has zero stake.

Third, and I want to emphasize this point, because it makes us really skeptical about Bill C-28, the chair of the board of Maritime Launch Services sold three million shares of the company on April 9, 24 days after the announcement. That is serious. Someone is making a lot of money on the backs of taxpayers, on the backs of Canadians, with help from the Liberal government. Questions need to be asked. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner needs to be formally seized with this issue now, not a year from now.

Some weeks ago, the minister proudly announced that this was a historic investment. He talked about Canada's sovereignty, Canada's future and Canadian ambition. However, there is zero ownership, zero control and zero transparency. Now, the government wants us to pass Bill C-28, which would give the minister sweeping, discretionary powers to be wielded behind closed doors. I experienced this yesterday at an in camera committee. The Liberals took control of the committee and decided to go in camera to make sure that people would not hear what was being said and that Canadians would not have access. They took complete control so that we would stop asking questions. That is not how a government should act. Democracy is all about transparency. Clearly, the current government does not understand that. It wants to decide who can go in to space without clear criteria, without going through Parliament.

In an industry as strategic as space, the risk of regulatory capture is real. This bill does nothing to reduce that risk. On the contrary, it concentrates power in the hands of ministers. It allows decisions to be made behind the scenes, as usual. It is shutting Parliament out of the process. Why are parliamentarians being asked to approve a regulatory framework after \$200 million was spent? Why were rules not established beforehand?

I will close with this question: Why is there no transparency, when that is what all Canadians expect from the government?

• (1320)

**Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks and I would like to ask him a question. I know it takes time to prepare a speech. What I am hearing is a lot of frustration. What I have also been hearing from the start is a lack of long-term vision for our country. During his 10-minute speech, I heard him say that people are not happy and that we are doing nothing.

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However, what I have been hearing from people in my riding, which is next to my colleague's, is that they are happy with what the government is doing right now. People have never been this happy to see their government taking action, moving forward and making progress. That is what people want us to do.

I am hearing the opposite from my colleague. Today we are talking about Bill C-28. I would like to know if my colleague is for or against this bill. Is he for or against the fact that we are investing in our future for our younger generations?

**Gabriel Hardy:** Mr. Speaker, I was taking notes because that is a good question. The frustration is very real. The member mentioned long-term vision, but people have been waiting for 11 years and are still waiting. The Liberals are very good at making announcements that end up being empty promises. There are no shovels in the ground. They just talk about huge, multi-billion dollar projects, while families are struggling to make ends meet. The Liberals keep unveiling major projects that they say are on their way and telling us how wonderful they will be, but there are no results. Unfortunately, it is all smoke and mirrors. That is the result.

A recent report states that Canadians were impressed with the Prime Minister's trips, which cost over half a million dollars in in-flight catering alone, but that they are extremely disappointed that he has failed to deliver on affordability issues. That is people's real-life experiences talking. When my colleague talks to his constituents, he should take a look at the Angus Reid report, which says that people were pleased to see the Prime Minister travelling but that they are extremely disappointed that they cannot afford groceries despite working so hard.

[English]

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's big contribution on this topic today, particularly about the uneasy relationship the government has with MLS. It seems crazy to me that something that is rented for \$13,500 per year is effectively receiving \$55,000 a day from the Government of Canada. Bear in mind that this property is owned by the Province of Nova Scotia.

There are other key elements in this bill that would allow the minister to use total discretion in who he can give permits to and under what terms. Does the member feel that this will benefit insiders, well-connected Liberals and lobbyists?

• (1325)

[Translation]

**Gabriel Hardy:** Mr. Speaker, we agree that what we are experiencing here is unbelievable. A piece of land that was being leased for \$13,000 a year is now being subleased for \$20 million a year. If we look up the owners of Maritime Launch Services, it turns out that they are all well connected to the government.

All we are asking for is transparency. Clearly, there has been no transparency from the start of this Parliament. There has been no collaboration either. Just yesterday, we witnessed an unprecedented total breakdown in collaboration and a refusal to answer questions.

The answer is that Bill C-28 is not paving the way for greater trust in our institutions. On the contrary, it is undermining trust, because paying \$20 million for a piece of vacant land that is being

leased for \$13,000 a year and is not owned by the federal government is bound to sap the public's trust.

**Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my colleague respond to his riding neighbour about measures that are not helping the people in his riding.

I would like to know whether the people in his riding have benefited from or will benefit from the Canada groceries and essentials benefit or the Canadian dental care plan. These are immediate affordability measures. Have his constituents spoken to him about those programs, and are they receiving those benefits?

**Gabriel Hardy:** Mr. Speaker, I would love to share what my constituents and other Quebecers are telling me. They are fed up with the empty promises they keep hearing from this government, which takes their tax dollars, spends it on all kinds of ideological projects and leaves them with less in their pockets. The Liberals then tell them not to worry, because they are going to get a bit of money back, to make things a little easier. Clearly, people are struggling to make ends meet, so they are going to take the cheque. In any case, it is basically their own money being returned to them.

Can members guess what people really want? They want to keep their money in their pockets. They want to be able to make it through the month, paying for groceries, gas and their mortgage or rent. That is what they want.

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's clear and precise remarks. He takes care to explain things well using concrete examples.

This government has a tendency to define terms in regulations. That is what happened with Bill C-2. It happened with Bill C-22. Now it is happening with Bill C-28. It tends to nail down definitions in regulations instead of bills. Can my colleague explain what reasons the government might have for doing that?

**Gabriel Hardy:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question.

It is simple. The Liberals just want things to happen how they want, when they want and the way they want. Anyone who does not think like them is guilty of obstruction.

That is my answer, and that is what the government has been showing us for almost a year now.

[English]

**Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

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Today I rise in support of legislation that will drive a level of investment in Cape Breton—Canso—Antigonish that has not been seen in generations. The future of the space industry in Canso holds tremendous potential for our riding and our province. Over the next few minutes, I will speak to the deeply positive impacts that Bill C-28 would have.

First, I would like to start off with a little bit of gratitude for our government and for our federal government making a historic, \$200-million investment in Nova Scotia, in my riding, to help establish a spaceport in Nova Scotia as a cornerstone of Canada's future satellite launches. This investment will create good jobs, support innovation and grow Atlantic Canada's role in a fast-growing global industry. It will also help us rely less on foreign launch sites and build a stronger, more sovereign role in getting satellites into space.

From coast to coast to coast, Canadians are turning ambition into capability, developing launch vehicles and spaceports, refining the engines that will lift them and building the satellites that will strengthen our economy and protect our sovereignty. These innovators are ready. Their talent is world-class, but they are held back, not by a lack of vision or capability, but by the absence of a modern legal framework that allows them to launch from home.

Today, with the Canadian space launch act, we hand them the key. Today, we unleash the innovation engine. Innovation is in our DNA, but innovators need the right conditions to thrive, a framework that matches the scale of their ambition, which is what this legislation would provide.

The global space economy is projected to grow more than 200% by 2032. Here at home, Canada's space sector workforce grew by almost 6% in 2023, reaching an all-time high. Canadians are ready to compete and lead in this rapidly expanding market, and this legislation will give them the clear framework they need to do it.

Without a domestic legal regime, Canadian companies face stark choices: wait indefinitely or take their innovation and jobs abroad. That is a choice this legislation ensures they would never face.

Why does launch matter so much? Satellites are critical infrastructure woven into daily life. When a ship threads through fog in the St. Lawrence, when paramedics locate a caller in seconds, when communities in the north rely on satellite links for school and telehealth, when utilities and banks synchronize time across vast networks or when our armed forces secure communications, maintain situational awareness, navigate environments and collect intelligence, each of these everyday capabilities depends on space-based assets overhead.

Satellites are only as reliable as our ability to launch, maintain, defend and replace them. Sovereign launch capability is not a luxury, but a strategic necessity.

Let me speak directly about the innovators who are the human face of this act.

NordSpace, headquartered in Ontario and operating in Newfoundland and Labrador, is advancing plans for a commercial spaceport that would create high-skilled jobs, attract investments

and inspire the next generation of Canadian engineers and scientists to see rocket launch from Canadian soil.

Based in Toronto, Canada Rocket Company is helping to reverse the brain drain by bringing skilled Canadians home to build cutting-edge light- and medium-lift rockets, advancing Canada's objective of securing reliable access to space.

Reaction Dynamics, headquartered in Quebec, is developing advanced infrastructure-light launch vehicles that position Canada at the forefront of environmentally responsible access to space: nimble, sustainable and globally competitive.

In my home riding, Maritime Launch Services is building one of Canada's first spaceports in Canso. Currently under construction and set to be built by 2028, it is expected to contribute \$300 million to our GDP annually. Once fully operational, it will create 1,600 jobs in my riding. I want to repeat that: 1,600 jobs in rural Nova Scotia. That is an amazing thing, and I have so much gratitude for that.

● (1330)

This project will deliver enormous economic opportunities for our communities and families. It will contribute to rural economic development, drive tourism and show the world that Nova Scotians can get big things done.

That is why I am shocked that the Conservative leader took to Elon Musk's social media company to oppose this competing commercial spaceport project.

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It is not surprising that there are no Conservatives in Nova Scotia as MPs, because every time a company decides to invest in our province, the Conservatives launch a crusade to kill the jobs, investments and economic benefits for Nova Scotians. We saw it when they opposed legislation, supported by the Progressive Conservative government, to build offshore wind. Thankfully, we did not let them block billions in investment, thousands of jobs, economic opportunities for first nations and our ability to be a renewable energy superpower. We saw it when they opposed the Mersey River renewable project, which would allow Nova Scotians to switch off Nova Scotia power to a new provider. Now they are opposing Nova Scotia's ambitions to be a leader in Canada's commercial space industry, which is expected to be worth \$40 billion.

With spaceport Nova Scotia, when Nova Scotians look to the stars, they will know that our province contributed to the future of space, built and led right here in Canada.

More than 20% of our current economy relies on satellites. In Nova Scotia, we want to continue to be at the forefront of building our economy and these satellites. These companies are proof that Canadian innovation is alive from coast to coast to coast and ready to compete if we give it the framework. This legislation is their launch pad.

Atlantic Canada's competitive advantages for commercial space launches are enormous. Our northern geography provides direct access to several desirable orbits essential for earth observation, climate monitoring and defence. Long coastlines offer the ability to launch safely over water, and our border with the United States, the world's largest satellite producer, means seamless supply chain integration. As the global launch infrastructure approaches capacity, international companies are seeking stable alternatives. Canada is positioned to be that destination, but only with the legal framework to welcome them.

This legislation is about unleashing Canadians' potential, telling the entrepreneurs across Canada that their government believes in them and is giving them the tools to succeed. Supporting this act means supporting engineers perfecting rocket engines in Sherbrooke, construction workers building launch pads in Nova Scotia, communities that will grow around Canada's spaceport, and every scientist, technician and innovator ready to write the next chapter of our space story. All that remains is for this House to say yes, to ignite the innovation engine, empower Canadian entrepreneurs and ensure that the next rocket to leave Canadian soil carries the full weight of Canadian law, Canadian ambition and Canadian pride.

Canada's innovators and economy are ready for us to finally take to the stars, on our own terms, and I am happy to see that happening.

• (1335)

**Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, why is the government asking Parliament to approve a discretionary regulatory framework after it has already handed \$200 million to a specific spaceport project on subleased land that could have been bought for a fraction of the cost? Is the principle of Bill C-28 really just about writing a blank cheque to Liberal insiders, while leaving taxpayers to cover the unlimited liability?

**Jaime Battiste:** Mr. Speaker, what we really need to concentrate on is the fact that Canada is the only country in the G7 without sovereign space launch capabilities. It is really important for us to focus on our safety, our security and our sovereignty moving forward. For far too long, we have relied on our partners to help us in this area. It is time for Canada to lead. It is time for Canada to innovate, and I am proud that my riding is at the forefront of ensuring that this happens. Supporting this legislation ensures that we move forward with innovation and building big things in Canada.

**Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my dear friend's tremendous speech. I know that he is a proud Nova Scotian. I know he is a proud Canadian. Like me, he probably grew up thinking about going to space and always dreaming of being an astronaut. Unfortunately, things changed for me, but we do now have this bill on the floor.

I want to talk a bit about the member's beautiful riding. I have never been there, but I know I will be there one day. He talked about the investment that this could bring to his riding. He talked about his constituents. He is a proud indigenous member as well. What can investments like this in his riding provide for indigenous communities and indigenous people in his riding?

**Jaime Battiste:** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that when we build, we are looking through not only a rural lens, but also one of indigenous participation. In moving forward, we not only expect projects that advance indigenous interests, but we expect meaningful equity, meaningful partnership and meaningful participation. We believe that with this spaceport, we would see 1,600 jobs in a rural area that has five first nations communities around it. We expect them to be full partners in the jobs and in the ability to move forward with partnership, with participation and with equity.

• (1340)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia is a big beneficiary. Indeed, all of Canada is, because expanding our space industry also impacts the Canadian Forces, in particular the aerospace industry, something I have talked a great deal about. Our aerospace industry provides thousands of jobs. I am thinking of the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba, all of which have aerospace industry. In fact, Magellan Aerospace in Winnipeg produces satellites. It would be nice to be able to have satellites launched in Nova Scotia. It is a national benefit. This legislation is an important step. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on that.

**Jaime Battiste:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to talk about what the capabilities would be in Nova Scotia in the future with this spaceport. As a big fan of *Star Trek* growing up, I always wanted to say that Canada is going to boldly go where no man has gone before. With this technology and with this investment, our riding and our province have the ability to lead, and I look forward to being a part of that. I look forward to all of the potential, the growth, the technology and the innovation that would come out of Cape Breton—Canso—Antigonish. It is a great time to be from that riding, and it is a great time to be a Nova Scotian.

[Translation]

**Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin not with statistics, but with a few quiet moments from everyday life in Canada.

A parent in Laval checks the weather on their phone before dropping their child off at school. A paramedic in Thunder Bay is guided to a highway accident using GPS. A farmer near Lethbridge, Alberta, checks satellite data on soil moisture to decide where to irrigate. A grandmother in Iqaluit sees her grandchildren's faces during a video call 2,000 km away. Each of these moments is made possible by satellites. Space is not an abstract concept. It is woven into the daily lives of every Canadian, and the Canadian space launch act will help us protect and strengthen the infrastructure behind these moments.

Canada's contributions to space are a source of national pride. Our astronauts, from Marc Garneau to Jeremy Hansen, have inspired and continue to inspire generations. Our legacy extends beyond the people we have sent into space. From robotics to earth observation and satellite communications, Canada has always contributed to space, and space has always contributed to Canada. It is a mutual connection.

As we have all seen and heard, the space sector is undergoing a major transformation. Commercial investment in space technology is quickly outpacing government investment. There are tremendous opportunities here. However, Canada is the only G7 country without sovereign launch capabilities. Without that, our industries remain dependent on foreign suppliers, which increases costs, lengthens lead times and creates uncertainty. This bill is the first step in changing that unfortunate situation.

I want to come back to these moments in daily life because they are at the heart of the matter. When Canadians use their phones to get directions, the satellites that guide the signal do not come from

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a cell tower but from a constellation of objects orbiting thousands of kilometres above the earth. When farmers decide when to plant their crops, satellites provide the images that map crop health row by row, which helps to save water, reduce the use of chemicals and feed more people with less waste.

Whether we are monitoring wildfires in British Columbia or Quebec, tracking maritime traffic in the Arctic or responding to floods, satellites are key to our emergency response. They provide real-time imagery that saves lives and protects property. When planes cross the North Atlantic, satellites ensure communication between the pilots and air traffic controllers. Without this coverage, the safety margins we take for granted would not exist.

When a student in Nunavut returns an online assignment, or when a nurse in an isolated community consults a specialist in Ottawa, satellites bridge the distance. For many Canadians, satellite connectivity is their only means of connecting online. When our armed forces patrol the Arctic, participate in NATO missions or support humanitarian operations, satellites provide the communications, navigation and intelligence they depend on every day.

Satellites are critical infrastructure to the same degree as roads, ports and electrical grids. However, their reliability depends on our ability to launch, maintain, protect and replace them. That is why this bill is important.

Canada is in a particularly good position to perform launches. Our northern geography provides direct access to the polar orbits essential for earth observation, climate tracking and Arctic surveillance. Our long coastlines provide safe, open-water launch corridors. Our stable governance, predictable regulations, skilled workforce and shared border with the United States allow for integrated supply chains with the world's largest space economy. Launching from Canada provides a competitive advantage.

• (1345)

The space sector is contested. Our allies are investing heavily in space defence and expect Canada to do the same. When space-based systems can be disrupted or neutralized, investment is not a luxury; it is a strategic necessity to be able to do it here at home.

This bill responds to a long-standing request from the Canadian space sector. It wants us to make sensible rules for launch and re-entry and enable it to compete. Bill C-28 establishes the permanent framework that will enable Canada to build a modern, responsible regulatory system for launch and re-entry, one designed with the actual operations of these sectors in mind.

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This bill takes a modern, risk-based approach to safety. Users must carry insurance and demonstrate financial responsibility before any vehicle leaves the launch pad. Our indemnification framework reflects international best practices. No country has ever had to use it. This regulatory framework works because it is rigorous.

In closing, I want to go back to the scenes from everyday life that I touched on at the beginning of my speech. This bill is about protecting the infrastructure that Canadians depend on. Here are a few examples: the weather forecasts that people check daily before going outside, the GPS that guides paramedics, the satellite images that help farmers feed the country and the Internet connection that keeps grandmothers in touch with their grandchildren across the Arctic.

That is what Bill C-28 protects, that is what it builds and that is why I am asking all members of the House to support Bill C-28, the Canadian space launch act, at second reading.

[English]

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned Marc Garneau. I think this is important, because many of us in the House knew him. In addition to his successful career in the navy, he ended up leading the Canadian Space Agency. Later on he became a Liberal member of Parliament and eventually a minister. I remember Mr. Garneau very well. When I first came to the House, we may have had our political differences, but I have always believed him to be a hero, and I do believe we need to honour our veterans and honour public service. I thank the member opposite for mentioning the service of Marc Garneau.

• (1350)

[Translation]

**Carlos Leitão:** Mr. Speaker, I thank our esteemed colleague for mentioning Marc Garneau, who was indeed an exceptional Quebecer and an exceptional Canadian. Duty was very important to Mr. Garneau. I thank my colleague for pointing that out.

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would join others in recognizing Mr. Marc Garneau for being an outstanding true Canadian. In fact, it would be nice to have his name associated with Canada's first launch pad.

Quite frankly, I look at the legislation as a very important stepping stone for our nation. We talk about building Canada strong for all, and we talk about security, having a launch pad and being able to support industries. The province of Quebec has a dynamic aerospace industry, as Winnipeg does and the province of Ontario does. We have our Canadian Forces. All these industries would benefit immensely. There are tens of thousands of potential jobs on the horizon and contributions to Canada's GDP. The legislation is a very important aspect of the government's agenda.

Could the member comment on why it is so important that we do move full steam ahead with this industry? It means so much to our nation in many different ways.

**Carlos Leitão:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. Yes, there would be many industrial benefits from this industry, and

with the legislation I think we would contribute to accelerating those industrial benefits.

More than that, it is also a question of sovereignty and a question of national security, to have the ability in Canada to do this from Canada. It is hugely important from a point of view of maintaining and assuring our sovereignty over our vast territory.

**Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in a specialized industry like space, the risk of regulatory capture is high. Why are the criteria for approval and indemnity not written in law? Is it because the minister wants the power to reward well-connected firms behind closed doors, without a single second of parliamentary oversight?

**Carlos Leitão:** Mr. Speaker, no, it is not that at all. What we are hoping to achieve with the legislation is to be practical, to be pragmatic and to be able to move quickly. There are sufficient Canadian companies interested in and capable of doing this. It is very important that we do this with Canadian companies and for Canadian companies.

**Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, when I questioned the minister earlier this morning about the gaps in the bill when it comes to national security, he said not to worry and that we would be working with the Canadian Space Agency. However, the Canadian Space Agency does not do national security or intelligence, nor does it have a mandate to do so. CSIS is not included in the bill, and neither is the RCMP. Does the member believe that there needs to be a solid reprisal or a change to the bill to address this?

**Carlos Leitão:** Mr. Speaker, I think those kinds of issues would be well discussed in the parliamentary committee.

**Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my Conservative colleague, the member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Canada should be a leader in space. I will admit that this is something that has fascinated me since I was a kid. Like many Canadians, I grew up watching *Star Trek* and imagining what the future could look like beyond our planet. That sense of wonder is shared by many Canadians and has helped drive what we have achieved in space.

In 1962, under former Conservative prime minister John Diefenbaker, Alouette I made Canada the third country in the world to design and build its own satellite. Since then, Canadians have built on that legacy. Astronauts such as Roberta Bondar and Chris Hadfield have carried our flag into orbit. Canadian innovation gave the world the Canadarm. More recently, Canada played a key role in the Artemis II mission, with Jeremy Hansen taking part in the historic journey of circling the moon and returning to earth. It is a powerful example of what we can achieve through partnership, while also reminding us why strengthening our own capabilities matters.

Let me be clear that Conservatives support building Canada's space capabilities. We support sovereignty. We support protecting Canada's national security. We support Canadian workers, engineers and innovators competing in a growing global space economy.

Bill C-28 speaks to a real opportunity. Canada is the only G7 country without domestic launch capability. That is a gap and a chance to lead. If done properly, this could strengthen our economy, reinforce our sovereignty and position Canada as a serious player in the next generation of space activity.

One day, I would love to see places like the London International Airport play a role in that future. We have strong infrastructure and a skilled workforce. That may be further down the road, but it reflects the kind of ambition we should have as a country. However, ambition alone is not strong enough, because the question before us is not whether Canada should participate in space, but whether this bill would set us up to do it in the right way.

That is where the concerns arise, because as it stands, Bill C-28 would put too much power in the hands of the minister without leaving key rules and safeguards to be worked out later. In plain language, it asks Canadians to accept the framework first and trust the rules, which will come later. That is not how we build durable policy. It is how we create a system that functions like a blank cheque.

This bill would not even clearly define what a launch is. Instead, it would push those basic rules off to be decided later. At the same time, it would give the minister broad control over who gets approved, who gets denied and what conditions apply. It would allow the minister to change the financial rules and protect companies from liability. In some cases, it would limit the ways decisions could be appealed or reviewed independently.

What we are left with is a framework that would be flexible where it should be firm and discretionary where it should be accountable. That would be concerning on its own, but Canadians are already asking a more immediate question: How is it that, what is, today, little more than a gravel lot and a concrete pad on Crown land, which was leased for \$13,500 a year, adds up to a \$200-million federal agreement before Parliament has even been asked to approve the framework governing it?

At its core, this is a question about whether Parliament sets the rules or whether those rules are written later behind closed doors. Who set that price? What valuation was used? Was there a competitive process? What exactly are taxpayers receiving in return? Who carries the risk if this project does not deliver?

Canadians are not funding a finished asset. They are funding a project still under development in a market that remains uncertain. That makes getting this right even more important.

This is where the broader concern comes into focus, because this is not an isolated situation. We have seen this pattern before. With ArriveCAN, what began as a simple app, originally estimated at about \$80,000, ballooned to nearly \$60 million, which is roughly 750 times over budget. A well-connected firm benefited from a process that lacked transparency, and Canadians were left with the bill.

### *Statements by Members*

More recently, we are seeing a \$300-million e-prescribing program, PrescribeIT, come under serious scrutiny. After nearly a decade, it is used for less than 5% of prescriptions, and key questions remain about where the money went and who benefited.

These are different files and different departments, but it is the same Liberal team and the same underlying problem, which is large commitments of public money, limited transparency and unclear outcomes. At the end of it, Canadians are left asking what exactly they paid for. These are just a few of the many examples Canadians have become used to.

● (1355)

From the SNC-Lavalin affair, to the WE Charity scandal and the green slush fund, there is a reason Canadians are not comfortable handing any government a blank cheque. This matters because Bill C-28 is not being introduced in a vacuum. It is being introduced in a context where trust in how large public projects are managed has been eroded. When a bill proposes to give broad power to ministers, to leave key rules for later and to move forward without clear safeguards, Canadians are right to be cautious.

This is also a national security issue. Space is no longer just about exploration. It is about communication, surveillance, navigation, defence and sovereignty. Any general launch system must include strong screening, clear national security oversight and strong protections against foreign influence, particularly when it comes to our Arctic and other sensitive regions—

**The Speaker:** Unfortunately, I must interrupt the member, but he will be able to continue after question period.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

### NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on National Day of Mourning, we honour those who went to work and never came home. Every year, hundreds of Canadian workers are killed on the job and hundreds of thousands more are injured or become sick, left to fight for the compensation they have already earned.

These workers are parents, daughters, sons and neighbours. They are the people who keep our country running, and right now, their lives are worth less to the government than a balance sheet. Labour protections are being gutted while unions are being undermined and workers who speak up are being pushed out.

*Statements by Members*

New Democrats have always stood with workers. We come from workers. We are the party of workers. On this Day of Mourning, we know that mourning without action is not enough. The greatest tribute we can pay to the fallen is to make sure that the living are protected, so today, we mourn the dead and fight like hell for the living.

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**NEW WESTMINSTER—BURNABY—MAILLARDVILLE**

**Jake Sawatzky (New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mark one year since I was first elected as one of the youngest members of Parliament, born in the 21st century, to serve the people of New Westminster—Burnaby—Maillardville. This has been a year of collaboration, listening, learning and showing up for my community, and it is an honour of a lifetime.

In my riding, I have had the privilege of working closely with families, local organizations and, especially, young people. From helping constituents who are navigating federal services to advancing priorities such as reducing the cost of living, my work this year has been grounded in service. I constantly hear about the challenges facing youth, particularly mental health challenges. That is why I have been proud to support the building safer communities fund. It will ensure people feel supported and that they are not alone.

This year, \$1.25 million in federal funding will help nearly 250 young people gain real experience right in my community. This work has been guided by the leadership of the Prime Minister, whose vision continues to inspire us to deliver for Canadians. We are one year in, and this is only the beginning.

\* \* \*

**KITCHENER CENTRE**

**Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago today, I got that little blue check mark on election night that told me I was coming to the House of Commons to represent Kitchener Centre.

I thank all the volunteers who dedicated their time. I thank all the voters who placed their trust in me. I thank my husband, Chris, my rock, who went with the flow when I blew up our lives. There is also my mother Merren, and I know Abigail's life would be very different without my mother's guidance and support at this time. I love my mom, and I thank her.

To my caucus colleagues who have been around a while, I thank them for their guidance, their support, their conversation and every answered question. I value them all so much, and I thank them. To all my colleagues in the House, I wish a happy one-year anniversary to the class of 2025.

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**MILTON EAST—HALTON HILLS SOUTH**

**Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago, the people of Milton East—Halton Hills South placed their trust in me to represent them in the House. It is an honour I carry proudly every day.

In that time, we have delivered real results. We have secured \$2.9 million for affordable housing in Georgetown, and we are just getting started. Through the Canada summer jobs program, we have increased opportunities for young people by adding 100 positions this year, which is an increase of nearly 85%.

I have shown up, and I have listened. I have acted by helping residents in Milton and Georgetown navigate federal services and by cutting through red tape when it mattered most. I am so grateful for the support of my family, my community, my wonderful staff, my fabulous colleagues and for the leadership of the Prime Minister, who is focused on bringing Canadians together, uniting people across regions and across party lines.

We are one year in, and there is still so much more to do. I will keep working every day to deliver for Georgetown and Milton.

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**OPIOIDS**

**Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I chose Edmonton as my home more than 40 years ago. It is a great city. It is friendly and full of honest, hard-working people, but lately, Edmonton is struggling. People are afraid to ride city trains and buses. Many are afraid to go downtown. They read about violent crime and see used needles in the streets. It is all because this great city has been plagued with a drug epidemic.

There have been 613 drug poisoning deaths just between January 1 and the end of November 2025. Fentanyl is the killer. Last year, it accounted for 75% of opioid deaths compared to just 15% in 2024. Clearly, the Liberals' supervised drug consumption sites do not work. People do not need a place to do drugs; they need a place to get off of drugs.

Instead of consumption sites, we need to help those struggling with addictions to get off the streets, get off the drugs and become productive members of society.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[Translation]

**COMPTON—STANSTEAD**

**Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, on April 28, 2026, one year to the day after I was elected, I sincerely thank the people of Compton—Stanstead for putting their trust in me. Representing them in Ottawa is an honour that I carry out with humility and conviction, the conviction that regions like mine have a place at the decision-making table.

I want to thank our Prime Minister, who shares these same beliefs. One year ago, Canadians, Quebecers and people in the regions made a clear choice to move forward with a team that is focused on results. One year later, the results are in: real support to address the cost of living, major projects that create opportunities in our regions, and agreements that diversify our markets. We are just getting started.

[English]

I would like to thank the people of Compton—Stanstead for placing their trust in me. I remain committed to representing them with conviction and deep pride.

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#### FINANCE

**Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again the Prime Minister is taking a page from President Trump's playbook. It is not enough for him to sign fake executive orders or hype a memo and call it a trade deal. Now he is importing an American-style sovereign debt fund to enrich his friends.

Norway and Kuwait use their national oil revenues to fuel a sovereign wealth fund. Unless the Liberals plan to steal resource revenues from the provinces, the only thing feeding this fund is more debt. Another Crown corporation just means more bureaucracy. This is the same failed approach we saw with the Infrastructure Bank and the Trudeau growth fund. They give corporate welfare to well-connected Liberals to build solar panels, while Canadians' energy bills go up.

Under the Brookfield government, corporations can claim an investment tax credit for spending a government grant. Which former colleague or friend will the Prime Minister appoint this time?

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#### MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

**Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Canadian military intelligence day on the Hill. The service provided by members of the Canadian Military Intelligence Association is critical. Since 1948, it has monitored adversaries and protected us against potential crisis. Each day, more than 3,500 uniformed and civilian intelligence professionals enable the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence to stay abreast of evolving threats and to act with strength and confidence.

On behalf of the Parliament of Canada, we stand in the House to commemorate and thank the men and women of our intelligence community for their duty to national security. Our freedom and sovereignty depend on the work they do every day.

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#### NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, each April 28th we come together in Nanaimo—Ladysmith, throughout Canada and around the world to solemnly mark a day of

#### Statements by Members

mourning in memory of people who have lost their life on the job and to renew our commitment to safe workplaces.

Whether someone is a chef on a ferry, a scaffolder on a construction site, a machinist in a mill or an administrator in an office, every worker deserves to know they will return home safe at the end of the day. Today we remember the people who did not make it home. We stand with the families, friends and co-workers who carry that loss, and we recommit ourselves to making workplaces safe for everyone.

However, this day is not only about looking back. It is also about moving forward. It is about speaking up when something is not right. It is about supporting one another. It is about making sure safety is never treated as optional. My door is always open to the workers in my community to discuss federal issues related to the important work they do.

Today we honour the fallen and we renew our commitment to protect the living. Every accident, every injury and every loss of life in the workplace is one too many.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

#### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSOCIATION DE CHASSE ET PÊCHE DE CONTRECOEUR

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to mark the 50th anniversary of an organization in my constituency, the Association de Chasse et Pêche de Contrecoeur. The organization, which mainly brings together duck hunting and ice fishing enthusiasts, is renowned for its famous Festival de la Brimbale, where a temporary village is set up on the river during the brief period when the St. Lawrence freezes over. These are magical moments that allow both enthusiasts and those who dabble to get together with family and friends in a setting like no other.

People from all generations head outdoors during the coldest part of winter to enjoy nature and all it has to offer together. The association holds a significant record, and not just any record at that. Since 2016, it has held the record for the world's largest tip-up, or *brimbale*. I am proud to have been there for its inauguration 10 years ago.

In closing, I would like to offer the entire organization, as well as its president, René Béland, my warmest congratulations on this 50th anniversary.

*Statements by Members**[English]***LABRADOR**

**Philip Earle (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise with gratitude to mark one year since I was elected to serve the people of Labrador, an honour I carry every day.

Since forming government a year ago, we have made meaningful progress on the priorities that matter most to Labradorians. In that time, we have strengthened search and rescue capacity and have secured critical generational investments for 5 Wing Goose Bay. We have also expanded funding for the Inuit child first initiative and Jordan's principle, all while advancing affordable housing and supporting families that are facing the pressures of the rising cost of living.

The actions we have taken are delivering real, tangible results for communities across Labrador. I am especially proud that this work has been grounded in partnership, working closely with indigenous leadership and local municipalities, businesses and community organizations.

One year in, we are just getting started. I remain committed to building a stronger, more prosperous Canada for the people of Labrador.

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*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister was elected on a promise to resolve U.S. tariffs. A year later, nothing has been resolved. Worse yet, tariffs have doubled.

Yesterday, we learned that Meubles South Shore in Sainte-Croix is shutting down operations after 86 years in business. This closure represents the loss of 126 jobs, primarily due to the unjustified tariffs imposed by the United States. In Beauce, our economy is connected to the United States. This connection is an asset that makes our region one of Quebec's and Canada's economic engines.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister describes our relationship with the United States, our largest trading partner, as a weakness. Last week, in parliamentary committee, we learned that the Liberal government has held no negotiations with the United States in the past seven months.

Beauce residents and businesses are demanding that the U.S. tariff issue be settled before more jobs are lost.

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*[English]***POLICE OFFICERS**

**Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today on Parliament Hill, we welcome police unions from across the country, including a stellar team from my riding in Hamilton.

I got to know a lot of police officers in my previous role as a journalist, particularly in my specialty of covering criminal court cases. I appreciated how all the elements of crime were laid bare in a trial, and I learned how doggedly detectives had to work in order

to crack a case. I saw how much the officers cared, how they got to know the families of the victims, felt their pain and did what they could to make the process easier.

Police officers have truly difficult jobs, but they do them with dedication. On their days off, they are typically raising money for causes or raising awareness about harms. We must ensure that police officers have the tools and resources they need to fulfill their mandates to keep our communities strong and safe.

We should thank police, loudly and often, for their vital work.

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**FUEL TAXES**

**Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago, the Prime Minister promised Canadians affordable groceries.

Since then, Canada has become the food inflation capital of the G7. High gas prices are driving up the cost of everything, including commuting, eating and living, yet the Liberals have offered only a drop of relief, cutting a third of taxes for only four months. Meanwhile, families in Haldimand—Norfolk pay more because they travel farther for work, groceries and services. They depend on their vehicles and should not be punished for their rural lifestyle.

Conservatives are calling on the Liberal government to remove all federal fuel taxes: the excise tax, the GST on gas and diesel, the industrial carbon tax and the fuel standard tax. This would save Canadians an additional 15¢ per litre. There have been enough speeches and rhetoric. It is time to stop taxing Canadians and to start lifting them up.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

*[Translation]***SAINT-BONIFACE—SAINT-VITAL**

**Ginette Lavack (St. Boniface—St. Vital, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago, I had the immense privilege of being elected to represent the people of Saint-Boniface—Saint-Vital, and it is my honour to do so to this day.

Since then, we have advanced concrete priorities: more accessible housing, investments that support our businesses and create good jobs and measures to help families cope with the cost of living.

What matters to me more than announcements and results is being present on the ground, listening to people and serving them. I see it as my job to help people navigate federal services and to speak on behalf of our community in Ottawa.

## Oral Questions

## ORAL QUESTIONS

I would like to applaud the leadership of the right hon. Prime Minister, who is enabling us to deliver concrete results for our communities. One year in, we are just getting started. I remain deeply, enthusiastically and determinedly engaged in pursuing this work.

[English]

\* \* \*

[English]

## FINANCE

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is proving to be just another tax-and-spend Liberal. He promised to spend less. Instead, he doubled the deficit, spending more than Justin Trudeau did. His credit card budgeting is fuelling inflation and driving up the cost of living, and that is hurting Canadians. More than half of Canadians are just \$200 away from bankruptcy.

Groceries cost more, gas costs more, housing costs more and families are maxing out their credit cards just to get by. Under the Liberal Prime Minister, we have the worst food inflation, the worst household debt, the worst housing costs and the second-highest unemployment rate in the G7.

Canadians cannot afford the Liberal government. Liberals must stop their wasteful spending and bring down the deficit to lower taxes and inflation so Canadians can once again afford to live.

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## GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

**Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mark one year since I was first elected to serve the people of Halifax, and I am so happy to be here. It has been the honour of a lifetime, and what a year it has been.

I am proud that our government is focused on the opportunities that arise in addressing current global challenges. We are investing in major projects at home. We are forging new trading partnerships across the globe. We are securing our sovereignty and our economic resilience, and we are doing so in a way that allows us to continue with our environmental and climate objectives.

At the same time, we are ensuring support for Canadians who need it the most. We are responding to the rising cost of living by cutting taxes and launching affordability measures such as the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, all while maintaining the many other social supports that people depend on. We have shown up, listened and acted. Whether through nation-building projects or local targeted support, this year has been building a stronger Canada.

I am so proud to be part of this team, and I am grateful to my family, friends and supporters.

I wish a happy first anniversary to all members of the House from the class of 2025.

## FINANCE

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, red ink is flowing here in Liberal Ottawa, as the government puts the final touches on today's fiscal update. The Prime Minister's promise to spend less money quickly turned into a pledge to load up the taxpayer credit card and blow right past the limit. He could not even stay remotely close to the \$31 billion left over by the last Liberal fiscal disaster. In fact, he actually doubled it.

Will he end this costly credit card budgeting, cut spending or, at a minimum, cap the deficit at the already reckless \$31 billion the last guy left behind?

**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, we certainly appreciate our colleague's enthusiasm about the upcoming spring economic update. She paints a picture that is negative and inaccurate. The good news is that in less than an hour, she will be enlightened by the good economic news, the effective spending controls our government has brought in and the investments we are making to build a truly competitive national economy, diversify our trading partners and build big once again. Good news is on the way.

● (1420)

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I doubt that Canadians will drink all that Kool-Aid, because they spent more and things actually got worse. After a decade of Liberal deficits, Canadians have the worst grocery inflation, the highest household debt, the worst housing costs and the second-highest unemployment in all of the G7. On top of all of that, Liberal ministers got rich and Canadians got the bill. These holdover ministers still have not learned that we cannot borrow our way to prosperity.

I will ask again. How much more do Canadians have to pay before the government learns to live within its means?

**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, again, we are very pleased that our colleague is able to use the same tired lines that they have been using for months and months. It is great to hear the eight-track, but good news is on the way. In less than an hour, my colleague, the finance minister, will share this good economic news. Perhaps our colleague will be disappointed that the tired talking points she has been using for the last number of months suddenly will no longer be relevant. She can celebrate the great economic performance of Canadians and of Canada.

*Oral Questions*

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe, but the Liberal Prime Minister makes Justin Trudeau look like a penny-pincher. After saying he would spend less, he doubled his deficit and added \$90 billion in new spending, more debt, more costs, more taxes and more spending; the same old Liberals. While adding to the nation's credit card, Canadians are putting their own bills on their personal credit cards.

Will the Liberal Prime Minister end his costly credit card budgeting so that Canadians can finally afford to live?

**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 properly raises the issues of affordability and the cost of living. It is something that I know every member of the House is concerned about, because Canadians are concerned about it. Again, in less than an hour, my colleague, the finance minister, will be in the House, talking about the important measures that our government has taken, will take and will continue to take to support Canadians in the very real concerns around the cost of groceries, the cost of fuel and the cost of living. Our government is there for Canadians.

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in an hour, we are going to find out just how expensive Liberal good news really is. It is these massive deficits that we are probably going to see in the next hour, the same massive deficits that mean inflation today and higher taxes tomorrow. The cost of government has driven up the cost of living, and 2.2 million Canadians are going to a food bank in a single month, because the government gave Canadians the highest food inflation in the G7 and the highest household debt.

Will the Liberal Prime Minister commit to capping the deficit at no more than the already reckless \$31 billion Trudeau gave?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is the finance critic, it must be said, for the official opposition. They keep talking about inflationary spending. First of all, inflation is in the target zone of the Bank of Canada and has been for some time. We have yet to see, and maybe the finance critic could help us out here, a list of proposed cuts.

What do they define as inflationary spending and how do they propose to withdraw that from the people who benefit, like our seniors, for example? Where is the list? What is it? The finance critic—

[Translation]

**Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government will present its economic update this afternoon. The Prime Minister promised to spend less, but he doubled the deficit. He promised to make cuts to the public service, but he increased bureaucracy by 7%. In Quebec, 40% of our seniors live on just over \$20,000 a year, while long-term care rents have risen to \$4,000 a month.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister stop running up deficits so that our seniors can finally get their heads above water?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Re-**

**gions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are building a strong economy while protecting our social safety net and getting our house in order. What are we really doing? We are spending less so we can invest more. In concrete terms, the results speak for themselves. We have the second-highest growth in the G7, and we also have the most enviable fiscal position and fiscal reality in the G7. At the same time, we are bringing down the cost of groceries. At the same time, we are also lowering gas prices at the pumps.

Basically, we are here for Canadians, and this is what a competent government looks like.

• (1425)

**Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister says that her government is getting the house in order. Who has been creating the mess for the past 10 years then? They did that. They want to clean up the mess they created, but let us be real. Nobody thought it was possible to spend more than Justin Trudeau. Still, as we can see, the Prime Minister has succeeded in achieving this unenviable feat. Meanwhile, the Liberal government has abandoned seniors, who now have to choose between paying rent and buying groceries.

Will the Prime Minister commit to not spending more than the \$31-billion deficit promised by Justin Trudeau?

**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 was very enthusiastic a few moments ago and I said that the Minister of Finance and National Revenue would be here in under an hour. I misspoke. It is in less than two hours that my colleague will have all the facts. He will not need to make up numbers. He will not need to repeat things that he knows very well are not solid.

There will be good news for the Canadian economy, for workers and for seniors, instead of the baseless accusations the Conservatives make in the House all the time.

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## NATURAL RESOURCES

**Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister explained that he wants new pipelines because he is a nationalist. Canadian nationalism means dirty oil. Quebecers do not identify with that and should not have to pay for it either. Last week, Ottawa confirmed that it wants to allocate \$10 billion in public funds for a new pipeline. Yesterday, the Prime Minister put \$25 billion into a sovereign wealth fund that looks more like a gimmick designed to finance oil companies.

Does he realize that no matter how many maple leaves he slaps on the pipelines, Quebecers simply will not want them?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, in an interview with *La Presse*, the Prime Minister said that he was a nationalist and that he advocates economic nationalism. What does that mean? Essentially, it means being in control of our own destiny, being able to use the levers of our economy to help our own people while managing a trade war.

It is under those circumstances that we announced a sovereign wealth fund. It is also under these circumstances that we are investing in our natural resources, as well as in renewable energy. That is why our investments will have an impact across Quebec and across the country.

**Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of buzz in Ottawa about building a new pipeline in western Canada, but no one in the private sector is interested because demand for oil is going to peak in 2029. It is not profitable.

What is profitable is investing in the transition, funding clean technologies, and funding climate change adaptation, yet the Prime Minister of Canada tells us that, in the name of Canadian nationalism, we should add \$10 billion in public funds to build a new pipeline, even though it is not profitable.

If the private sector does not think it is profitable, then why would the government invest Quebecers' money in it?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is because Canada is investing in Quebec and we will also be undertaking major projects in the mining sector in Quebec. There is Nouveau Monde Graphite, which represents thousands of jobs, the designation of the Port of Québec as a first port of arrival for our country, and the expansion of the Port of Montreal, which will increase capacity in Contrecoeur by 60%.

These are megaprojects that represent tens of thousands of jobs and economic opportunities for Quebecers. We are investing. That is what economic nationalism is all about, and that is good for Quebec.

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#### TRANSPORTATION

**Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Liberal chair of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, the member for Vaudreuil.

Two days ago, he posted on social media that he was the guest of honour at an event organized by a group that promotes Driver Inc., namely the CTOA.

The committee just completed a study on the loss of life. It just heard testimony from victims. It just heard the entire trucking industry denounce this public danger, and yet the committee chair still shows up at this group's events.

Why are the Liberals and that committee chair promoting Driver Inc. instead of banning them?

#### Oral Questions

**Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I receive invitations from truckers who are organizing meetings aimed at figuring out how to make Canada's roads safer and more accessible, of course I am going to accept.

If someone calls me again to invite me, I will accept and I will be there. We will work together to make roads safer across the country.

\* \* \*

● (1430)

[English]

#### FINANCE

**Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a year after the federal election, the Prime Minister has shown that he is just another high-spending Liberal. His costly credit card budgeting is forcing Canadians to use their credit cards. We have \$90 billion in new spending and spending is up 9% this year alone.

When the finance minister presents his spring economic statement this afternoon, will he commit to no credit card budgeting so that Canadians can finally afford to live again?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that it is a national day of mourning for workers who have lost their lives or become injured at work. I know all of the members in this House are thinking about their families, communities and colleagues today.

I also want to speak about the investment that we have been making in skilled trades, major projects and community infrastructure across the country, in fact, so much so that we are getting the support of people who I think the members opposite know. We hear from people like Joe Mancinelli from LiUNA, who says that the true economic strength begins with those who build it, and Marc Arsenault from the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, who says that they are pleased to see the federal government's—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

**Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a former governor of the Bank of Canada, the Prime Minister should know that fiscal discipline is non-negotiable and that deficits undermine investor confidence and harm Canadian workers.

Conservatives are asking the Liberals to stop their credit card budgeting and to show some fiscal restraint.

When the Prime Minister presents his spring economic statement this afternoon, will he commit to a deficit of no greater than \$31 billion for the sake of Canadians?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I speak with workers across this country, as all members of this House do, and what I hear them say is that they want us to invest in their success. They want us to invest in the great jobs of today and tomorrow.

We want to make sure that they can access skills training through things like the union training investment that we have been providing to unions, ensuring that we can attract and retain skilled trades workers to build the major projects and local infrastructure all across this country.

The Conservatives voted against these measures time and again. They keep voting against workers. Is this a pattern? Are we going to see them continue to vote against the very people out there building up our country?

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are seeing more debt, more spending, more taxes and more of the same. That is what the Liberals are toasting champagne to today.

While Canadians are tightening their belts, the Liberals are celebrating massive deficits. This is the inflationary spending that will force Canadians to take on more debt and make real sacrifices just to get by.

Will the Liberal Prime Minister end his costly credit card budgeting so Canadians can afford to live?

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to affordability, that member voted against every measure we have put forward for Ontarians.

Here are the facts. Parents are saving \$10,000 per child for affordable child care; kids have received 99.8 million meals through a national school food program, and by the way, we are making it permanent; and we have delivered income support for over 300,000 Ontarians.

These are the types of support that member opposite always votes against. I do not know why she does, because we build Canada strong by making sure we are making it in a way that is also affordable for Canadians.

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have quite the contradiction. We have a Liberal government celebrating bigger deficits and an entire country struggling under them. Canada now faces the worst grocery inflation in the G7, the worst household debt and the highest housing costs, and lineups at the food banks are surging. There is nothing to celebrate about that.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister commit to capping the deficit at no more than the already reckless \$31 billion that the last guy left behind?

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we recognize that families are still having challenges. Families are now going to the pumps. They are saving 10¢ per litre thanks to our government. We are also ensuring that when they are buying groceries and essentials, through the Canada groceries and

essentials benefit they are receiving an average of \$1,900 per year to ensure that we can help Canadians. They are also going to save up to \$10,000 on child care.

We are doing everything we can to make life more affordable while also investing in Canadians, providing more jobs and, of course, building our strong country.

● (1435)

**Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to spend less, but a year in, he spent \$90 billion more. Who thought Trudeau could be outspent? Well, his former adviser, the PM, said “watch me” and doubled his deficit. Deficits drive inflation and higher credit card, grocery and mortgage bills here at home. Deficits, taxes and red tape cause the worst food inflation in the G7.

With high housing costs, high food bank use and a jobs crisis for young Canadians, when will the self-identified European PM stop his high-spending, high-flying lifestyle that everyone else pays for so Canadians can have a high quality of life?

**Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the opposition members claim they care about affordability, but they voted against a tax cut for 22 million people. They voted against the groceries and essentials benefit. They voted against \$10-a-day day care. I could keep going. We have nothing to learn from them about affordability.

**Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has made it so Canadians cannot afford essentials, and experts say Liberal red tape is worse for Canada than Trump's tariffs. Businesses say Liberals must cut their own red tape for investor confidence so proponents can build. The PM says Canada is in a crisis but will not match U.S. emergency timelines, put two-year reviews in the law or even define Canada's national interest. Here at home, it takes over two years to approve a domestic natural gas line expansion and 20 years to do a mine, and the Liberals say we are not grateful enough.

If the PM says Canada is in a crisis, when will he scrap his costly credit card budgets so Canadians can compete?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are going to build the strongest economy in the G7. We have the best fiscal position in the G7 and second-fastest growing economy in the G7, ahead of Italy and Germany.

Just yesterday, our Prime Minister announced the sovereign wealth fund, which will spark massive investment by Canadians in Canada. In an hour and a half, our finance minister is going to table the spring economic update to continue our historic growth. It is time for that side to get off the sidelines and help us build Canada strong.

**Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians were promised restraint. Instead, they got more Liberal overspending, more debt, higher costs and more of the same. The Prime Minister did not change course from Justin Trudeau. He doubled down, doubling the deficit and, according to the independent budget watchdog, sending nearly two-thirds of new spending into day-to-day operations and a growing bureaucracy, not real investment. Those choices are hurting Canadians' daily lives. The cost of living has skyrocketed, food bank use is rising, and more households are maxing out credit cards just to afford groceries.

After blowing past Trudeau-era spending and deficits, who does the Prime Minister think pays the bill?

**Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, why will the member not be honest with her constituents and tell them exactly what she is willing to cut in order to achieve her very irresponsible plans?

We can start with dental care. In Cambridge, we have 11,355 members of that community accessing the Canadian dental care plan. That is 11,355 people who visited a dentist and had an opportunity to get their teeth fixed last year. What about the Canada child benefit? In Cambridge alone, 19,621 kids are having a better life and a better start because of the Canada child benefit. Those are programs she is willing to cut for her reckless agenda.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### LABOUR

**Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since April 1, the federal government has been unnecessarily delaying the hiring of temporary foreign workers. Businesses are now required to advertise a job for eight straight weeks without finding a candidate, rather than four, as was previously the case, before they can begin the process of hiring a temporary foreign worker or renewing their permit.

Businesses outside the major urban centres do not recruit abroad by choice, but by necessity. Eight weeks is four weeks too many for no reason.

Will the government change the requirement back to four weeks?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. We are very aware of how important temporary foreign workers are in the regions of Quebec. That is why, on April 1, we gave Quebec the authority to extend work permits. As soon as an application for permanent selection is sent to a worker, Quebec can extend their permit by one year.

That is a solution that is unique to Quebec and that meets Quebec's needs. I would like to point out that the Conservatives on the

other side of the House would completely scrap the temporary foreign worker program, which would be harmful to our businesses and Quebec's economy.

• (1440)

**Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, extending the time frame for recruiting or renewing temporary foreign workers from four to eight weeks will cause businesses to miss their deadlines. The regulatory change that took effect on April 1 will prevent our businesses from fulfilling their contracts. There is an urgent need to revert to four weeks. Otherwise, the federal government's new measure will have an impact on the Quebec economy as a whole, and even more so in the regions.

Why not go back to a four-week period instead of delaying worker recruitment in a detrimental way?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, as of April 1, we have been offering a solution that is unique to Quebec. Once a worker receives an application for permanent selection, their work permit is extended by 12 months.

That is precisely why Quebec businesses asked us for this bridge. As for the issue of labour market impact assessments, we look forward to working with our colleagues on that matter.

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#### SENIORS

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 600,000 Quebecers are being forced to make ends meet on the guaranteed income supplement. That is one in three seniors, and 600,000 people is more than the entire population of Quebec City.

I am going to address Quebec's seniors directly and ask them whether, over the past year, their situation has improved when they go grocery shopping. Unfortunately, the answer is no. For the past year, Canada has had the worst food inflation of any G7 country. It has been the worst for the past year, ever since this Prime Minister was elected. That is the result of a Liberal government.

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives voted against the budget, they voted against the OAS and the GIS. They also voted against the New Horizons for Seniors program, a tax credit for personal support workers and the dental care program.

What are the Conservatives voting for? It is certainly not for seniors.

**Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot get over how the Liberals put their arrogance on full display every time they answer questions.

### Oral Questions

When we tell them about seniors who are struggling to pay for housing and food, they keep saying that everything is going well because of their grand announcements. The Liberal Prime Minister said he would be judged by the price of groceries, but what is the result? Apparently 35% of households are using their savings or credit to buy food.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister put an end to his credit card budgets so that seniors can make ends meet and have enough to eat?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we lowered the retirement age to 65. We increased the guaranteed income supplement by 10% for seniors living alone, and we also increased old age security for seniors aged 75 and older. We also invested \$54 million to improve quality of life for seniors in more than 400 communities across the country through the New Horizons for Seniors Program. We are here for seniors.

\* \* \*

### FINANCE

**Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister continues to use Canadians' credit cards by creating more debt and more government spending and taxing more to spend more, families and seniors are paying the price. They are paying more for groceries, gas and housing, to the point where one in three households has to go into debt or dip into their savings to put food on the table.

We know that the Prime Minister spent over half a million dollars on in-flight catering on his travels. Does he realize that Quebecers and Canadians can no longer make ends meet?

When will the Liberals stop squeezing Canadians?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we are doing right now is taking care of Canadians while growing our economy. Taking care of Canadians means that seniors are getting a groceries benefit. That means seniors will get money directly in their pockets to help them with the rising cost of groceries.

Good oral health is important for overall health, and we are helping seniors with the Canadian dental care plan. We have implemented a number of measures and we are directly supporting seniors. None of these measures would have been possible otherwise. We are there for seniors.

• (1445)

**Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is living in a world of make-believe. One day, the Liberal government will have to wake up and realize that ordinary Canadians are getting crushed by the cost of living. What is more, the seniors who built this country are struggling in their retirement. Our seniors aged 65 and over deserve the utmost respect.

Will the Prime Minister stop strutting about on the international stage and running up the deficit and finally show seniors some respect by giving them hope?

**Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of**

**State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the great privilege of serving with some very dedicated colleagues on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. We are currently studying the vulnerability of senior women. What we are being told is that we need to continue to focus on the living conditions of seniors.

We have put various measures in place. My colleague mentioned the Canadian dental care plan. Senior women can receive direct support through this plan. There are other measures, but what we are saying right now is that we remain committed to providing the best possible support to Canadian seniors.

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, more than half of Quebecers aged 50 and older are worried about not having enough money for their retirement. One in two Quebecers is worried about not being able to pay their bills. This is the direct result of a decade of Liberal mismanagement and Liberal deficits. The economic update is coming later today, and unfortunately, our seniors will once again pay the price.

Will the Prime Minister stop racking up debt on the national credit card, yes or no?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Beauce wants to talk about a decade of decisions that were bad for seniors, so let us talk about that.

A decade of bad decisions included raising the retirement age to 67, as the Conservatives had proposed, which would have left tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of seniors in financial hardship. A decade of bad decisions by the Conservatives included voting against the Canadian dental care plan, which is helping 28,837 people, including many seniors in my colleague's riding. A decade of bad decisions by the Conservatives included refusing to increase the GIS by 10% for the most vulnerable seniors aged 75 and older.

If I were them, I would take note of these votes and actions and reconsider them.

\* \* \*

[English]

### HOUSING

**Danielle Martin (University—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be here on behalf of the people of University—Rosedale, who are feeling the effects of the changes in our housing market as supply expands and rents come down, but that progress matters—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The member may start from the top.

**Danielle Martin:** Mr. Speaker, the second time is the charm. Housing is expanding, and rents are coming down, but there is more we need to do on social and supportive housing.

Will the Minister of Housing tell us more about what Build Canada Homes is going to do to expand access to social and supportive housing for Canadians?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for University—Rosedale. Yes, we are very happy to see housing starts up 10% year to year and to see construction activity above the 10-year average, as well as seeing average rents come down for 18 consecutive months. We are seeing movement in the right direction. There is a lot more work to do.

Build Canada Homes is delivering on more social, supportive and community housing, working with non-profits, co-ops and builders across the country. We are seeing progress, and we are just getting started.

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#### FINANCE

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, from 1867 to 2015, over 148 years, Canadian governments accumulated a certain amount of debt. Over the last 11 years, the Liberal Prime Minister and Justin Trudeau doubled it. They doubled the entire national debt in 11 years. This now means we pay more interest on the debt than we do in health care transfers.

There will be an economic update today. Are these Liberals really going to celebrate another massive increase of the debt that our children and grandchildren will have to pay off?

• (1450)

**Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the hard-working men of the Toronto Police Service and other police associations are here in Ottawa today, and I want to thank them for their service.

We are spending less to invest more. We are investing in building, from LNG projects in British Columbia, to critical minerals in the Prairies, to nuclear and transit in Ontario, to ports and trade corridors in Quebec, to offshore energy in Atlantic Canada.

From Newfoundland to B.C., we are building across this country. Together, we are going to build a Canada strong for all.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member said, “We are spending less to invest more”. That is the kind of thing someone's crooked accountant tells someone when all their money has gone missing. This is exactly what the Liberals kind of do. They make up words and phrases to cover up for the fact that they have doubled the national debt.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Kyle Seeback:** Mr. Speaker, they are shouting because they do not like it. It took 148 years to accumulate a certain amount of debt. Eleven years of these guys running things and they more than doubled it. The result is our children and grandchildren are mired in debt. With all of their investments, why is it the least affordable country we have had in the history of Canada? These investments clearly are not working.

#### Oral Questions

**Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the member is speaking from experience but, look, the Conservatives cannot stand up and say they support Canadians while voting against the supports Canadians rely on. They have opposed tax relief. They voted against it at every opportunity. They voted against child care. They voted against dental care. They voted against all measures to support the cost of living.

They cannot oppose it all and then claim to support it. They cannot have it both ways.

**Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Brian Kingston, president of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association, took a moment to say, “There’s clearly a disconnect between statements and implementation. The longer this goes on, with no resolution on US tariffs, it will have real implications for investments in this country.” The only thing the Liberals have invested in is more costly bureaucracy. They are using Canadians' own taxpayer money to fuel deficits larger than Justin Trudeau's.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister take a moment to end his costly credit card budgeting, so that Canadians can afford to live?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are building Canada strong. That is exactly why we have the second-highest growth of the G7 and also the best fiscal position of the G7, all that while dealing with unjustified and illegal tariffs on the part of the American administration; all that while our workers in the auto, steel, aluminum and forestry sectors are affected. We know the manufacturing sector is impacted by the tariffs.

We are making sure to put money on the table to help these workers and help these businesses. We will continue to do that because this is exactly what this government needs to do right now.

**Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, everyday Canadians do not have time to worry about what the G7 or IMF says. At this moment in time, we have record high unemployment for youth. At this moment in time, we have record lineups at food banks. At this moment in time, Liberals want to waste \$1 billion on a gun grab that nobody wants. At this moment in time, Canadians have the highest household debt at over \$3 trillion. At this moment, we are at year 11 of record Liberal deficits.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister commit to capping the deficit at the reckless \$31 billion left by Justin Trudeau?

*Oral Questions*

**Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing Canadians can count on is that the pessimism of the Conservative Party will never infect the members on this side of the House. Do members know why? It is because we will never apologize about being optimistic about Canada's future. That is why we are here. We are here in government to build Canada strong.

Just shortly, in under an hour, the Minister of Finance will give a progress report on our plan to build a stronger economy. There are signs of progress. The International Monetary Fund says we have the strongest fiscal position in the G7. That does not happen by accident.

**Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nobody thought it was possible to outspend Justin Trudeau, but the Liberal Prime Minister has doubled Justin's deficit. He is putting the nation's bills on a credit card. Canadians will be paying off his debts for generations. I thought he was an economist. Deficit spending leads to inflation. A quarter of Canadians are skipping meals.

Will the Liberal Prime Minister stop swiping the nation's credit card so Canadians can afford to live?

**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, in about an hour the finance minister will give very good news for that member.

Instead of just this negativity, let me give some facts. It is a fact that wages are growing twice as fast as inflation. It is a fact that Canada has the highest credit rating in the world. It is a fact that we lowered taxes for 22 million Canadians. It is a fact that we invested \$6 billion in the auto sector. It is a fact that the Conservatives do not support investing in Canadians. It is a fact that this government does, and we are just getting started.

• (1455)

**Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only people doing well are people connected to Brookfield.

Imagine that, instead of leaving kids with an inheritance, people leave them enough to pay their debts. That is what this Liberal Prime Minister is doing to generations of Canadians. In his first year, operating spending is up 9%. It is enough already. We cannot handle the taxes, we cannot handle the inflation and we cannot continue to borrow like this.

Will the Prime Minister stop maxing out our nation's credit card?

**Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the good people of York Centre do not have to put on their credit card are their dental bills. In fact, 11,147 people do not need to pay out of pocket for their dental care because they signed up for the Canadian dental care plan. I will say it again. There are 11,147 people who were helped, just in York Centre alone. In addition to that, 27,665 kids benefit from the Canada child benefit. All these are programs that the Conservatives are willing to cut to achieve their reckless agenda.

**Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberal spending is out of control. Liberal overspending means higher inflation today and more taxes tomorrow. The money is not getting to Canadians who need it. It is going to well-connected Liberal companies and corporate welfare queens, like Brookfield.

Canada has the highest grocery inflation in the G7, the worst household debt, the highest housing costs and the second-highest unemployment in the G7. Will this Liberal Prime Minister end this costly credit card budget so Canadians can afford to live?

**Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is more concerned with conspiracy theories than with the truth. This is the problem with the pessimistic politics of the Conservative Party; they do not correspond with the truth.

The truth is that there are signs of progress. There are very clear signs that our plan to build a stronger economy is working. We see generational investments coming to fruition throughout our country, building industries and creating opportunities for workers. We see wages outpacing double the pace of inflation. We see Canada projected to have the second-strongest growth in the G7. We see foreign direct investment at levels that we have not seen in—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

**Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is just another tax-and-spend Liberal specializing in costly credit card budgeting. Canada now faces the worst grocery inflation, the worst household debt, the highest housing costs and the second-highest unemployment in the G7. Canadians know they cannot borrow their way to prosperity. There is more debt, more costs, more spending, more taxes and more of the same.

Will this Liberal Prime Minister commit to capping the deficit at no more than the already reckless \$31 billion left by his predecessor and mentor, Justin Trudeau?

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to get more Canadian exports to new markets and create jobs, we are championing major projects like the Darlington nuclear project with 18,000 jobs in Ontario; the port of Montreal project, 8,000 jobs; the copper mine project in Saskatchewan, 500 jobs; the Grays Bay road and port project, nearly 3,000 jobs in the north; and the LNG Canada phase 2 project with 7,000 jobs in British Columbia. This is how to build Canada strong.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no one thought it possible to outspend Justin Trudeau. This Liberal Prime Minister has somehow managed to. He has added \$90 billion above the Trudeau-era levels in new spending and nearly doubled the deficit. Operating costs are up 9% in under a year. Two-thirds of that new spending goes to day-to-day operations, not investment. The result is the worst grocery inflation in the G7 and Canadians putting their own bills on credit cards are going to food banks.

When will this Liberal Prime Minister end his costly credit card budgeting so Canadians can afford to live?

• (1500)

**Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is more good news for Saskatchewan.

Funding for the RCMP Heritage Centre is done. SMR research at the University of Regina is done. Defence procurement for Yorkton is done. Nuclear power opportunities and procurement services for Estevan are done. Housing opportunities in Saskatoon are done. Canola crushing in rural Saskatchewan is done.

Let us imagine for a moment, if we had not wasted 10 years of sending Conservative MPs to Ottawa, how much further ahead Saskatchewan could be. That ends now.

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*[Translation]*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to take the floor again today to ask an important question on behalf of the citizens of Terrebonne, whom I have the honour of representing.

Quebec businesses are facing a situation that is far from normal. The trade environment has changed, and we must support our businesses while creating new opportunities.

Can the industry minister inform the House of the measures the government is taking to protect workers and create jobs in Quebec?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to welcome my colleague, the member for Terrebonne, back to the House.

We are working tirelessly on behalf of our workers and businesses affected by the White House's tariffs. That is why we have announced \$63 million for 99 businesses affected by the steel and aluminum tariffs to protect jobs and help these businesses pivot. This helps employees and workers, whether in Terrebonne, Repentigny, Sherbrooke, Quebec City, Montreal or elsewhere across Quebec.

I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent work.

**ETHICS**

**Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics committee has issued a report calling on the Prime Minister to divest himself from Brookfield.

Now, the Prime Minister has set up a blind trust, but the problem is that it is not truly blind, because the Prime Minister stands to make millions from stock options and future bonus pay from an investment fund that he personally set up while he was at Brookfield.

Will the Prime Minister finally do the right thing and divest himself from Brookfield, or is he going to defy the direction of the ethics committee?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, as we all must, all 343 of us, follows the rules, which are among the strictest in the world. These are rules that the Conservatives put in place under Prime Minister Harper.

The Prime Minister has disposed of all his assets in a blind trust. He did so on the day of his election as the Liberal Party leader, five days before he was sworn in as Prime Minister. Contrast that with a 22-year run of not having a security clearance, which is the position in which the Leader of the Opposition finds himself.

**John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in a review of the Conflict of Interest Act, the ethics committee heard that while the Prime Minister was Trudeau's economic adviser and chair of Brookfield, he set up one of Canada's largest tax-dodging schemes by hiding \$5.3 billion in offshore tax havens. Brookfield's CEO also confirmed that the Prime Minister will make millions from what is in his blind trust by aligning public policy with Brookfield's strategy.

The committee recommended that the Prime Minister divest his holdings to ensure that he is acting in the best interests of the country and not his personal self-interest. Will the Prime Minister divest his Brookfield assets to eliminate his conflicts of interest?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course those accusations are ridiculous.

Just like us, the 343 members of this House, the Prime Minister has abided by some of the strictest rules in the entire world. These rules were put in place by the Conservatives and Mr. Harper.

The Prime Minister placed all of his assets in a blind trust on the day he was elected leader of the Liberal Party, even before he became Prime Minister. Contrast that with the Leader of the Opposition, who has spent 20 years in the House without a security clearance.

*Oral Questions*

● (1505)

*[English]*

**John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the ethics committee also recommended that the general application provisions of the Conflict of Interest Act need to change. That means that a public office holder, including a highly conflicted prime minister, can be involved in decisions they benefit from personally, even though they are in conflict.

Brookfield's COO again confirmed that the Prime Minister will make millions from public policy decisions that align with Brookfield's strategies. Will this Liberal Prime Minister commit today to address this loophole in the law so Canadians have confidence that he is making decisions in the best interests of the country, not his own or Brookfield's?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these are, of course, the most spurious, bottom-of-the-barrel conspiracy theories and allegations that one can possibly imagine. It is imagined, it is fake, and the members of the opposition who continue with this fantasy tale should be ashamed of themselves.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Doly Begum (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the good people of Scarborough Southwest.

Our government has now made strategic investments into public safety programs across Canada. Initiatives like the building safer communities fund help combat new and old threats to safety and security, including gun violence, youth crime, violent extremism and more.

Can the Minister of Public Safety outline for us the work that he and our government are doing to keep people in Scarborough and across Canada safe?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my friend from Scarborough Southwest to this House.

Through the building safer communities fund, we are tackling gun violence and youth crime and supporting victims through organizations across Canada, including in her riding of Scarborough Southwest. We have also introduced several measures to keep Canadians safe. This includes tougher bail laws, lawful access measures to help police protect Canadians, hiring 1,000 new CBSA and RCMP personnel, and measures to address hate and protect places of worship.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Jaskirat Sidhu, a non-citizen, pleaded guilty to 16 counts of dangerous driving causing death and 13 counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm, yet, yesterday, he was granted a stay of deportation. The psychological and physical harm to the Humboldt Broncos vic-

tims and their families was not adequately considered in the stay decision.

My question is for the Minister of Public Safety: Will the Liberals appeal this decision and allow the victims and their families to be interveners?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me first express my deepest condolences to the families impacted by this horrific act.

The decision of the Federal Court yesterday is that of a judge who, based on the evidence in front of him, made that decision. Having said that, we will review the decision and we look forward to supporting the families in every way we can.

\* \* \*

**GROCERY INDUSTRY**

**Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals line corporate pockets with sovereignty incentives paid for by the taxpayer, the NDP is fighting to ban creepy surveillance pricing at the grocery checkout. The Liberals shut this down. They have a second chance. Today's spring economic statement is another chance to decide who they stand with: people getting ripped off at the grocery checkouts or companies that are exploiting the population.

Will they act and ban surveillance pricing once and for all, or will they keep protecting corporate profits?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course, we believe in competition, because we believe that competition brings down prices. That is why we have said clearly that we would be hawkish on competition. That being said, we are very concerned with the allegations linked to algorithmic competition. We want to make sure that, ultimately, consumers are well protected. This is work that we will be doing as well with the provinces and territories, and of course we will be there for consumers and Canadians across the country.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

**PHARMACARE**

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot go on TV one day and claim that pharmacare is a nation-building program for all Canadians, and the next day allow entire provinces to be excluded.

Newfoundland and Labrador's health minister says that the federal government has closed the door on negotiations. Right now, where one lives determines whether one can access essential medications. People are being left out altogether. That is not a national program. It is patchwork.

Why is this government abandoning Newfoundland and Labrador and so many other provinces and territories while claiming that pharmacare is for all Canadians?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I am aware of the minister from Newfoundland and Labrador's intervention on the pharmacare issue. As I have said, I am having conversations with my counterparts in all the provinces, including Newfoundland and Labrador, about how we can better support them.

\* \* \*

### PARTICIPATION OF A MEMBER IN PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair would like to make a statement on the participation in Private Members' Business of the member for Terrebonne and on the sponsorship of Bill C-241, an act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting.

Following a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada on February 13, 2026, the election of the member for Terrebonne was declared null and her seat subsequently declared vacant. Members may be interested to know that, in the early years of Confederation, such decisions on controverted elections were made by a committee of the House instead of the courts. A by-election was held on April 13, 2026, and it resulted in the same member being re-elected to the House of Commons. This, in turn, raises unusual questions regarding her participation in Private Members' Business.

[English]

The current procedures surrounding Private Members' Business have been in place for nearly 25 years. The Private Members' Business process, broadly speaking, is straightforward. Following a draw, the list for the consideration of Private Members' Business is established at the beginning of each new Parliament. The names of members are added in sequence to the order of precedence on the Order Paper, based on their rank in the list, starting with the first 30 names, and afterwards by groups of 15. Members whose names are placed on the Order Paper then have the unique opportunity to have one, and only one, of their items considered by the House. This contrasts with an earlier practice, when there were multiple draws of bills and motions, meaning the same member could end up having more than one opportunity.

Most members are familiar with our current process. That said, exceptional circumstances, like the one before us, sometimes occur and may not be fully covered by the existing rules or precedents.

Standing Order 87(1)(a)(iii) stipulates that members who become eligible during the course of a Parliament, in this instance through a by-election, are added to the bottom of the list for the consideration of Private Members' Business. In cases where more than one member is elected the same day, a mini-draw is held to determine the order in which they will be added to the list.

[Translation]

A key principle of Private Members' Business is that over the course of a full Parliament, as many members as possible be afforded the possibility to participate. This flows from a proposal in the 66th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented in the House on June 12, 2002.

• (1515)

[English]

The situation involving the member for Terrebonne is unique, as she has already participated in the draw establishing the list for consideration for the current Parliament and has seen her name added to the order of precedence. Furthermore, she has already acted as a sponsor of a bill, Bill C-241, which was adopted at second reading and referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on December 3, 2025.

I am sure the lobbies will be most interested in this, because I do have a Yiddish proverb, as I always do. It goes like this: *Shikt di refueh far der make*. Basically, it means, "He sends the remedy in advance of the plague."

Here is my remedy. Given that she has already had an opportunity to sponsor an item, one that is still working its way through the legislative process, the Chair is of the view that allowing the member for Terrebonne to be added a second time to the list for the consideration of Private Members' Business would go against the principle behind the procedure and House affairs committee's proposal of 2002. Her name will therefore not be part of the upcoming mini-draw along those of the new members for University—Rosedale and Scarborough Southwest.

In cases where members have items before the House when their seats become vacant, the practice is normally to remove their names as sponsors. This is appropriate in the case of a death or resignation, as the original sponsors can realistically no longer play any role in moving the item forward. In these situations, a process exists, through Standing Order 94, to dispose of items once it is apparent that there is no member able to move them. Alternatively, the House may also decide to choose a new sponsor and allow the item to continue.

In the current context, however, the original sponsor of the item has now returned to the House. It is worth noting that the bill has been in committee during the entire period of her absence, meaning there have been no occasions where a sponsor would have been required to move a motion in the House.

[Translation]

To be a sponsor has procedural meaning, as the sponsor is expected to move their item when it is called, for instance. It also has operational meaning as, typically, sponsors are the default managers of business. They draft items, put them on notice, and have some say in their scheduling. The work of a sponsor can begin before they are sworn in, and can continue after a bill is passed by the House.

### *Government Orders*

It seems obvious that the member for Terrebonne has performed these responsibilities in regard to Bill C-241 before the Supreme Court decision. As prior proceedings have not been nullified by the said decision, and the member was reelected to the House in the by-election held on April 13, 2026, it is the view of the Chair that the member should continue to carry out her duties as sponsor of the bill.

This will allow the House to consider and dispose of the bill in accordance with the process and principles for Private Members' Business.

I thank all members for their attention.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADIAN SPACE LAUNCH ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, any Canadian launch system must include strong screening, clear national security oversight and strong protections against foreign influence, particularly when it comes to our Arctic and other sensitive regions. If this bill is about sovereignty, then those protections must be written into the law, not left to chance.

This is ultimately about balance. Canada can build a competitive space sector. Canada can support innovation. Canada can strengthen sovereignty. That is how previous generations succeeded. The achievements of Canada's space program were not the result of vague rules or unchecked power. They were built on clear objectives, strong oversight and public trust. That is the standard we should be applying today.

As we consider Bill C-28, the question is not whether we support Canada in space. We do. The question is whether the bill gets the framework right. In its current form, there are serious concerns. Let me be clear about what getting this right actually looks like.

A serious bill would define the key terms clearly in the law so Parliament, not just cabinet, sets the rules. It would include clear criteria for approvals and rejections so decisions are not made behind closed doors without explanation. It would preserve independent review so Canadians can have confidence that decisions can be challenged when needed. It would also require full transparency around major financial commitments. If hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are involved, Canadians should be able to see the reasoning, the price and what they are getting in return.

Most important, the bill would put national security safeguards directly into the law, not as an afterthought or something decided later but as a core requirement from the start, because once these systems are in place, once launches begin and international actors are involved, it becomes much harder to go back to fix gaps that should have been addressed from the beginning. These are questions that must be answered and issues that must be addressed, and this is where Parliament must do its job.

Canada has the opportunity to get this right. We can build something that reflects our strengths and values, but that will not happen by default. It will require scrutiny, accountability and a willingness to improve what is in front of us, because the goal is not just to participate in space but to lead in a way that Canadians can be proud of. That means that when we act, we do so in the clear interest of Canadians, not behind closed doors and not without answers. Canada should lead in space, but Canadians should never be asked to sign a blank cheque for decisions made behind closed doors.

● (1520)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives really need to focus on the principle of the legislation. This particular legislation would support an industry that is critical for economic growth and security for Canada. It would have an impact on industries, whether the space industry, our aerospace industry, post-secondary facilities or many other indirect industries. There is great potential for growth.

The Conservatives should support the principle and recognize that Canada needs a launch site for satellites. Magellan Aerospace, in Winnipeg, employs hundreds of people work. Magellan has a satellite orbiting the earth today.

Does the member recognize the value of the legislation and that it may ultimately pass?

**Kurt Holman:** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives support space. Conservatives support the commercialization of space. The concern with regard to Bill C-28 is the blank cheque or a credit card that the current Liberal government may be offering to itself. We are just asking for checks and balances as Canada furthers the commercialization of space.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I homed in particularly on the fact that the member has mentioned the administrative, arbitrary nature of the minister's power. First of all, it would all be concentrated in the minister. He would actually be taking it away from the transportation tribunal that usually handles these things. Again, there is very little specificity as to what is in the public interest. The minister could literally give one indemnification rate to one market participant, and another to a different performer, totally distorting the market.

Could the member please comment a bit about who would benefit from a regime that is so opaque and arbitrary?

*Government Orders*

**Kurt Holman:** Mr. Speaker, right now there would be too much power for the minister with regard to Bill C-28, and therefore, with regard to decisions, there would be closed doors behind the scenes. Conservatives are asking for there to be more transparency with Bill C-28 with regard to decisions for procurement of opportunities for projects related to the deep commercialization of space.

• (1525)

**Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have claimed success with military recruiting, when in fact they have managed to meet only their own artificially low thresholds, and the Liberals have claimed success with 2% of GDP spent with NATO, when they know full well that the spending fails to meet NATO's criteria. The bill is short on detail and devoid of security considerations. It has not addressed potential hostile state interference.

My question for my colleague is this: Does he agree that this parking-lot planned spaceport is a closed-door plan reporting to a single minister and not responsible to Parliament and Canadians, or is it another Liberal illusion?

**Kurt Holman:** Mr. Speaker, my concern is the repeated pattern of Liberal boondoggles or possible scandals. We have seen it with the Trudeau government, and we are possibly seeing it with the Liberal government. Cases in point are ArriveCAN and also PrescribeIT. With the lack of checks and balances in Bill C-28, there could potentially be a Liberal scandal, such as possibly what is happening in Nova Scotia with \$200 million spent for what is deemed a spaceport but for which so far the results have been very limited.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a very ambitious goal. Ideally, we want something to be able to launch as early as 2028. Does the member share the ambition that we can in fact have a launch pad for 2028?

**Kurt Holman:** Mr. Speaker, ambition is very important. I think all Canadians have the ambition for space exploration and also for the commercialization of space. As I said earlier, all Canadians also want accountability and transparency about where their tax dollars are being spent, and that is needed in Bill C-28.

**Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada stands at a crossroads in the global space economy. This is no longer just about exploration or scientific curiosity. It is about sovereignty. It is about national security. It is about economic opportunity in a rapidly growing sector where other countries are moving decisively to protect their own interests. Canadians expect leadership in moments like this, leadership that is transparent, accountable and grounded in the national interest. Instead, what we have before us is Bill C-28, and it raises serious concerns about who will control Canada's future in space and who will make those decisions.

Canada has a proud and remarkable history in space. Under the leadership of John Diefenbaker, our country launched Alouette I, becoming the third nation in the world to design and build a satellite. We developed world-class technology such as Canadarm, and we inspired generations through astronauts like Chris Hadfield, Roberta Bondar and Jeremy Hansen. That legacy was built on trust and accountability, and it was built for all Canadians, not for the insiders behind closed doors.

Bill C-28 would move us in the wrong direction. It would give sweeping powers to the ministers, who could decide who can launch, what can be launched and under what conditions. It would do so with vague definitions, limited oversight and broad discretion. In fact, it does not even clearly define what constitutes a launch. Instead of clarity, we get ambiguity. Instead of accountability, we get the concentration of power. When power is concentrated, transparency becomes essential.

I want to share something from my own life. When I was a kid growing up on the farm, we had an old coach house, a small barn, that we had to move. I remember one day working with my father and his good friend. We jacked up that building and took off the siding. We had to replate it so we could slide some telephone poles underneath to make some skids. We had those telephone poles there and put another one across the front, chained it up and pulled the building with a tractor, moving it across our farm and setting it down in its new location. What I remember is that when I looked back at where the barn had originally stood, there was nothing more than a simple concrete pad.

When I look at what is being described today as a spaceport in Nova Scotia, a gravel road, two sea cans and a small concrete pad, I cannot help but think of that farmyard. What Canadians are being told is a launch facility looks, by all accounts, strikingly similar to what was left behind when we moved that barn, yet we are talking about a reported \$200-million lease over 10 years, a lease that was backdated, an agreement that describes the site as being capable of supporting orbital launches.

Canadians are asking a very simple question: What launch site are we talking about? According to detailed reporting and first-hand accounts, all that exists is a gravel road, a couple of containers and a concrete slab. Nonetheless, this same project is being presented to investors as capable of supporting more than 150 launches per year. That is not just a gap between promise and reality. That is a credibility gap.

### *Government Orders*

Let us look deeper. The company involved has reported losses exceeding \$47 million and revenue of just \$15,000. The executive compensation for that company is approaching \$1 million. What makes it worse is that the land it is on is Crown land, leased for roughly \$13,500 annually, yet it is being presented as a multi-million-dollar asset, \$14.8 million being the book value, I believe, if my memory serves me correctly. On any farm, in any small business and in any household across the country, those numbers do not pass the smell test, yet somehow in the House they do. Why is that?

The concerns go much further beyond the numbers. The residents in the area, more than a thousand people within a few kilometres, have raised serious concerns about safety, environmental impact and the economic consequences to fisheries and to local livelihoods. They have spent years filing access to information requests, reviewing thousands of pages of documents and trying to be heard.

● (1530)

What did they find? They found an environmental assessment process that many believe is inadequate and repeated requests for federal impact assessments rejected. They found that, even after years, key requirements for the project had still not been completed, and the regulatory framework for launches was not even in place, yet approvals and funding continued anyway.

Let us think about that. We would be committing hundreds of millions of dollars to a project in a sector where the regulatory framework does not even exist. That is not leadership or competence, and Canadians have the right to question it.

When we look at the broader picture, a troubling pattern emerges: a company with questionable financials, a project approved through a process many consider deeply flawed, lobbying and political connections appearing at multiple levels, and a massive federal commitment to taxpayer dollars despite all of these red flags. Canadians look at this and ask whether this is about the space sector or something else.

Bill C-28 would take this kind of situation and make it easier, not harder, for this to happen. It would give even more powers to ministers to make decisions behind closed doors, reduce transparency, limit oversight and increase the risk that decisions are driven not by merit, but by access.

Space is strategic. It affects our Arctic sovereignty, national defence and communications, yet this bill would not provide strong safeguards against foreign interference or influence or ensure robust national security screening.

At the same time, Canada has a real opportunity in this sector. We have the talent, expertise and geography, but success requires clear rules, transparent decisions and investor confidence. Bill C-28 would risk undermining all of those.

Conservatives support a strong Canadian space sector, innovation, investment and defending Canada's sovereignty. We cannot support giving the government a blank cheque, legislation that concentrates power without accountability or a system that appears to reward insiders while asking taxpayers to carry all the risk.

Canadians believe in ambition and building, but they also believe in common sense. When we see \$200 million tied to what looks

like a concrete pad at the end of a gravel road, we know something is wrong.

From Alouette 1 to today, Canada's space legacy has been built on trust. Let us not replace that with secrecy, insider arrangements and unchecked power. Let us build a space future that is transparent, accountable and truly in the national interest.

Conservatives will stand for a strong Canada in space, a transparent government here on earth and a future that belongs to all Canadians.

● (1535)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely silly for the Conservatives to try to portray that this has something to do with insiders.

Seriously, we need to take a look at the actions of the government over the last year. What we have witnessed is a clear indication to what degree this Prime Minister and this government are driving to expand Canada's economy.

We are talking about an industry, the space industry, and many others that would benefit by the passage of this legislation. The only thing the Conservatives want to look at is any form of character assassination, denying the opportunity for these good-quality jobs and developing and promoting an industry that could contribute billions more and provide thousands more jobs.

Why will the Conservative Party not recognize it for what it is, a wonderful opportunity to take a step forward in an industry that we need to support? At the very least—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

**Steven Bonk:** Mr. Speaker, they say that the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour.

Let us go through a few examples. We will not talk about the space industry for right now, but let us talk about the oil and gas industry, for example. We passed Bill C-5 this year, which gave the government extraordinary powers to circumvent its own bills that it put in place that stopped oil and gas exploration in this country. That is another example of where projects could not get done. Nothing could happen without the government ministers hand-picking projects.

We are seeing the exact same thing when it comes to this bill. We are seeing that the Liberals do not want to go through a proper process; they want the ministers to have all the power.

**Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, building on the point that my colleague was making, over the last couple of years, Maritime Launch Services lobbied the government 158 times, and most of that was in 2025, right before it got the \$200-million payout. If we look at some of the stock activity going on, it was valued at five cents and it jumped to over 60¢. If we look at the incredible value that people who knew what was happening would have gotten because of that, we can clearly see the conflicts and the shenanigans that are going on here behind the scenes.

I am wondering what my colleague thinks about that.

**Steven Bonk:** Mr. Speaker, someone does not have to be that good in business to understand that there is something wrong here. The land that this launch site is on is owned by the provincial government in Nova Scotia. It was leased for \$13,500 per year. That company turned around and leased it to our federal government, in its incredible business acumen, for \$20 million a year.

That is some pretty good business for whoever owns this launch site. It is some very poor business if we are trying to be in support of the Canadian taxpayers who are actually footing the bill for this.

**Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think that the member has raised, in his comments today, a very good example. If the oil and gas sector was regulated the way that the Minister of Transport is suggesting Bill C-28 should be regulated, it would be all-powerful and it would be for arbitrary reasons.

I think industry participants would say it would not be fair if certain companies were insured and certain companies were not insured, and if certain companies could get a permit to start drilling and certain ones could not. That is an opaque system. It would not be tolerated in any investment-oriented enterprise like oil and gas.

Could the member talk a bit more about how MLS lobbied the PMO and ministers over 150 times and somehow acquired this lease where it is getting \$55,000 a day from the federal government?

**Steven Bonk:** Mr. Speaker, we will even take a further step back from that. There are two things that private industry or private investors want more than anything. The number one thing they want is predictability.

We have a system now where the government is not following its strict processes. It is allowing the ministers to pick winners and losers. We know that something is wrong. We have a democracy and we have a country like Canada that has had such a great reputation. I have had the great privilege of working all over the world and there was an open door wherever we went because we were Canadian and others knew that our system worked. We are seeing that eroded every day by giving the ministers more power and less scrutiny. This is a terrible slide in our democracy, as far as I am concerned.

• (1540)

**Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this bill today and to set it in the context of what has been already an incredibly exciting year for space in Canada, a year in which we have sent and seen return back, from the far side of the moon, Colonel Jeremy Hansen. With Dr. Jenni Gibbons, they were a key part of that work with respect to the Artemis II mission of the Canadian Space Agency.

I appreciate the comments from my colleagues from Souris—Moose Mountain and London—Fanshawe with respect to some of the particularities of the bill and their concerns.

It is rare that we get a piece of legislation that has some inspiring words in its text, but I am going to share some of these and will come back to the manner in which this is inspiring specifically.

There were some questions around what was in the legislation and some vagueness. However, I read some very specific language in the legislation. I want to read out here what it says under proposed subsection 3.2(1):

The following definitions apply in this Act.

launch vehicle means

(a) a rocket; or

(b) a vehicle, other than a rocket, that is designed to ascend to Earth orbit or beyond.

re-entry vehicle means a vehicle that is designed to be returned by its operator, substantially intact, from Earth orbit or beyond to Earth.

In the very text of this legislation, we have the imagination, the promise and the hope of space exploration. The thing that is inspiring millions of Canadians and has inspired hundreds of millions of people around the world with the Artemis II mission is part of the framework of this legislation today. It is talking about vehicles that were not earlier contemplated in our aeronautics legislation. The Canadian space launch act sets up a position where we can imagine vehicles we did not have as deployable resources, imagining a sector that is emerging, but needs some regulatory shape to it, and bringing it into life.

I think that, very crucially, the legislation does a very good job of balancing the need to promote risk-taking and the gathering and deployment of resources across Canada with the appropriate supervision of the minister, the departments and others, but with the right calibration toward risk-taking and setting into motion an industry that already exists. However, from a G7 perspective, the very specific things we want to do in this sector we are not doing as much in Canada as other G7 partners.

The Canadian Space Agency is a key partner in the Artemis II mission. The European Space Agency is very much involved as well.

I forgot to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Peace River—Westlock. My enthusiasm for this mission and all things space in this moment is very heightened. I apologize for that brief oversight.

### *Government Orders*

It is not just the inspiration. When one is in space, one cannot do what my friend from British Columbia would like me to do in this moment. When one is on a mission, one has to keep going. Our friend Colonel Hansen definitely did that.

I want to draw attention to the Artemis II mission, and I mentioned Colonel Hansen. Two other astronauts had a key role. One was Jenni Gibbons on Artemis II. She was in mission control. She was officially one of the backups on the mission, so she had to be ready. She went through the exact same training as the other astronauts. She is also the youngest Canadian astronaut and a huge source of pride, motivation and inspiration, not just to women and girls, but to Canadians across the country who can say that they can do this, that they can go into space.

I also want to draw the attention of members to Joshua Kutryk. We are sending a second Canadian astronaut into space at the end of this year, to the International Space Station on another mission. He is going to be in space for around six months. We respect the personal cost, the sacrifice and training he has had to go through, the running of scientific experiments and the extent to which he is subjecting himself to that experimentation. We thank him.

These astronauts, these heroes for Canadians, are heroes they might have seen earlier in movies and are now able to watch on television in these missions. They are a really important part of the space sector and the inspiration that is coming in this year of space for Canada.

It is not just the astronauts. Recently I had the pleasure of meeting some young people who were employed by NordSpace, which is one of the companies looking to do, and that has done, some very successful tests around rocket launches in Canada. I met one of them at a recent Next Generation Manufacturing conference. She came into the sector through the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, specifically 631 Sentinel squadron in Scarborough. She told me that once one has a taste of aerospace, it never goes away.

• (1545)

We are building a sector that is inspiring hundreds of thousands of Canadians. It is a sector they want to join. When there is an appetite or an interest, what does government do to serve that interest? In the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy articulated a national mission, and that attracted resources and energy. Obviously, the U.S. administration and NASA were very involved in leading that effort. It is the connection between government action and inspiration that I want to draw members' attention to.

By saying we are going to have sovereign space launch, I mean we are going to make space for more of the NordSpaces of the world to, again, as described in the legislation, launch rockets and launch vehicles that were not earlier contemplated in legislation. This creates the space for young people, like the woman from 631 Sentinel squadron, to then get into that sector.

I was talking about space, and there is a lot of interest in space this year, and these kinds of sovereign launch capabilities have a relationship to some of our deep space missions, but even the near-Earth orbit that would probably be the more daily subject of this piece of legislation also creates its own inspiration.

A number of years ago, when I was teaching at what was then Ryerson University, now Toronto Metropolitan University, I assigned a biography of Elon Musk to my students as an example of, at the time, some of the ways in which he was pushing the frontiers. There is a very fascinating chapter in the Elon Musk biography by Ashlee Vance on his work with SpaceX and the frontiers he was pushing with the scientists and the engineers in his company, saying, "Can we do this faster? Can we do this better?" He was imagining something that had never been done, except by a giant corporation and a giant space agency, the biggest entities in the world. He decided to move into space because of his inspiration and because of the capital he had to deploy.

We know, and I know from teaching those students, that that effort, that imagination, that ambition inspired them and other Canadians. Now we have other inspirations that are not just from Elon Musk and are not just American. NordSpace itself is an inspiration. The astronauts I mentioned earlier are an inspiration. It is lighting a fire and an interest on campuses across Canada. I was recently at an Artemis II space launch celebration gathering. There were gatherings across Canada for both the launch and the landing. We felt our hearts beat as the capsule came toppling through the atmosphere and then cheered when those first parachutes came up.

It is those moments that are inspiring students across Canada. At the Artemis II space launch event that I attended with Let's Talk Science at the University of Toronto, I met a group of undergraduate students who were starting a rocket club, the second rocket club on campus. There was already a rocket club for the engineers, and this was a group of arts students and science students who were going to have their own rocket club. There are students who are joining competitions and getting course credits. They are building the kind of excitement and economy that would be supported by this act.

Recently, I had the pleasure and the opportunity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry to visit Western University, the University of Waterloo and the University of Victoria, all campuses and locations that have this research energy but also student energy toward the space launch capabilities that this act would be building.

I think my colleagues are going to share some of the other very specific benefits of this legislation, the economic benefits and the regional benefits. We are not going to have our own Kennedy Space Center or our own Cape Canaveral, but we can have versions of those places that people are proud of, that we can launch from and identify with.

I want to conclude by reminding us of the vision that is required here, with a quote by Langston Hughes, in the Dalton McGuinty book *Be a Good One*:

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

In this legislation, we are giving Canadians from coast to coast the opportunity to fly. It is a great opportunity and a great piece of legislation. I commend it to the members of the House.

• (1550)

**Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify something. The member earlier said that there are definitions in the bill for “launch”, “launch vehicle” and “re-entry vehicle”. The reality is that there is a transitional definition, and the minister can now call a “launch vehicle” anything. He could call it an orange if he wanted to. There is no real, permanent definition, in contrast to what he says.

I would go forward to things that are absolutely not in there, which are the certification and operation of a launch re-entry vehicle, safety requirements and anything on national security. If the Liberals do not want to put it in the legislation, will they at least publish the draft regulations?

**Karim Bardeesy:** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague for Northumberland—Clarke is familiar with how legislation and regulations work. We bring legislation forward, and then regulations are developed under that.

I know there is a strong commitment to safety in this kind of work. The people and the professionals who are involved in this work take the safety pieces extremely seriously. It is part of a broader ecosystem of companies, in fact, that are working on this. The sovereign capabilities that we would be building through this act would take care of that situation.

**Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his impassioned speech about this important piece of legislation and about our future in space. Presently, Canada has to rely on other countries to launch our military satellites into space, to launch our communication satellites into space and to launch some of the finest trained astronauts in the world, our Canadian astronauts, into space.

I wonder if my hon. colleague can speak to the importance of Canada finally taking the future of space exploration into our own hands and giving us the capacity to do so.

[Translation]

**Karim Bardeesy:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague's question and his work. He represents an economic region where the aerospace and aviation sectors are very important and where we can train the students who are the future of these sectors.

[English]

In exactly the way the hon. member described, in a continental context with our peers and with our partners that we do this essential work with, we have all the ingredients, except we lack the sovereign launch capability. This sovereign launch capability that we would be building through our sectors and through this legislation would attract yet more investment, yet more expertise and yet more excitement, and it is all part of the work we need to do to have sovereign launch.

**Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch a little on theory and reality. We heard my colleague across the way talk about launch capability and how it is

going to create jobs and all this good stuff, but then we actually have reality.

The reality is that Maritime Launch Services leased to Canada for \$20 million a year a concrete pad, which is being leased for \$13,000 a year. Our Canadian taxpayers are on the hook for \$20 million a year. It is a dirt road with a concrete pad. The other reality is that Telesat, which got over \$2 billion from Canadian taxpayers, is now running from creditors.

I would like to hear comments from the member on this huge mismanagement of Canadian taxpayer dollars.

**Karim Bardeesy:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, but I would advise that the demand for this kind of capability is exactly why we are responding with this legislation.

Here is what Kepler had to say: “It is essential that Canada's sovereign launch capability is globally competitive so it can meet domestic Department of National Defence requirements while also serving global launch demands.”

Eutelsat also relied on American firms and facilities to launch 20 satellites. It said that it “always welcomes the prospect of new entrants into the launcher market to increase the options for access to space.”

It is the building up of supply that we are doing, in part through the legislation we are enabling here today, that enables the sovereign launch capability we have and also attracts new investment.

**Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Taiaiko'o'n—Parkdale—High Park for sharing his time with me today.

I am surprised the Liberals have chosen to bring up space exploration today, given the fact that over the last week, we have seen the concrete pad out in Nova Scotia. I am sure we have all seen the picture by now. I want to thank Marie Lumsden from the Hamilton Examiner for the great article that has given me the information for this speech here today.

The Liberals are true to form. We have seen over and over again where they have worked very hard to enrich their friends. We have seen the clam scam. We have seen the ArriveCan app. We have seen the WE Charity scandal. We have seen the Chuck Rifici and the marijuana “pump and dump” schemes. We have seen the Brookfield stock go up over time. We have seen the green slush fund. We have seen the Randy Boissonnault scandal. We have seen this over and over again.

### *Routine Proceedings*

In the fallout of the news being reported around this gravel driveway and a concrete pad out in Nova Scotia, and a government contract for \$200 million, the government decides this is the week we should be talking about space exploration, or participation in space. I am excited that Canada participates in space. I remember growing up being super proud of the Canadarm. Does everyone remember the Canadarm? I remember being excited about that, going to the Edmonton Space and Science Centre, watching the spacewalk on the IMAX and things like that, and also about the International Space Station and our participation in that.

The Liberals want us to talk about that today, about our Canadian participation, how we should be so proud that Canada participates in space and that we should have our own Cape Canaveral. What we saw in the news last week is no Cape Canaveral. It is a concrete pad.

Now, I poured a bit of concrete last summer, and I can say that concrete is pretty expensive by the cubic metre. It was about \$300 a cubic metre back home. I can imagine that is a pretty expensive place, and the company is paying \$13,500 a year to lease the land that this pad is on. We know that. I would give them a generous amount. I have paid a few contractors in my time for concrete as well, so I will be generous with it. Let us say some Caterpillar work was done there and some gravel trucks came and brought some gravel. It cost maybe \$1 million. I think that is a pretty generous amount. Everybody made some good money building that pad.

The Canadian government could have done that. The Canadian government could have leased the land from the Nova Scotia government, spent \$1 million and built the concrete pad. I think that would be an acceptable thing for us to have done, given that the Canadian government owns most of the airports in Canada. I do not know if everyone knows this, but most of the airports in Canada are owned by the Canadian government. Then private companies, generally not-for-profits, operate these places, and they pay the Canadian government for the operations.

Members can imagine being flabbergasted that this has been brought up here, that we are paying for the privilege of being able to maybe one day use this concrete pad to launch a rocket somewhere. We are paying \$20 million a year for the privilege of maybe being able to use that concrete pad. That is not all. The Liberals really know how to make their friends happy: by backdating this contract a whole year and paying them back an entire year. Marie Lumsden looked into some of the people involved. Lo and behold, a Liberal premier is on the board of directors of this company. Wow, look at that, Liberals feeding their friends. Members may think that is kind of interesting. There is a partnership. All of this was brought up by the partnership from—

• (1555)

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, we have not yet gotten to the point of listening to the spring economic statement. The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock is still delivering his speech, so out of respect for our colleague, let us keep the sound level down.

The member has the floor.

**Arnold Viersen:** Mr. Speaker, I was just talking about the launch corruption into the stratosphere pad out in Nova Scotia. We then

discovered, through the work of Marie Lumsden, about some of the directors of the company—

• (1600)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock will have about five minutes left when the topic returns to the House for debate.

[Translation]

It being 4 o'clock, pursuant to order made Tuesday, April 21, 2026, I now invite the hon. Minister of Finance and National Revenue to make a statement.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### WAYS AND MEANS

#### NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I would like to table, in both official languages, the spring economic update documents for 2026, including the notice of ways and means motion. The details of the measures are contained in these documents.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I am requesting that an order of the day be designated for consideration of these motions.

\* \* \*

### SPRING ECONOMIC UPDATE 2026

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, honourable members, fellow Canadians, when I rose in this House to deliver budget 2025, I presented an ambitious plan to navigate current challenges and harness Canada's many strengths to position our country for success for decades to come.

The changes we are witnessing are sudden and unprecedented. From geopolitical shifts to supply chain disruptions to rapid technological breakthroughs, including in artificial intelligence, the world is changing quickly and Canada must adapt to thrive.

That is why the Prime Minister called on Canadians to seize the opportunity and build at a speed and scale not seen in generations, to build Canada strong, to build sustainably and responsibly and to build a Canada for all, because we believe in Canada.

[English]

In budget 2025, we made generational investments to build communities, to empower Canadians and to protect our country. Now the journey must continue. We do this by drawing on Canada's unique strengths and capabilities. We have the most educated workforce, something we should all be proud of.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we should applaud all the strong people we have in Canada.

We have a very strong industrial base that builds ships, cars and planes. We have critical minerals to power the economy of the 21st century. We are an energy superpower in renewables and in conventional and nuclear energy. We are the only G7 country with a free trade agreement with all other G7 nations, giving us preferential market access to 1.5 billion people around the world.

This is a Canada we can be proud of, a country that is strong, a country that is ambitious, a country that is confident. Above all, as the Prime Minister said, let us lead with the strength of our values and the value of our strengths. Canada is resilient. Canada is resourceful. Canadians are resourceful people. Together, we can chart a path forward through the fog of uncertainty, because Canada has what the world wants and increasingly needs.

We have the right plan. We are building big. We are moving fast, and the good news is that we are just getting started. I know that, in their hearts, my Conservative colleagues also feel the same. I can see that across the aisle. These are serious times, and Canadians expect us to be good stewards of our economy and manage our public finances with thoughtful fiscal discipline.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Over the past six months, we have supported Canadians with concrete measures to make everyday life more affordable while strengthening our economy. We have built the second-fastest growing economy in the G7 while reducing our projected deficit for 2025-26 by more than \$11 billion.

[English]

This is the essence of being strong fiscal managers, to make sure that we make the right decisions to ensure benefits not only today but for future generations. Our economy is resilient, driven by GDP growth, rising incomes and obviously more jobs.

Let me be clear: This is good news for Canadians. It reflects a stronger, more productive economy. We have made this happen through pragmatic and targeted investments to make Canada the most competitive jurisdiction in the G7 for investment, including through the productivity superdeduction and through our trade diversification strategy. We have ensured that as revenues have grown by two-thirds, two-thirds of this increase over the past year has been directed toward affordability measures that make a real difference in the lives of Canadians. This is the true essence of being Canadian.

Guided by our commitment to spend less so we can invest more, and building on the comprehensive expenditure review, our govern-

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ment continues to reduce spending, improve efficiency and deliver better value for Canadians. As a result, projected deficits are lower over the fiscal horizon. We also remain firmly on track to balance day-to-day operating spending with revenues by 2028-29 and to keep the deficit-to-GDP ratio on a steady downward path.

This country is growing at an unprecedented speed. Just to put that in perspective, Canada has the second-fastest growing economy in the G7. We are growing almost twice as much as Germany, almost twice as much as Japan and almost three times more than Italy. This is because Canadians are resourceful. This is because we have the right plan. This is because, as Canadians, there is nothing that is beyond the limit for us.

[Translation]

Canadians understand that by spending less, we can invest more. Our fiscal position is strong and allows us to build a Canada that is strong and fair.

[English]

This is a Canada that is not just for some, most of the time, but for all, all the time. Our ambitious plan to build the strongest economy in the G7 is on track. We are delivering on our plan through the work led by the Major Projects Office to supercharge 15 projects that are projected to create over 60,000 jobs and drive \$126 billion in new investment. We are delivering on our plan through a defence industrial strategy that will increase our defence exports by 50% and support 125,000 high-paying careers, with an anticipated \$125-billion downstream economic benefit by 2035. We are delivering on our plan through an automotive strategy that will protect a cornerstone of our economy while growing an industry that supports 500,000 jobs. We are delivering on our plan because we believe in Canada.

This is a moment for Canadians to lead, for our nation to be ambitious. We are building fast. We are building Canadian. We are building sustainably. From the copper and gold mine expansions in British Columbia to the Darlington new nuclear project in Ontario, we are powering the next generation of prosperity. In the north, we are proud to support an Inuit-owned renewable energy project in Iqaluit, breaking the Arctic's reliance on diesel and returning energy sovereignty to our people.

I can see smiles across the aisle.

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There is more good news. We are also expanding this model of economic reconciliation through the indigenous loan guarantee program, supporting first nation equity in major projects like the Chatham to Lakeshore transmission line. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Bay du Nord project advanced significantly under our new government and positions Canada to be a supplier of choice at a time when energy security is top of mind.

• (1610)

[Translation]

These projects and others like them across the country are creating thousands of high-paying careers for Canadians and strengthening communities from coast to coast to coast.

Advancing economic prosperity also means building a more sustainable future. That includes concrete climate policies that support growth, lower costs, and strengthen Canada's competitiveness. We are well on our way to conserve 30% of Canada's lands and waters by 2030.

[English]

I am pleased to report to this House that the dream of Canada is alive and well. Young people, increasingly, see themselves in building Canada strong, and we will be there with them.

[Translation]

Our vision is clear: a Canada strong at home and a Canada strategic abroad. Canada is seen on the global stage as moving with pragmatism and purpose. Over the past year, we have shown that Canada is a top destination for foreign direct investment. We attracted nearly \$100 billion in investments, the highest level in almost two decades, and secured around 20 new economic and defence partnerships across four continents.

[English]

We are just getting started. Every member of the House will be happy to learn that in September we will host the first-ever Canada investment summit in Toronto to unlock even more opportunities, building on our trade diversification strategy that we outlined in 2025.

Canada is seen as a trusted partner to deliver the energy and the food security the world needs, both now and for decades to come. In a volatile environment, investors choose Canada for a reason: We offer unparalleled stability, predictability and opportunity. We will continue by making Canada strong. People want to invest in this country, and we will be there with them.

That said, we know that affordability is the single most pressing issue for many Canadians.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I think they might want to listen.

We are relentlessly focused on what we can control: delivering targeted support where it matters most while our economic plan takes hold, a boost today and a bridge to tomorrow to ease the cost of living for Canadians.

• (1615)

[Translation]

On June 5, more than 12 million Canadians will receive additional support through the new Canada groceries and essentials benefit. Millions more are already benefiting from our middle-class tax cut and automatic federal benefits, ensuring they receive the support they need. The suspended federal fuel excise tax on gas and diesel across Canada aims to reduce Canadians' bills by up to 10¢ per litre on regular gasoline and four cents per litre on diesel. That relief is already being felt by consumers.

Four hundred thousand children have access to healthy meals, while their parents are saving \$800 a year on groceries, because we worked with the Prime Minister to make the national school food program permanent. First-time home buyers are saving up to \$50,000 since we eliminated the goods and services tax on homes priced at \$1 million or under, and over nine million Canadians can now access affordable dental care through the Canadian dental care plan.

[English]

From the beginning, we have placed people and affordability at the centre of our economic plan because we know that these pressures are real and demand immediate action, because we believe in a Canada for all indeed. This brings me to the spring economic update that Canada's new government is tabling today.

[Translation]

Our objective is clear: to build a stronger, more independent, more resilient economy. That work begins by investing in our future and by giving Canadians the opportunity to take part in building it.

[English]

Through our flagship Canada Strong fund, we are creating Canada's first national sovereign wealth fund, something Canadians should all be proud of under the current government. This is a historic moment. Generations will look back at the Prime Minister, the government and the current Parliament and say that we were there for them. We are building long-term wealth and growth.

**Some hon members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues across the aisle are excited, because I can hear them shouting.

A sovereign fund, and I will make this real for people watching at home, is essentially a national savings and investment account designed to grow wealth for future generations. It is about taking action today for future generations. The fund will invest in key strategic Canadian projects and companies. It will create jobs. It will support innovation. It will make Canada more competitive. Canadians themselves will be able to take part directly by investing in the fund, sharing in our growth and contributing to the country we are building together, because we are all in for Canada.

[Translation]

Investing in our future also means investing in the people who are building it. That is why this update is focused on helping workers and young people gain the skills, experience and support they need to succeed, as well as ensuring they take advantage of opportunities available to them.

[English]

We are creating new opportunities for young Canadians to give back to their country, by launching team Canada strong as part of a nationwide effort to recruit, train and hire 80,000 to 100,000 new skilled trades workers. This is a step change in how we approach that. We are going to have the people to build this country together across our nation. This means real pathways into skilled trades, with paid training and hands-on experience. It means more opportunities for employers to hire and train young workers. It means a \$5,000 bonus when a person completes their Red Seal certification. Most importantly, it means being part of building a stronger Canada. It is going to inspire a new generation of young people in our country.

At the same time, we are making education more affordable by extending the increase to Canada student grants and the interest-free Canada student loans, which will benefit thousands of students across our nation. My colleagues and I, as well as the Prime Minister, have been across this nation and have listened to young people. They asked us to give them a hand now to make sure they can study and be part of this, and we have answered. We are glad to do our part for our young people.

We are doing much more, because growth depends on giving people the tools to succeed. That is at the core of a Canada for all.

● (1620)

[Translation]

It is thanks to this new generation of builders that we will be able to build enough homes here in Canada. This brings me to one of the most pressing challenges facing Canadians today: housing. Housing is a key pillar of affordability and we have made significant and tangible progress to build more affordable housing across the country.

[English]

Since their peak, home prices are down 20%, and rents are down 9% nationally. For many families, this is starting to translate into real relief, but all members of the House would agree that more work needs to be done. This update continues the work of Build Canada Homes, with a plan to increase supply, lower costs and help more Canadians find a safe and affordable home. We are cutting

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red tape to build homes faster, supporting innovation in construction, unlocking over \$7 billion in low-cost financing, boosting housing supply and protecting construction jobs across the country in partnership with provinces and territories.

We are helping the people most in need by extending support for people experiencing homelessness across our nation and by ensuring that survivors of gender-based violence have access to a safe place, because we believe in a Canada for all.

Let me speak about defence.

[Translation]

Security starts at home but it also extends beyond it. We embarked on an important mission to rebuild, rearm and reinvest in the Canadian Armed Forces. In the last year, we have invested over \$63 billion into our defence and security. This marks a historic shift in support for our military, one that is already delivering real results.

In March, NATO confirmed that Canada has achieved its 2% defence expenditure target, half a decade ahead of the original schedule.

[English]

If there was one part I thought the opposition would applaud, it was this one. There is only so much one can ask.

[Translation]

We will continue to strengthen our defence capabilities, equip our forces with modern, Canadian-made equipment, and invest in our workers and our defence industry. Because national security begins with those who serve, we announced the largest pay increase for the Canadian Armed Forces in a generation, with recruitment now at a 30-year high.

[English]

That is because we are all in for Canada.

● (1625)

Let me talk about stronger and safer communities. Strong communities are also safe communities and communities that bring people together. That is why this update will invest in the things that make communities stronger, safer and more connected across our great country.

We are moving forward with a financial crimes agency and a national anti-fraud strategy to help protect Canadians, our seniors in particular, and to strengthen trust in our financial system. We are also taking steps to make communities safer, with strong tools to address crime and better protect public access.

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We have listened to communities across the country. We have listened to people, and we understand that they need safety in their place of worship. We are there for them.

[Translation]

We are investing in the vitality of our communities, and in the programs and people that support them. That includes the most significant investment in our sport system in 20 years.

[English]

I would have thought that clapping for sports was Canadian, in a way.

[Translation]

I got a bit carried away, but I am going to say it again because I think it is worth saying. It is the most significant investment in our sport system in 20 years.

[English]

I gave them a second chance to clap.

[Translation]

It will expand access for youth and better support high-performance athletes with additional funding of \$755 million. Canadians understand the power of sport—how it pushes us to do better and brings us together in our communities. We saw this last year during the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and we see it every day on our rinks, in our sports centres, and in our school yards. A Canada for all must also be a Canada where sport is accessible for everyone.

[English]

Our strategy from the playground to the podium will make a real difference. It will unite our country and inspire a generation of young Canadians in a very true Canadian way. This is Canada at its best, and we are going to support our young people and young athletes.

Along our coast, the same spirit of hard work and community lives in our small craft harbours. Maybe we can get a smile for small craft harbours. I am looking. Small craft harbours are more than infrastructure. They are a foundation for coastal communities, supporting more than five million Canadians, sustaining indigenous traditions and powering thousands of jobs in the fish and seafood industry. This is why we are investing almost a billion dollars to repair and strengthen these vital harbours.

Regardless of which side of the aisle someone sits on, they know that when we in the House invest, we invest in the people who depend on these investments. These are not isolated measures. We made these investments with a purpose. Let me make it real for my colleagues, the members of the House. In budget 2025, we made generational investments in infrastructure to build stronger communities, delivering tangible benefits across the country.

Now team Canada strong will empower a new generation of workers from those same communities, to help build the local infrastructure the government is investing in. Whether that means homes, sports facilities or transit systems, these projects will be built by workers in our communities, for our communities, because

when communities are strong, safe and connected, Canadians thrive together because we are all in for Canada.

• (1630)

There is so much more to talk about, but I know that Canadians understand that we are building Canadian strong.

[Translation]

In conclusion, this spring economic update reflects the progress we have made and the important work that remains: building a strong Canada while ensuring that progress and economic growth are felt by Canadians across the country.

[English]

It is about stepping up for our businesses, farmers, entrepreneurs, workers and fishers, Canadians from all walks of life. It is about making sure the projects that build our nation move forward and that people have the support they need to get ahead, especially those affected by unjust tariffs. We are all thinking about them, and we can tell them that we have their backs. Every single member here has their backs. We are thinking about them.

[Translation]

It is about building Canada strong for all.

[English]

When we build Canada strong together, there is no limit to what we can achieve. As Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen showed us on his recent journey to the moon, the sky is no longer the limit for us.

Let us seize the moment, be ambitious and build Canada strong together.

**Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is just another Liberal. He said he would spend less, and then he doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

The member may start over.

**Jasraj Hallan:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is just another expensive Liberal. He said he would spend less, and then he doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit. The Liberals liberalled, and they doubled the national debt. Every single year, debt-servicing costs are going to go up, and they are going to be more than what the provinces get in health care transfers or what is collected in GST revenue. In fact, debt servicing costs are going to go up by 50% by 2031, all on the backs of hard-working Canadians. This is all while the Liberals have given Canadians the worst housing debt, the most housing costs, the highest food inflation and the second-highest unemployment in the entire G7.

This economic update is more debt, more costs, more taxes and more spending, all from the same old Liberals. In what world is it fair that the Liberal Prime Minister is giving more money to his banker and bondholder buddies than what goes to doctors and nurses in health care transfers?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, let me help my colleague. I know it is Tuesday, and it is likely that he will need to update his QP card. The deficit is lower and growth is up. Let me help him. The deficit is down and growth is up.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, they can shout as much as they want. I come from Shawinigan; I can handle these guys.

It is amazing to me that they will not take the time to talk about support to build a stronger nation together. They will not talk about small craft harbours. They will not talk about the things that will build Canada strong.

On this side of the aisle, we will support young people, workers and industry. We will build Canada strong together.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the update fails to take into account the U.S. President's April 2 order, which slapped a 25% tariff on most of the goods exported to the United States from Quebec and even Ontario.

What good is an update that is not up to date? When we asked the Prime Minister questions about this, he said the answer would be in this update.

What good is yesterday's weather forecast?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. As I mentioned in my speech, we are aware that the results are there at the macroeconomic level. Still, we share the member's concerns for workers in the aluminum, steel, auto and softwood lumber sectors.

One thing is certain, and I think my colleague would agree. The best thing we can do is to support our workers as we have always done and build a strong economy together. I hope that the Bloc Québécois will join us for once so we can pass this legislation to support our workers, support our industries and ensure that together we build a strong Canada that works for everyone.

[*English*]

**Danielle Martin (University—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the people of University—Rosedale, many of whom could benefit from the Canada disability tax credit but have found the process to be difficult and onerous to navigate.

Could the minister elaborate on how this spring economic update will make this regime easier to navigate for Canadians living with disabilities and the health care workers who support them?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure everyone watching in University—Rosedale is proud of their new

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member of Parliament. It is just a few days, and she is already making a difference. She is right, and she has the experience.

We have made sure that people who need the disability tax credit, those who are entitled to it, can do it faster. We have listened to the community and the people, and what they told us is that the process was very cumbersome. They could not get the benefit.

This is about being a true Liberal. We are fiscally responsible, but we are also there for people. We are listening to communities. Two-thirds of the additional revenue we received has been used to make life more affordable for Canadians. That is truly building Canada strong for all.

**Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in the spring economic update on surveillance pricing. There is nothing on excessive tax profits, as oil companies are set to make some \$90 billion in excess profits. Meanwhile, two-thirds of the \$140 billion for housing is actually for developers in lost revenues. The government does not, in the economic budget, have the wherewithal to ensure that the Right Fit program for people with disabilities will be funded. Only \$500,000 is needed to keep the program going for people with disabilities to find a home.

Why did the government not support people with disabilities?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I have enormous respect for my colleague. She raises a very important question. With respect to the disability tax credit, we have listened to the community. We have made sure that it is more efficient. We want to make sure that the people who are entitled to the benefit can find the process easier.

One thing I want to say is that 50% of the new measures we have adopted in the spring economic update are to help Canadians from coast to coast. We are always going to have the backs of Canadians. We are going to support our workers and support our industry. We are going to build Canada strong, together.

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**Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at the facts. The former Liberal prime minister anticipated a \$31-billion deficit this year. According to today's announcement, the projected deficit is twice the anticipated amount. Today, the government is confirming the creation of a sovereign wealth fund. The Minister of Finance compares Canada to Norway and Saudi Arabia. The major difference is that these countries develop their natural resources using their budget surpluses. Here, we run deficits. The government is going to put \$25 billion on the credit card of Canadians to create this fund.

As for our biggest economic partner, the United States, the economic update contains only three short lines about the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement. They say that they are going to talk about aluminum, steel, the automotive industry and forestry, and that the negotiations are going to resume. There are only three short lines about the agreement with our largest financial partner, the United States. It is also the country we conduct 75% of our trade with. Does the importance of this agreement amount to no more than that?

• (1640)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I realize this is an important document and that, as my colleague has only just arrived, he has not had time to read it in full. I will help him prepare for the next question period. The deficit is going down by \$11 billion. It has not increased; it has decreased. I will help him out with his next question.

Here is what is important. He spoke of a sovereign wealth fund, a fund that will help build a strong Canada and enable people to invest. Instead of criticizing and heckling, I invite the members opposite to join us in building a strong and fair Canada for everyone. We are doing this for the whole country.

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, once again, nothing new is being proposed for developing renewable energy, clean energy and public transit. However, new subsidies for oil and gas are being proposed. The government is even going so far as to expand subsidies for carbon storage in order to allow oil companies to drill and produce more oil from the oil sands.

The government is now providing \$14.5 billion to oil and gas companies through this program. There are plans to increase the country's oil transportation capacity by 12%. A "superdeduction" is being offered for liquefied natural gas, which will cost \$640 million. A \$25-billion sovereign wealth fund is being created, a significant portion of which will go to oil and gas companies.

How can the government claim to be serious about combatting climate change and how can it claim it will meet its reduction targets for 2030 and 2035 when it is going full steam ahead with oil?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell that my colleague read the economic update, but he only read part of it. I realize there are a lot of pages to read, so I will help my colleague out. The economic update also covers major projects. The Port of Montreal's Contrecoeur expansion project will boost its capacity by 60%. This will be the biggest port expansion in Canadian history. Quebec is a business leader. Quebec has green energy and entrepreneurs.

We will continue to invest in our entrepreneurs and our industries to build Canada strong all across this great country.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. minister on his presentation and thank him for proposing to simplify the disability tax credit. As a father, I appreciate that. We are ready to work with him to simplify the system and help more people. I have already filled out these forms and can attest to how complicated they are, so this is a worthwhile proposal.

Despite that, we now know that the Liberal Prime Minister has doubled the deficit left by Justin Trudeau, increasing it from \$31 billion to \$65 billion. No one thought it was possible to borrow and spend more than Justin Trudeau, but the current Liberal Prime Minister has done just that. This deficit-driven budget will lead to higher costs, higher taxes, and more debt on the national credit card. The Prime Minister is just another Liberal.

Today, the Liberal Prime Minister patted himself on the back for the Liberal's 11th credit card budget. On top of that, he told Canadians that the cost of living is the best it has been in 10 years. However, let us put aside these illusions and look at the reality faced by ordinary Canadians. We have the worst food inflation in the G7. The situation is quite dire for seniors in Quebec. According to the newspaper *Le Journal de Montréal*, one-third of seniors have an income of less than \$25,000 a year. Many have to choose between rent, good groceries and medication. One retiree told *Le Journal de Montréal* that she would have been homeless if she had not found a solution at the last minute, given that the cost of rent is skyrocketing. Many seniors live on less than \$1,900 a month. They are saying that they have to skip meals every day. We hear the same stories all across Canada.

The Liberals' credit card budget means higher inflation, higher prices today and higher taxes in the future, all while a small circle of well-connected Liberal elites continue to enrich themselves through subsidies, corporate welfare and tax havens, which the Prime Minister himself is also using.

Here are the facts from the Liberal economic update. It brings higher costs, more debt and more taxes being racked up on the national credit card. The Prime Minister is just another Liberal.

The Prime Minister broke his promise to reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio, which is set to rise in each of the next four years. The Prime Minister broke his promise to cut spending. In fact, spending is going up 5% this year, which is more than under Justin Trudeau and more than economic growth and inflation combined. Today, he announced \$37 billion in new spending. That is the net number, not including the small savings measures he promised.

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Since taking office, the Prime Minister has created 13 new agencies. That means more bureaucracy. Outside of the COVID-19 pandemic, this is the biggest deficit in Canadian history, and government spending now accounts for the largest share of our economy since 1996. Interest on our national debt now stands at \$59 billion. That is more than we spend on health care and more than we collect in GST. That means that when a Canadian pays GST, every penny goes to bankers and nothing goes to nurses and doctors. Every Canadian family will have to pay \$3,400 in interest on the national debt this year. There is nothing left for services.

• (1645)

An increasing share of spending is going to Liberal cronies. We see this with the new sovereign wealth fund, which has no wealth to put in it. It is the new gimmick with no wealth in it. That will go on the credit card too, and the money will go to cronies and people well connected to the government. It is a big financial risk.

We see more waste benefiting the global elite. More specifically, we see \$3 billion in funding for international climate finance. This is the same money scheme that this Liberal Prime Minister used to enrich himself at Brookfield and through his now bankrupt Net-Zero Banking Alliance. We see that there is \$2.3 billion to subsidize electric cars manufactured abroad, which will jeopardize Canadian jobs. Another \$11 million is earmarked for a major gathering of the financial elites to discuss how to spend taxpayers' money. The economic update also predicts slower economic growth and rising inflation.

All of this Liberal Prime Minister's policies are driving up the cost of living and driving down workers' wages while a small Liberal elite keeps getting richer. A year down the road, our economy is declining and the cost of living is rising. I say that simply so that we can face reality and put a plan in place to reverse the trend.

The Conservative plan has four pillars. The first is affordable and abundant energy with no gas tax or carbon tax. The second is very low inflation and very low taxes thanks to cuts to the public service, consultants, corporate welfare, foreign aid and other kinds of waste. The third is free market competition. The fourth is national self-reliance because we can free up our natural resources to meet our own needs here at home. That is how we can and must make Canada more affordable at home, stronger at home and greater at home.

• (1650)

[*English*]

On this day, I want to congratulate the minister for his speech and thank him for his commitment as a father. I thank him for his commitment to simplify the disability tax credit. Our people should be spending their time living their lives rather than filling out forms. We want to make life simpler for people who already have enough challenges.

Unfortunately, then comes the bad news. The Liberal Prime Minister has now doubled the deficit that Justin Trudeau left behind, from \$31 billion to \$65 billion. Everyone thought it would be impossible to outspend the reckless Justin Trudeau, but then the new Liberal Prime Minister came along and said, "Hold my champagne". On this day, as he congratulates himself for putting an

11th Liberal budget on the national credit card and tells Canadians that "Affordability is the best it has been in over a decade", let us remember that his illusions are not reality.

With Canada's food prices rising the fastest in the G7, just last week in Calgary, on April 25, thousands of families lined up for hours at the Guru Nanak's Free Kitchen, many with suitcases, so they could take away 80,000 pounds of free potatoes and groceries because they cannot afford to feed themselves. In Moose Jaw, the food bank has to limit visits to once a month instead of two. I do not know what people are doing for the rest of the year. There has been a 150% increase in the demand at that local food bank under the Liberal government. Nationwide, food banks are recording nearly 2.2 million visits per month. That is double from seven years ago. Working parents are skipping meals so their children can eat. Seniors are choosing between groceries and medication. Young families are staring down mortgage increases as inflationary government spending drives up their mortgage costs.

All of this is leading to real misery in people's lives, the real human costs we saw with the index of the World Happiness Report, which saw Canada fall from the fifth happiest in the world to the 25th during the span of the Liberal government. Among Canadians under the age of 25, we now rank 71st, behind the U.S., the U.K., Australia, even Kazakhstan, Vietnam and Moldova. Who would have thought that Kazakhstani, Vietnamese and Moldovan youth would be happier than Canadians in their youth, in the springtime of their lives?

That is the tragedy of Liberal credit card budgeting, which imposed higher costs on people's lives. Here is how it works. They put the nation's bill on the national credit card, and they force Canadians to put their bills on their personal credit cards. Meanwhile, a small group of Liberal elites and corporate insiders get fantastically rich off government handouts, bailouts and carve-outs. Today's Liberal fiscal update brings more costs, more debt and more bills on the national credit card. The Prime Minister is just another Liberal.

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Here are the facts. He doubled the deficit from \$31 billion to \$65 billion. The Prime Minister broke his promise that he would reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio over the fiscal horizon. Today, he reported that the debt-to-GDP ratio will go up, not only over the fiscal horizon, but in every single year that this government serves. He broke his promise to spend less, with spending, year over year, going up 4.9%, which is far more than the combined inflation and economic growth, and about twice inflation plus population growth. He has added \$37 billion of brand new spending measures in this economic update alone, on top of tens of billions of dollars already announced in the last year.

Since taking office a year ago, the Liberal Prime Minister has created 13 new government agencies. Outside of COVID, last year's was the largest deficit in Canadian history, and this year's spending is the highest, as a share of GDP, since 1996. Interest on the national debt will hit \$59 billion this year, more than we transfer for health care and more than we collect in GST. That means every penny we pay in GST goes to bankers and bondholders, not to doctors and nurses. Every Canadian will spend \$3,400 on interest payments.

An increasing share of spending goes to Liberal elites and corporate insiders, so not everyone is hurting. The Prime Minister's so-called sovereign wealth fund, which has no wealth to put in it, is relying 100% on the national credit card. Today, we learned that the government is going to spend millions of dollars to set up a transition office that will eventually set up a permanent office to borrow on the national credit card to place bets on Liberal-chosen corporations.

Then there is \$3 billion for international climate finance, the same money scheme the Prime Minister used to enrich himself at Brookfield and through his now bankrupt net-zero alliance. I see someone over there from Brookfield was applauding. It was the former environment minister. He might feel like he is out of business sitting in the corner, but no worries, the Prime Minister's net-zero alliance is also bankrupt, so he is not alone.

The Prime Minister has been wrong about everything, by the way. He tells us every day how smart he is. He was wrong to say we needed a bigger and broader carbon tax, wrong to oppose the pipeline to the Pacific, wrong to say there would be deflation after COVID, wrong to say that printing money would not cause prices to go up and wrong to say we should keep 50% of our oil in the ground. How can we ever expect him to get anything right when he has been so wrong for so long?

There is \$11 million to hold a summit. One meeting with a bunch of global financial elites will cost \$11 million. In case anyone is worried that this is something new, Justin Trudeau held the same meeting with the same people at a Shangri-La hotel 10 years ago to set up the Infrastructure Bank, and how did that work out?

Under the current Prime Minister, Canada now has the highest household debt in the G7, the most unaffordable housing in the G7, the lowest investment per worker in the G7, the second-worst productivity and the second-highest unemployment in the G7. Half a trillion dollars of net investment has fled to the United States. Twice as much capital has left than has returned. Twice as many Canadians are starting businesses abroad than they are at home. In

fact, more Canadian firms opened in the U.S. than opened in Canada last year. Last week's Liberal convention had a solution for all these people and this money leaving. They said they want an exit tax: a gigantic wall of taxes to prevent people from fleeing the costly policies of the Prime Minister. Any country that punishes its citizens for fleeing has lost hope.

• (1655)

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business reports that after one year of this Liberal Prime Minister, more businesses closed than opened; that we face an entrepreneurial drought; that high costs, red tape and uncertainty are crushing the next generation; that closures have outpaced start-ups for six straight quarters; and that over half of small businesses told a survey they would not recommend someone start a business in Canada today. The CFIB concludes that Canada's economic foundations are cracking. We cannot regulate and tax ambition out of our economy and expect to build a strong country.

Nothing has changed. Everything costs more. There is no real tax reform other than the rebranding of the carbon tax to be called the clean fuel standard. The Prime Minister promised to cut red tape, and yet not one anti-development law has been removed. As I said, 13 new agencies have been created. He said we would build at speeds not seen in generations, yet after we gave him unprecedented legal powers to approve big national projects, that new office, which those laws created, has not approved a single one.

Then there is the pipeline to the Pacific that he promised. It has no permit, no route, no investor, no start date, no end date, no starting point and no end point. The only company that we know could actually build the pipeline, Enbridge, says that Liberal laws and taxes will prevent us from generating enough oil to put in it. Finally, the Prime Minister wants Alberta to spend \$20 billion on a money-losing carbon capture project that has never been proven anywhere as a condition for building the actual pipeline.

What about the Prime Minister's famous Davos speech on middle power alliances? It has produced a lot of MOUs, but zero new free trade agreements around the world. Announcements are not results. Lofty speeches do not pay mortgages, fill tanks or stock the shelves.

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At the root, this Prime Minister still holds the same Liberal ideology of top-down government control that concentrates power and money among insiders like him, a philosophy that doubled our debt, killed growth and priced families out of the basics. He has been wrong on all of those issues all along. After one year of this Prime Minister, our economy is weaker, more expensive and less hopeful. I share these harsh facts because we must replace the illusion with reality if we are going to fix what the Liberals broke.

It has been said that optimism without realism is delusion, and realism without optimism is surrender. We will neither delude ourselves about the harsh reality nor surrender to Liberal failure. Today, Conservatives speak of a different, more hopeful, better Canada, a Canada that is the most affordable and autonomous anywhere on earth.

Everything in Canada should be dirt cheap, because we have the most dirt in which to build homes, dig resources and grow food. We hold the most resources per person of any country in the history of the world. A home with a yard, heat in the winter and fuel in the tank should be easily affordable. With vast farmland, the cost of food should not even be a concern.

We should be able to afford everything we want in this wonderful, splendid country with all of the abundant bounty that we have been given. That is our birthright, and it is our potential. Our mission for an affordable, autonomous, strong country is realistic. We possess the third most uranium, the most hydro potential and the cheapest natural gas to produce affordable, abundant electricity. We have the most oil reserves anywhere in the G7 and the shortest shipping distances from the Americas to both Asia and Europe. We have the most land per person of any G7 country, by far, on which to build homes. We rank third globally in farmland per person. We should have the most affordable food.

Conservatives choose a big, open, free market economy where everyone can fulfill their potential, where our money is sound, where our money buys more and where the people are thoroughly in charge of their own lives. Our plan rests on four principles: one, affordable, abundant energy; two, low inflation and taxes by cutting the cost of government; three, free market competition; and four, national self-reliance.

Energy touches every aspect of our lives. Conservatives, therefore, propose to scrap all taxes for all of the year on gas and to get rid of all carbon taxes forever. Workers and farmers would pay less. Truckers would deliver our goods more affordably.

• (1700)

We also need strong money. Strong money rewards work and savings. Like Switzerland, we will balance budgets in the medium term by slashing spending on consultants, bureaucrats, corporate welfare, foreign aid and handouts to false refugees. We will cancel the \$90-billion wasteful Alto rail project and enforce a strict dollar-for-dollar rule. Every new dollar of spending will be matched with a dollar of savings to pay for it.

We will unlock and unblock the free enterprise system. We will end corporate welfare, cut taxes, end taxes on homebuilding, energy and reinvestment, and lower taxes on work by simplifying and lowering the rates in our Income Tax Act. We will unblock home-

building and resource extraction by eliminating delays. We will do all of this because we believe in an economy that serves the hard-working people of this country.

The choice is clear: We can have an economy of lobbyists and handouts, or we can have hard work and competition. Between political aristocracy and economic meritocracy, I choose meritocracy.

The final principle, of course, is autonomy. Our Canadian sovereignty act will bring home paycheques and production through free enterprise and not subsidies. We will repeal the anti-development law, Bill C-69, lift the northern B.C. oil shipping ban, scrap the industrial carbon tax, cut regulatory burdens by 25% in two years and bring in a two-for-one rule. Every new regulation must eliminate two old ones.

We will move to the world's fastest permitting, and we will bring in binding pre-permits so we can get projects moving quickly and our economy rolling. We will unblock a dozen LNG plants, create a strategic energy and mineral reserve for crises and for leverage, and we will use that leverage to fight for tariff-free trade with the United States. That means building up our leverage to end the needless tariffs on our steel, aluminum, autos and lumber. Pushing a new auto pact will also allow us to work with our American friends to increase production on both sides of the border.

We will seek to relaunch the Keystone pipeline to move hundreds of thousands of additional barrels of oil south of the border, and we will not seek a permanent rupture with our closest customer in favour of a strategic partnership for a new world order with the dictatorship in Beijing.

Canada sells 20 times more to the United States than it does to China, and that is not going to fundamentally change, no matter how many illusions and falsehoods the Prime Minister promises. The same Prime Minister knows this. That is why he has 91% of his investments in the United States and not in Canada. Unfortunately, under his leadership, his investments are among those that have fled.

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In short, we need to remove the obstacles, the tariffs, the taxes, the red tape and the bureaucracy. Other government obstacles need to be removed. In essence, we need the government to get out of the way. It is not about what the government must do; it is about what it must stop doing. As Saint-Exupéry, the famous French author, said, "Perfection is achieved not when there is nothing left to add but when there is nothing left to remove."

By removing Liberal burdens, Liberal taxes and Liberal red tape, we will liberate the Canadian people to fulfill their potential. By lifting 11 years of Liberal burdens, we can free Canadian energy, genius and ambition. There is a Canada in the heart of every immigrant and pioneer, and in every indigenous person whose lineage dates back to time immemorial. It is this: With freedom we can achieve anything. Our promise is not a memory. It is our destiny.

Imagine a young tradesperson able to afford the homes that he builds; a mother filling her grocery cart worry-free, making decisions about her children's nutrition and not worried about emptying her bank account; families breathing freely; entrepreneurs launching ideas the same day they invent them; and our resources coming out of the ground and enriching all our people, not foreign coffers. No limits exist on the potential of the Canadian people when they are free to pursue it. We must be realistic and optimistic, because a realist counts the odds, while an optimist changes them. Let us do both.

● (1705)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, where I agree with the leader of the Conservative Party is that we should look at the contrast. There is a great, big difference. On the one hand, we have a Prime Minister, elected one year ago today, and a government that recognize that in order to grow the economy and to protect our security into the future, we need to invest in Canada. We need to invest in our infrastructure and in our people. From day one, those are the types of actions we have witnessed in the fall budget. We saw it detailed in the spring update that was tabled only an hour ago, full of good news.

The Conservative Party has nothing new to add, and that is unfortunate. I think the bar should be set higher for the official opposition, quite frankly. Let us recognize that if we want to build a strong and healthy country, we have to be able to invest in people and invest in the country. The question—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. leader of the official opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the member has been rattling on about the same thing for the last 10 years.

What has the result of the Liberal government been? It doubled the debt, doubled housing costs, doubled food bank lineups and gave us the worst growth in the G7 and the worst food price inflation in the G7. We have seen the results. Every time the Liberals use the word "invest", what they mean is to add more debt. Today, we got more costs, more debt, more taxes and more on the national credit card.

What we need is not a credit card economy. We need a paycheque economy, an economy where hard work brings home a powerful paycheque that buys affordable food and homes in safe

neighbourhoods. That is the promise of Canada that we would restore.

● (1710)

[Translation]

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition often talks about corporate welfare. I would like to hear him talk about the additional oil and gas subsidies provided in this economic update. The government is now spending \$14.5 billion on carbon capture and sequestration and has expanded the tax credit to allow more oil production. That makes it a direct subsidy for oil production.

LNG projects qualify for an accelerated capital cost allowance, which amounts to another \$640 million. On top of that, the government is setting up a \$25-billion sovereign wealth fund to finance major projects, but also any business or project that received government funds in the past. For example, if the government wanted to expand the Trans Mountain pipeline, the money could be provided through this sovereign wealth fund.

I would like to know the leader of the official opposition's thoughts about what he calls corporate welfare. Are these subsidies unacceptable when they are granted to oil and gas companies?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, that question is very simple. The oil sector does not need corporate welfare. It is extremely profitable if companies are allowed to operate. The problem is not a lack of money. The product these companies produce is extremely valuable. The problem is the government barriers that are preventing these companies from producing this resource. Let us therefore issue permits within six months for pipelines and new projects. Let us axe the industrial carbon tax and allow oil companies to pay more to help fund health care for all Canadians, including Quebecers.

They do not need corporate welfare. Instead, they need the government to get out of the way. The Liberals want to tax, regulate and ultimately subsidize oil companies. We do not want any of that. We simply want to unleash the potential of our investors and workers so they can thrive in the free market.

[English]

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a contradiction today. We have a Liberal government that is celebrating bigger deficits while Canadians continue to struggle under them. Canadians are now staring down a \$67-billion deficit that, two years ago, would have been unthinkable because, even under Justin Trudeau, the projection was half of that. This, of course, is not even the full picture because it does not include the \$100 billion for submarines, which is the largest military procurement in our history.

My question for the member is simple: Does he think that the Liberals will ever balance the budget?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, of course, the budget is going to balance itself. We make fun of Justin Trudeau, but how can we really continue doing that when the new Liberal Prime Minister has a deficit that is 100 times bigger? Did members ever imagine that anyone could outspend Justin Trudeau, that anyone could be more irresponsible than Justin Trudeau?

We wonder, is it sheer incompetence, or is it because the Liberal Prime Minister and the elites around him actually profit off of all of the inflation and the handouts this creates? Members will remember that the CEO of Brookfield said that inflation drives profits for Brookfield. It means that the company can charge higher rent to working-class tenants. It means its stock price goes up. It means its assets go up in price while destroying the working-class people.

At the same time, the money that the Prime Minister is putting on the national credit card is funding corporate welfare and handouts to insiders. While the Liberals lock up all the other small business owners and entrepreneurs, they give special deals to Liberal insiders and powerful elites. That is the economy that they have created. It is an economy for insiders and elites. We want an economy that is bottom-up, free enterprise for every Canadian who works hard, pays their taxes and plays by the rules.

• (1715)

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that people living with disabilities who qualify get \$200 for the Canada disability benefit. That is very meagre and the Liberals offered nothing in terms of an increase, despite the high rates of inflation.

Also, we talked to the Liberals and brought forward ideas about improving the disability tax credit form to honour people who are living with disabilities in their province or territory so they would automatically qualify. What do the Liberals do? They tinker with the form and say it is good enough, but it is costing 250,000 doctor-hours a year and one million patient visits just to fill out that form. That red tape alone is a reason to honour people living with disabilities in their province or territory.

Does the leader of the official opposition support our proposal that if people are on disability in their province or territory, they should automatically qualify? Do the Conservatives support increasing the Canada disability benefit for those living with disabilities?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. First of all, obviously, if somebody is on disability, they should au-

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tomatically qualify for the disability tax credit. I will note there are a lot of people who should also qualify for, but are not receiving, disability provincially. It should not necessarily be the case in the reverse direction.

The other thing that needs to be simplified is the disability savings account. I think that when somebody applies for the disability tax credit, they should be able to tick a box for the CRA to contact their bank and alert the bank to set up, free of charge, a registered disability savings account. It took us two trips to the bank and a large stack of paper in order to do it. It took forever. I cannot imagine that a very busy single mother working as a waitress is going to be able to go to the bank twice and fill out all those forms. As a result, 18 years later, her child is not going to have a savings account to help with their future.

Let us make it automatic. Let us make it simple. Let us empower people's lives and not drown them in paperwork.

[Translation]

**Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very curious about the opposition that today's economic update has triggered given that, every day in question period, people talk about the massive barriers to housing and property ownership that all Canadians, especially young people, encounter.

As stated in the budget and the economic update, the government wants to build and create a build communities strong fund. The government will use this \$51-billion fund to support projects for communities and infrastructure development.

Will you support this measure? It is important and it will be good for the whole country.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I cannot personally speak to that, but I will let the leader of the official opposition comment.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the government has created so many funds, so many agencies and so many programs to shift the burden of government spending onto Canadians that it is hard to know which one she is talking about. I imagine it is the sovereign wealth fund. It is a bottomless pit.

Normally, sovereign wealth funds accumulate surpluses. Countries like Norway, Saudi Arabia and Singapore have surpluses year after year. They save and set aside this money to bring prosperity to their people. Here in Canada, there are no surpluses. There are deficits, year after year. We have a debt of over \$1 trillion that needs to be paid off.

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The Prime Minister says he plans to use credit cards to invest in influential government-linked companies. I imagine Canadians will lose money and pay interest on the new debt the Prime Minister is going to add. It is ridiculous.

We need to encourage investment, eliminate taxes and barriers, and promote free enterprise in Canada.

**Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to form an opinion about a document that is so unfinished. The purpose of an economic update is to take stock. We know that the government shifted the budget cycle and tabled a budget in the fall, a budget it was probably not ready for. We saw that certain measures were unfinished. We saw the advance GST cheque.

The government did not table a budget after it was elected, even though it had campaigned on addressing the economic emergency. Today, we thought we would get a budget update containing better measures to help our businesses, our manufacturing sector, Quebec's economy and Canada's economy adapt to a situation that has changed. The thing that has changed is the tariffs. We will talk about trade deals later on, but we have a Prime Minister who claimed to be a master negotiator.

At present, not only is there no deal with the U.S., but there are no negotiations with the U.S., yet a partner like Mexico—

• (1720)

**Martin Champoux:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was very impressed with the Leader of the Opposition earlier for being able to stay focused while the Liberals were leaving.

Now it is my colleague from Mirabel's turn to speak. We listened respectfully while members from other parties gave speeches. It might be nice if we could get the same respect from the other parties.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his point of order. If any members wish to engage in discussions, they should do so outside the chamber, where we will not be able to hear them.

The hon. member for Mirabel.

**Jean-Denis Garon:** I thank my colleague, Mr. Speaker.

Basically, the finance minister keeps saying that the world has changed. In his view, the world is always changing, so the situation is serious. Here is what has changed recently.

A little over two weeks ago, the U.S. president signed a new executive order changing the way tariffs are calculated on goods exported by Quebec and Canada. Previously, about 85% of our exports were protected under CUSMA. Today, a large number of goods are subject to 25% tariffs, even though they are covered by that agreement.

As a result, nearly 50% of exports from Quebec and Ontario are now subject to tariffs, according to a recent study by the University of Calgary. Business closures have already begun. We saw a critical situation from day one at BRP. There is the case of Meubles South Shore, and there are others. It is starting to look like a house of cards. We asked the government whether measures would be taken. Our job, as an opposition party, is to ask questions.

Two weeks ago in question period, we asked the Prime Minister what he planned to do about this new way of calculating tariffs, which means that we are no longer protected under CUSMA. Two weeks ago, the Prime Minister had absolutely no idea what we were talking about in question period. He was honest and upfront about it. He told us that he would get back to us with an answer. We gave him a week.

Last week, in question period, we asked the Prime Minister what he was going to do since businesses had started to close. My Liberal, Conservative and Bloc Québécois colleagues whose ridings are home to an industrial base are getting messages from businesses that have been struggling over the past two or three weeks and that are concerned. Many of them are SMEs that have exhausted their line of credit. The Prime Minister's response was to wait for the economic update because it would provide solutions. I have not slept for a week. I have never experienced such suspense in my life. I thought that he was going to sort this problem out.

I read the economic update, and then I read it again. I told myself that the Prime Minister could not have forgotten our businesses, but he has forgotten them. Even though they are covered by CUSMA, they are currently facing 25% tariffs. In light of this, we are calling for a very short-term wage subsidy.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have announced measures related to workforce training. While it is true that this measure could be beneficial in other provinces, workforce training was fully devolved to the Quebec government several decades ago. The workforce training strategy is managed in Quebec City. Vocational training is managed in Quebec City. Sector-specific internships for the job market are administered there.

To quickly train workers in fields that are in high demand today, we need to send money to Quebec. Ottawa, however, is averse to sending money to Quebec, since it likes to meddle in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction. I see the Minister of Health, who knows I like her. Her department really likes to do that. At the Standing Committee on Finance, we are conducting a study on spending authority, and the other side does not even know what they are talking about. It is disconcerting. So there are no measures for businesses.

The reality is that the United States is going to remain our biggest trading partner for a long time. This is especially true for the SMEs that are affected by these new tariffs. Large companies, particularly those in the aluminum sector, have the industrial capacity to redirect their exports to other markets, sometimes quite quickly, even if that is not ideal. However, SMEs, like the ones back home on Curé-Labelle Boulevard in Mirabel and elsewhere, do not have the capacity to do that. Their entire bureaucratic and technical infrastructure is designed to export their products to the United States, and they do not have the resources to protect themselves.

These companies are not oil companies. My colleague spoke earlier about subsidies for oil companies. They are not big banks. They cannot afford to hire lobbyists to convince the government to give them tax credits. They have been forgotten.

● (1725)

The government is bragging about a strong economic record in this update. We are being told that exports to the United States have fallen by 10%, which is significant, given that this partner accounts for 80% of our exports. Canada is a small, very open economy. We are being told, quite rightly, that exports to countries other than the United States have increased by nearly 30% or 40%.

That is good news, especially considering that the Prime Minister has not signed a new trade agreement with a single one of those countries. The government is looking for new export opportunities. The Prime Minister has travelled, he has burned fuel, he has played king all over the world. One might therefore think he has signed agreements. However, we have not increased our export opportunities in a single country because the Prime Minister has not signed any trade agreements. What has increased are oil and gas exports to Europe and Asia.

Does anyone know what good came from this strong economic record? Aluminum exports to Europe increased. Our aluminum producers sent their aluminum to Europe because the Prime Minister was unable to solve the problem with the United States. That is what he is covering up.

The government says that the deficit is lower than expected. That is the other good news from the Minister of Finance and National Revenue. It is true. The deficit was \$11.5 billion less than anticipated for last year. Let me remind the House that the big banks have lowered their economic growth forecasts for next year and for the year after that. That is last year's deficit. It is true that there was more growth. We acknowledge that. There was also more inflation. Across-the-board price increases generate revenue for the government. However, tax credits for batteries and tax credits for investments in clean energy account for two-thirds of the amount mentioned by the Minister of Finance. These tax credits went unclaimed because of insufficient investments, yet the Minister of Finance portrays himself as Mr. Investment.

The natural disaster fund accounts for the rest. Maybe the Minister of Finance did not do enough rain dancing, but it seems that there were not enough floods and forest fires this year to use up the \$7.5 billion that was allocated.

This means we need to focus on the real issues. There is not really anything new in this document. I can show the document, since it has been tabled, so I will take the opportunity to do so. There is not much that is new, just some promising measures that have already been announced. The government deserves some credit when it develops strategies and takes the initiative, so we commend it for doing so.

There is the national defence strategy, the national auto strategy and the national infrastructure strategy. There is the national critical minerals strategy, to which we got phosphate added as part of Bill C-15. The government had overlooked this, but it had the good sense to accept our budget amendment. There is also a national

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strategy for nature. What is missing? There is still no national aerospace strategy.

The industry as a whole has been calling for such a strategy for two or three decades. People who truly know what is happening, those who manufacture airplanes, helicopters and parts, those who are in my riding within walking distance of my office, on the south shore and in Dorval, are calling for a national strategy. Why? The answer is so that they can develop the products that the Department of Defence and the government need, because it is a long-cycle industry. We need a strategy so that, when the time comes to order products, we can do so.

Giving press conferences like the Prime Minister and other Liberal members are doing is not enough. Right now, they are giving press conferences. Unions come to us after meeting with Liberal members. They bring up the issue with the Liberals, who then tell them that it would be unfair to the aerospace industry in Winnipeg and Manitoba if there were a Quebec-based strategy. That is what Liberal members have told our unions in Quebec. That would be useful.

I listened carefully to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue. It is not always easy, but I listened to him. He said that he wants the Bloc Québécois to side with the government for once, that it would be good if the Bloc Québécois were on the government's side. He said that Bloc MPs are very partisan, that they are very difficult and very narrow-minded. It takes two to play that game. It takes two to come up with proposals that will shape our industry. Why should we be cozying up to the Liberals when they turn a deaf ear to our proposals?

● (1730)

I will explain why there is no aerospace strategy. We know what is happening in Ontario's auto sector. A lot of the manufacturing workforce is experiencing major structural problems. We also know the government would prefer to move a segment of the industry, possibly to Ontario. I do not know if that is true, but I do know that people are worried about it and that there is no strategy.

That is what is lacking in the economic update. Ottawa bureaucracy is out of touch with on-the-ground realities. There are plenty of examples like that. The Minister of Finance says we need to get on board. Every time there is a budget or an economic update, we make demands. Those demands are costed. They are self-funded, five-year proposals. We make those demands even though we know we will never govern. I can assure everyone that I always renew my driver's licence. I know I will never have a car service. I will keep driving my own car. That is fine. I sit down. The entire Bloc Québécois caucus sits down, and sometimes we come up with what everyone acknowledges are the best campaign platform budgets. That is what happened last time.

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The first thing we are asking for is that subsidies to oil and gas companies be eliminated. That is step one. That amounts to \$10 billion a year. Imagine how many school food programs could be funded with that money instead of propping up oil companies, which have no problem surviving these days. We never received a response to our request, which is entirely reasonable, rational and in the public interest. Another thing we are asking for is that the digital services tax be reinstated. That is worth \$7.5 billion over five years. I see some folks over there nodding or frowning. The Liberals said they did it for the good of Canada. I will quote the government, which said recently that it would not pay an entry fee to negotiate with the Trump administration. The Liberals said that. They said they are proud and they are building Canada strong.

We know that they are building Canada strong. We are a little tired of hearing it. In fact, we do not know when this Canada strong is going to get here. They keep telling us that they are not up for paying any entry fees and will not make any concessions ahead of the negotiations. However, the first thing that the Prime Minister did when he came to power was to make concessions and bow down before the Trump administration. The government wants to build Canada strong. It wants to take a stand and show that it does not pay entry fees to negotiate. In that case, it needs to reverse course on its bad decision and reinstate the digital services tax. If Liberal members want to be proud Canadians, they should behave like it. It seems they do not, however. Meanwhile, our media is losing its fight for survival.

Let us talk about the media. There is a crisis in the media sector. It is not me saying this, it is the Minister of Finance, on page 107 of his economic update. It is a good page. I really liked it. The minister says: "Broadcast journalism in particular is a key part of our community fabric." Let me stress the word "key". I like the Minister of Finance. He is a revolutionary. He told us about "the government's intention to seek the views of Canadians and stakeholders on extending the Canadian Journalism Labour Tax Credit". Now that is a revolution. If the Minister of Finance had been around during the French Revolution, he would have set up a booth across from the Bastille and conducted a survey on the price of brioche, and France would now be under King Louis XLIX. That is what it means to do nothing for Quebec. If members want concrete examples, that is exactly what we have.

We are calling for some kind of emergency wage subsidy for businesses. We have been meeting with business leaders who are telling us they need to keep their employees on the payroll. Some companies are productive and can export if there is a free trade deal. The Prime Minister keeps saying that he will sign an agreement eventually. For these people, the solution is not to send them back to school. The solution is to lower production costs for these businesses through wage subsidies and to cushion the productivity hit caused by the tariffs until the situation improves, so that our regions do not shut down. The Liberals are refusing. I wondered why, because it is a good proposal. We are reaching out to the Minister of Finance.

• (1735)

I thought that the government might be waiting for Cúram to be ready, so it could distribute the wage subsidies through Cúram. Apparently, it has money for Cúram, but not for wage subsidies.

Let us talk about employment insurance, which is designed to help people get through a crisis. We are currently in a crisis. The minister tells us that the world has changed and that we are in a crisis. The unemployment rate has held up a little better than expected. We were expecting worse. We need an EI system that covers more than half of all workers. A little over half of Canadian workers are covered by EI. No one here in the House would be able to renew their mortgage if they told their lender that they have fire insurance that has a 50:50 chance of covering them. That does not happen, yet we are willing to subject workers to that.

We asked for temporary measures, and they were put in place. Those temporary measures were so necessary that they were renewed. There are pilot projects in the regions that have been going on for so many years now that they have become almost permanent. If anyone wants proof of why EI reform is needed, there it is.

I want to talk about the \$814 million that was stolen from Quebec. I would think this is of interest to the minister. I have read the Prime Minister's book; it occupies a place of pride on my bookshelf. It is called *Values*. Before entering politics, the Prime Minister used to travel around, talking about his values. He spoke about the fact that values are more important than the market. He spoke about the fact that having a market economy and capitalism without values leaves us, as a society, without a compass. Then, he entered politics and bought votes. What happened to values?

The Prime Minister decided to refund a carbon tax. We know how it worked. To ensure it was socially acceptable, it was refunded before people had even paid it. He decided to send refunds to seven provinces for money that had never been paid, all in order to buy votes.

Quebeckers paid for that. As the Parliamentary Budget Officer said, and as officials from the Department of Finance told us in committee, Quebec is owed \$814 million. Where is that \$814 million? It is everywhere except in Quebec at the moment. It seems to me that would be a good step to take.

Let us talk about health transfers. There is no increase in health transfers. The minister is happy because he was prepared to run an \$80-billion deficit. However, we are calling for increases in health transfers. We see the need in our hospitals. We know that system costs are rising by 6% or 7% per year as the population ages. We know that no government ever introduced or implemented as many programs based on the federal spending power as the Trudeau government. That was the Trudeau government's choice. Meanwhile, people are languishing in hospital hallways and unable to get surgery. Is federal funding the only problem? It may not be the only problem, but it is definitely a substantial factor, and it is part of the solution. We also know there will be cuts starting in the next fiscal year. There is no mention of that.

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There is also the issue of the guaranteed income supplement. The Liberals talk about affordability, but there is nothing in there to address affordability. The Liberals increased the grocery cheque, which is great. We welcomed that. They based it on the GST rebate, which takes into account the family structure, the family benefits that people receive, and so on.

However, as far as the government is concerned, there are still good seniors and bad seniors. The legal retirement age in Canada is 65. If that has changed, no one has told me. As far as the government is concerned, there are good retirees and bad retirees. There are people aged 75 and older whose pension increased by 10%, and there are people aged 65 to 74, who are told to go away and wait another 10 years before becoming eligible for their old age security benefits. This is discrimination between two classes of seniors. The Liberals say they want to help people with the cost of living. Seniors aged 65 to 74 are the missing group, but there is nothing about them. The Minister of Finance and National Revenue tells us that we are just too partisan and that we should support the government, which wants to take care of seniors.

There is also the increase in the Canada public transit fund. There are problems with public transit, and infrastructure investment is needed. This will promote green and sustainable growth. Half the funds went to Ontario. First, the Liberals cut the fund, reducing it from \$30 billion to \$25 billion over 10 years. Then they gave half the funds to Ontario. Furthermore, since this falls under Quebec's jurisdiction, there is yet another standoff and everything is taking forever. Rather than being paid out for public transit projects, the money that Quebec is owed is being held up here. Perhaps the Liberals will put it into their sovereign wealth fund. I do not know what they are going to do with that money, but it is taking forever.

• (1740)

Let us talk about loan guarantees for the forestry sector. We have a forestry sector that pays countervailing duties in advance. Often, years later, forestry companies will win in court. They will get reimbursed for those countervailing duties, but in the meantime, they are unable to get credit because they cannot use the money they paid the Americans, those same Americans that the Prime Minister calls our friends in his public communications. Forestry companies cannot go and get that money. We need help for the forestry industry. Where is the help for the forestry industry? The minister seems to think that the world has changed, but nothing has changed for the forestry sector. That is what is happening.

Quebec also wants to be reimbursed for the money that it spent on asylum seekers. I am talking about the \$733 million that the Quebec National Assembly is unanimously calling for. Is that partisan or do the 125 people who sit in the blue room in Quebec mean nothing? It is the red room these days, but it will be blue again eventually.

The Liberals are telling us that productivity and innovation are important, but they are closing agricultural research centres in Quebec, in the Minister of Government Transformation's own riding. I do not know what he wants to transform in the agricultural industry, but things are not going well. What is more, the salaries of these researchers amount to about \$28 million over five years. For an orga-

nization the size of the federal government, that is peanuts. There is nothing in this budget to address that.

I do not know who is being partisan about any of that. I do not know what we are supposed to expect from an economic update like the one today. We need to help people, we need to be working on the ground, we need to be listening and we need to propose measures. The government's answer to all that is a sovereign wealth fund. Yesterday, the Liberals announced that they are going to create a sovereign wealth fund. They went to HEC Montréal for the announcement and put on a show. The audience was clapping like penguins. We asked questions. They would not give us any details, because they said we would get the details today when the economic update was tabled. We opened the economic update document and went to the section on the sovereign wealth fund. We could not contain our excitement. However, what we read was that we are going to get more news in a few months' time. There were no details, apart from one new detail about the sovereign wealth fund: The projects that it will fund are the ones that have been approved by the Major Projects Office, which the Prime Minister already basically controls. They are saying that the fund will be independent, but only just independent enough to say yes to the Prime Minister.

Earlier, we asked officials if there would be an independent investment committee. They answered that they did not know, that the board would no doubt be independent, but that the rest remained to be seen. They have no idea how much it will cost to finance this fund. They do not know what type of bond they will fund it with. They do not know what the governance rules will be. They do not even know how much private investment will be mobilized. They are putting in \$25 billion, and we want to know how much private investment that will pull in. They do not know, because they only thought of it yesterday. We are supposed to not be partisan and to just clap for this, but these are valid questions. By all accounts, this fund will not be independent from the Prime Minister's Office, because he is the one selecting the major projects. They wind up on his desk, and he is the one who signs off on them. We are being told that the capital of the people who put money into the sovereign wealth fund will be guaranteed and that they will not be taking on any risk, but the projects we are talking about are so risky that nobody is willing to invest in them unless the government gets involved. Who will end up paying for these projects?

Sovereign wealth funds exist all over the world, and there are all kinds of them. Norway has one. It invests in foreign currencies, something Canada should have done long ago to avoid Dutch disease. The Netherlands' oil exports are killing its manufacturing sector. In Canada, we have never really had one, apart from a similar example in Alberta. Some sovereign wealth funds are used to influence geopolitics, like in China, where the Chinese are buying up infrastructure. Some sovereign wealth funds are used to trade on the foreign exchange market. Quebec's generations fund was a type of sovereign wealth fund. In every case, there was always a clear reason for establishing the fund.

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The Minister of Finance and National Revenue has set up a fund to make an announcement. At some point, we will need to know why he is establishing this sovereign wealth fund. I am curious, and we have questions. We are an opposition party, and our job is to ask questions. The minister's job is to answer them. Eventually, he will have to answer this.

If anybody is wondering whether we are happy with this economic update, the answer is no, because it does not update anything. We knew it would not be a big document because we had had discussions with the department. We were not expecting a budget, but we were expecting something, at least. If the minister just wanted to upset everyone by announcing the deficit number, we could have waited for the official numbers in October. We will get them in our inbox.

• (1745)

We cannot be faced with such huge changes in tariffs and in the geopolitical landscape of global trade and then be told that the only solution is to encroach on Quebec's jurisdictions. The Liberals have a majority, as everyone knows. We want to contribute, and we all have. We want to make proposals. However, when someone makes a suggestion, someone else has to listen. Someone needs to take action. Someone on the other side of the House needs to be sensitive enough to recognize that every member on this side of the House was elected by folks who deserve to be represented and whose views deserve to be heard. I think the government needs to work on its ability to listen, and I think that may well be the most pressing challenge facing this new majority government.

**Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am deeply honoured to rise to ask my colleague a question.

It is a lesson in politics and a lesson in speed reading. At the same time, I am a bit sad, because some items that were in the budget and are now in the update that aim to support Canada were among the issues raised. For example, there was the measure to provide \$5 billion in support to forestry workers. There were also items in the build communities strong fund that are very important to Quebecers. Earlier on I spoke about it with the Leader of the Opposition. My constituents and the mayors in the riding I represent are extremely satisfied with these items.

I feel a bit sad, and I would like my colleague to tell me about the positive signs he sees in the budget for Quebecers, because there are some. Examples include the build communities strong fund and research and development for businesses.

**Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. I know that she has worked with us in the past, in a former life. We never spoke much, but I appreciate her, and I would invite her, if she fancies some 100% pure maple syrup, to come to Mirabel. I would be delighted to give her some. Ours is 100% pure.

Following that little joke, which comes from the heart, I can tell her that it is true that there are measures in place for workforce training for forestry workers. Of course, we are criticizing how it is being done, because we genuinely believe that the expertise lies in Quebec City and that there are ways to make things move faster for the companies. There is an imbalance in federalism when it comes

to workforce training, and I believe that this money should go to Quebec City, which is capable of managing it.

Now, in the forestry sector, there is always the issue of funding and access to liquidity. By implementing what the Bloc Québécois is proposing, the average tariffs on Quebec lumber would drop from about 48% to 27%, which would give the forestry sector some breathing room. It is all well and good to meet them halfway, but if a runner stops at the 21-kilometre mark, they are not going to finish the marathon.

**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has done an admirable job of breaking the update down into its various components.

Like the members of the Bloc Québécois, the Conservatives believe in a smaller but more effective federal government that respects provincial powers by focusing on its core responsibilities. This update provides for the creation of a new federal fund and expands Ottawa's role in directing economic investment. Does the Bloc Québécois support this increased centralization, or does it believe that these decisions should remain decentralized in order to reflect local priorities?

• (1750)

**Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that, a few months ago, my colleague did not speak a word of French. It is extraordinary that she is able to ask questions in French, and I want to commend her for that.

My colleague was probably referring to the sovereign wealth fund. We have no information about this sovereign wealth fund. It is hard to criticize what we do not know. However, one thing is certain. This fund will be yet another new structure where a Liberal insider will be able to earn a salary of \$600,000 or \$700,000 to manage it.

I wonder whether there might have been a way, if there were specific projects, to go through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, for example. It is not itself a huge success, even though its mandate has changed, because it only gives out loans to obtain shares. The mandate of the Canada Infrastructure Bank has been changed more than once. I wonder whether this was just a gimmick that they came up with as a way for the Minister of Finance to tap-dance at press conferences.

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to commend my colleague and friend from Mirabel on his excellent speech.

With regard to the \$25-billion fund to build Canada strong, when we look at the revenues and expenditures set out in this update, we do not see that \$25 billion figure. One has to go to page 129, under non-budgetary transactions, where there is a line that refers to enterprise Crown corporations. The amount is not broken down. We were told that the fund could be found there.

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This is not very transparent. Had this fund been included in the budgetary operations, then we would not be talking about a reduced deficit but an increased deficit. Once the money is in the Crown corporation, as is the case with Build Canada Homes or any other Crown corporation that is set up, there is no longer any accountability to the House. We, as MPs, can no longer ask the government questions about it. It is managed independently, but as my colleague said, perhaps not so as independently as all that. What does my colleague think about that?

I would obviously ask the other members to keep their voices down so that I can hear my colleague's answer.

**Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, I am on page 129.

Essentially, what the government is going to do is borrow \$25 billion. It is going to funnel that money into a corporation somewhere where there will be a lack of transparency, a corporation that will not be subject to parliamentary oversight.

We, the taxpayers, will be paying interest on that every year. We asked the government how this would be financed, and what kind of bonds would be used. We asked if the interest costs would be high and whether these were short-term or long-term bonds. The Liberals have no idea. They told us they lumped this in with all sorts of other matters and that they cannot really tell us.

If they want to sell a good idea, if they want to convince us that it is a good one, then maybe they should include the numbers somewhere. My impression is simply that the minister wanted to make an announcement and he is a little embarrassed by the structure of his proposal.

**Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Mirabel for his speech.

I would like to address his comment regarding rain dances. I simply want to bring it to his attention.

[English]

I would like to get the member's thoughts on the fact that the Liberal government has put forward a spring economic update that will not allow us to meet our climate targets, while putting billions in a sovereign wealth fund that lines the pockets of big oil corporations. Who is paying for it? It is the taxpayers and indigenous peoples, while the Liberals backslide on indigenous rights, as confirmed by Amnesty International. They could actually subsidize their corporate dream through a windfall tax paid for by their corporate friends, but alas, that is not their plan. It sounds to me like they are all in it for their corporate buddies.

I was wondering if my hon. colleague could give his thoughts on that.

• (1755)

[Translation]

**Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly did not intend to offend my colleague. Incidentally, my riding includes the beautiful community of Kanesatake, and I want to say hello to everyone there. I certainly did not intend to offend anyone with my terrible sense of humour, which is sometimes a bit of a trademark for me.

On the environmental issue, there may be pipeline projects, but in this economic update, the government announced that it plans to move forward with 11 new liquefied natural gas, or LNG, projects. From what I understand, when the Green Party member supported the budget last fall, she was given assurances that there would be no enhanced oil recovery, that there would be no subsidies for processes that involve injecting CO<sub>2</sub> underground. It is buried to produce even more oil. Now the government is bringing that back and expanding the tax credits. Clearly, what was promised last fall is a done deal. In fact, once the government secured a majority, it did the exact opposite.

What is the government going to do with the money in that fund? That worries me. Will the government be transparent? It might not be transparent enough. That worries me. The Liberals already went ahead and sent some so-called green funds to PSP Investments. We never heard any more about what was being done with that money, and that worries me a great deal.

[English]

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the member's speech. He talked about health transfers briefly. He also had quite a bit to say about debt service and the debt repayment, like how this \$25 billion going into the sovereign wealth fund would be borrowed and charged to the taxpayer immediately, even if it is put onto a separate balance sheet.

In the years ahead, we see that the increasing costs of debt service will far exceed health transfers. Can he comment on debt service costs?

[Translation]

**Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the Minister of Finance was boasting about having a smaller-than-expected deficit. We see in the forecasts that the deficits for the next four years remain the same. While he is boasting about having a good year, he is not telling us that he feels guilty about forecasting four bad years.

It is clear that the government needs to tighten its belt, and we expect the minister to be more rigorous in his management.

\* \* \*

[English]

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-205, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

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## SPRING ECONOMIC UPDATE 2026

**Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to respond to the 2026 spring economic update on behalf of Canada's New Democrats and our new leader, Avi Lewis.

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At the outset, I want to acknowledge that this update includes some positive measures that New Democrats agree with and some, indeed, that we have long advocated for, including supporting apprenticeships in the skilled trades, delivering the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, standing up the financial crimes agency to better go after white-collar criminals and funding youth athletic programs.

New Democrats will always work constructively with other parties and support measures that bring real benefits to working people in this country. However, taken as a whole, this update represents a missed opportunity to meet the moment, just as the budget in the fall did. In fact, there is almost nothing new in this update that has not already been announced.

In classic neo-liberal fashion, it naively assumes the private sector can be relied upon to solve all the challenges we face. It doubles down on trickle-down economics by using taxpayer dollars to fund corporate welfare, an approach that has consistently failed to deliver benefits to working people wherever and whenever it has been applied. It falls far short of responding to the reality that Canadians are living through, the everyday emergency of just trying to get by in a rigged economy.

I want to underscore this: Across this country, people are being stretched to the breaking point. Young Canadians are being locked out of opportunity, unable to find stable work in the communities where they live. Half of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque, one missed payment away from crisis. The cost of essentials, from groceries to rent, continues to soar and is pushing families deeper into anxiety and uncertainty.

At the same time, our public services are under persistent and growing strain, and our economy remains fundamentally tilted in favour of those at the very top. Beyond our borders, the world grows more unstable by the day. Donald Trump's trade war is a direct attack on Canadian workers and our industries. His illegal war on Iran has destabilized the global economy. Critically, the Prime Minister and the Liberal government chose to support that war despite its foreseeable economic consequences for Canadians.

New Democrats recognize these are not small challenges. They demand bold, decisive action. They demand a government willing to stand up for people instead of deferring to the powerful, yet what we have before us is an economic update that tinkers at the margins when what Canadians need is transformative change.

Modest relief is not enough when people are facing an affordability emergency, and make no mistake, this is an emergency. At kitchen tables across this country, Canadians are doing everything right. They are working hard. Some are juggling multiple jobs. Others are caring for children or aging parents. Many are sacrificing just to keep up. Despite all that effort, they continue to fall behind. Why is this? It is not because Canadians are not working hard enough. It is because the system is not working for them.

To understand why so many Canadians feel like they are falling behind, we have to confront a deeper truth. This is not just an affordability crisis; it is also an inequality crisis. In Canada today, the richest one per cent hold as much wealth as the bottom 80% combined. That is the worst degree of inequality in generations in this

country. Even more striking is that Canada's richest 86 families hold as much wealth as the poorest 6.2 million Canadians. While wealth at the top explodes, everyone else is being squeezed. That is why working harder is no longer enough. That is why people feel that the system is rigged; in many ways, it is.

● (1800)

Corporate profits are soaring. Billionaire wealth is growing by the tens of billions. There are almost double the number of billionaires in Canada today than there were 20 years ago, but wages are not keeping up, costs are rising and public services are being cut. This level of extreme inequality undermines social cohesion, weakens democracy and makes it harder to solve every other challenge we face, from housing to health care and climate change, as public priorities are displaced by private interests.

However, in this economic update by the Liberal government, there is really no serious plan to address these issues. There is no effort to rebalance the system, and no willingness to ask those who have benefited the most to contribute more. It is no surprise that, for the economic projections the government relied on for this economic update, it consulted a group of some 12 economists, and every single one of them works for a bank or the corporate sector. Not a single labour economist was consulted on the path ahead for the government.

Working Canadians are not asking for special treatment. They are asking for an economy where hard work is rewarded, where opportunity is real and where prosperity is shared. Until we confront the growing concentration of wealth and power in this country, we will not solve the affordability crisis, because at its core, that crisis is not just about high prices. It is about who our economy is built for and who it is leaving behind.

Let us talk about one of the clearest examples of that imbalance, one that came up just last week, which is predatory pricing. Canadians know that prices are too high. We just have to walk down a grocery aisle to know that. They see it every time they go to the grocery store, pay rent or fill up their gas tank. What they may not know is that companies are increasingly using invasive data practices, such as tracking personal information to charge different prices to different people, often exploiting the most vulnerable, those who do not have the mobility to actually chase lower prices. This is called "surveillance pricing". It means two Canadians can pay different prices for the exact same product simply because an algorithm decides that one of them can be charged more, and they can get away with it. That is not fair or transparent, and it should not be legal.

The New Democratic Party called on the government last week to ban surveillance pricing and to protect consumers from this kind of digital price gouging. However, in this economic update, there is nothing. There is no action, no protection. There is not even any acknowledgement of the problem. There is just full-throated support and cheerleading for more AI. Canadians deserve a marketplace that is fair, that is competitive and that is not one that exploits them in increasingly sophisticated ways.

Let us turn to energy. Canadians are being crushed by the cost of living, and now gas prices are skyrocketing, but not everyone is suffering. Oil and gas companies are set to rake in an extra \$90 billion in profits this year alone from Donald Trump's illegal war on Iran, which is an illegal war that the government supported. What was the government's response? It was a tax cut, which oil companies can simply pocket, and no doubt will pocket to some degree, by raising prices.

That is not relief. That is a gift to the oil and gas sector. It is also a band-aid, because that reduction in the excise tax will last only until Labour Day. We will come back to this point in September and find out if gas prices are lower in September, because every reputable economist that I have looked at tells us that we are looking at persistent high oil prices for the foreseeable future beyond Labour Day. Instead of more corporate welfare, we should put a windfall tax on oil and gas giants and invest that money in projects that benefit working Canadians.

Through this update, the Liberal government announced plans to launch a sovereign wealth fund and the Canada Strong fund, and it cited Norway as an example. New Democrats have been calling for this approach for many years. Norway has a public oil company and invests the revenues in its sovereign wealth fund, which is now worth over \$2 trillion. Norway put that money to work for the public benefit, including building a renewable economy and investing in high-quality public services.

• (1805)

However, what this update is proposing is the mirror image of what Norway has done. Norway built a public oil company, something the Conservatives dismantled under Brian Mulroney, and it took a fair share of the oil profits for the public. However, instead of using private profits for the public benefit like Norway did, the Liberals are proposing to use public money for the private profit of wealthy investors. The public takes on the risks, but the private sector reaps the rewards.

New Democrats favour the concept of a sovereign wealth fund. We believe we have an opportunity to fund it properly for public benefit like the Norwegians did. It should start with an excess profits tax on the oil and gas sector. Now is a great time to do it, as Canadian oil companies stand to reap some \$100 billion in excess profits this year alone. If we cannot start now, when can we start? However, there is nothing in this update to ask the most profitable corporations to contribute their fair share towards Canada's economic transformation.

I would like to turn now to housing, because no discussion of affordability is complete without addressing the housing crisis. This is one of the clearest and most painful expressions of inequality that exist across our economy. Secure, decent, affordable housing is a

foundational need for every Canadian. It anchors us in community, making participation in society and access to work, friends and family possible.

However, young people are giving up on ever owning a home. Renters are facing relentless increases in housing and security. Seniors are struggling to remain in their community. Students are being priced out of the community they grew up in, are being forced into unsafe conditions or are having to live with roommates well into their thirties. This is a national crisis, and it demands a response on the scale of a crisis.

In the last election, the Liberals made a clear promise. They said they would double Canada's rate of residential construction to reach 500,000 homes per year over the next decade, but a recent report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer found that the government has not even laid out a plan to achieve that goal. Maybe that was why the government was so quick to remove him.

According to the same report, the government's flagship initiative, Build Canada Homes, will produce only about 26,000 homes by 2030. That is nowhere near what is required. That is not a legitimate response to a housing crisis. At the very moment when Canadians need a surge in housing construction, federal housing spending is projected to fall over the coming years. That is the opposite, I would suggest, of what this moment needs.

For decades, successive governments, Liberal and Conservative alike, have stepped back from building non-market housing, the only way we are going to deliver truly affordable housing. The result is clear. Canada now lags far behind peer countries in the supply of housing that is built for people, not for profit. New Democrats know that the market alone cannot fix this crisis. I think the Liberals and Conservatives refuse to acknowledge that.

New Democrats say that we need sustained federal leadership and long-term investment to dramatically scale up non-market housing: co-ops, student housing, seniors' housing, supportive housing for people living with disabilities and housing for low-income Canadians. Housing is not just a commodity to be addressed by the market. It is a human right and a foundational need.

*Routine Proceedings*

Housing is the foundation of stable lives, strong communities, a fair economy and a healthy country. Investing in housing is also smart economic policy. It creates good jobs, supports local industries and builds the infrastructure our communities need in order to grow. Once again, this economic update fails to rise to that challenge.

• (1810)

Health care is another area where the government is failing to meet the moment. Canadians are deeply proud of our public health care system. In fact, as we face threats from south of the border, from Mr. Trump, public health care is one of those strong national Canadian institutions that has helped bind us together and create Canadian pride in the face of that threat to our sovereignty. However, our health care system, as we all know, is under strain. It has been facing staff shortages, long wait times and growing privatization. Now instead of strengthening it, the Liberal government is stepping back.

During the last election, the Prime Minister and, I would bet, every single person elected on the Liberal side of the House promised Canadians that they would protect and expand pharmacare. The Prime Minister committed to signing agreements for free contraception and diabetes medications with all outstanding provinces and territories, in his words, “quickly and equitably”. Liberals insisted on calling it “national pharmacare” when New Democrats, of course, meant public pharmacare.

After being in power a year, the Liberals have not signed one agreement with a single province or territory, leaving only B.C., Manitoba, P.E.I. and the Yukon territory with deals in place. That is not national. In fact, Newfoundland and Labrador's health minister just revealed that the federal government has now closed the door on negotiating a pharmacare program with their province. We hear the same thing from the Government of Nova Scotia. Even more troubling, we have also recently learned from P.E.I.'s health minister that the Liberal government will allow existing agreements to expire in 2029, dismantling pharmacare before it is even fully realized.

This economic update does not even include pharmacare in its list of affordability measures alongside dental care and other programs like child care. This economic update claims that the government is protecting essential social programs, but that simply is not true. The Liberals committed to national pharmacare, which the NDP forced to be delivered publicly. Betraying that pledge is politically immoral. It is a democratic offence, and the Liberals ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Speaking of what is politically immoral, this update provides no increase whatsoever to the Canadian dental care plan. As we all know, costs go up every year, and the CDCP is no different. Any government truly committed to the long-term viability of dental care would ensure that both the income threshold to qualify and the fee guide to properly compensate oral health professionals went up by at least the rate of inflation. The fact that the Liberals have ignored that completely, not adding a penny to the fee guide or to the income threshold, speaks volumes to their lack of commitment to this important public health initiative spearheaded by the NDP.

We all hear Liberals stand up in this place and in public claiming to take credit for dental care, when we all know the NDP forced them to bring it in. As Joe Biden said, “don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I will tell you what you value.” Nothing speaks louder about this Liberal government's lack of commitment to dental care than the fact that they are allowing it to wither on the line, not properly funding it, as soon as the New Democrats are not there to make them do it.

If I might, there is also an issue of accuracy in budgeting and budget integrity raised by this update. This government is projecting a deficit difference of \$11 billion from projections it made just five months ago. Despite a 2026 that is shaping up to be just as volatile, just as uncertain, just as affected by tariffs and Trump and increasingly affected by global disorder as 2025, this update claims Canada will face four smooth quarters of 2% growth. To compare that to last year, we experienced two quarters of growth and two of recession.

• (1815)

If I did not know any better, I would say that the government is pulling the old Paul Martin trick: overestimate, pad numbers and claim victory when they come in better. In fact, that would be amusing, if the real pain of an economy that is not serving working people was not so devastating.

This brings me to the broader question of nation building. At key moments in our history, Canada has chosen to build, to invest in public services and infrastructure that connects us, strengthens us and prepares us for the future. New Democrats say that today should be one of those moments. We face economic uncertainty, yes. We face external threats, yes. We face internal inequality and declining affordability. That is precisely when governments must step up, yet there is not nearly enough in this update for indigenous people, for real action on the climate crisis, to support our public servants, who deliver critical services for Canadians, or to invest in peace building and peacekeeping. Instead, the Liberal government has chosen to put its blind faith in the market to solve our current challenges.

New Democrats see a different path. We understand that our country faces deep structural problems that cannot be solved through the profit motive and the private sector alone. Ensuring that everyone has a roof over their head, a world-class education and high-quality health care can only be done by the government using collective power and exercising public enterprise. We need investments in non-market housing, clean energy, transportation and public services that create jobs and build resilience. We need to strengthen the east-west connections and reduce our dependence on an increasingly unreliable U.S. We need a vision for Canada that is bold, inclusive and forward-looking.

That is not what the economic update delivers. The pattern is clear. On affordability, the government falls short. On inequality, the government falls short. On housing, the government falls short. On jobs and public services, the government falls short. On health care, the government falls short. On the broader vision that Canadians need, it falls short.

Canadians deserve better than slogans and self-congratulations. We heard the Conservatives practise nursery rhyme politics. Now we are hearing endless sloganeering from the finance minister. Slogans do not put food on the table, and slogans are not a substitute for strong public programs.

Canadians deserve a government that understands the scale of the challenges they face and responds with the urgency those challenges demand. Canadians deserve fairness. They deserve security. They deserve hope.

The New Democratic Party put forward clear priorities for this economic update: ban surveillance pricing; implement a windfall profits tax on oil and gas giants; enforce the Canada Health Act against privatization; strengthen public health care, including pharmacare and dental care; and take real action on affordability. These are practical measures that would make a real difference in people's lives.

The government chose not to act in those ways. Instead, it has delivered an update that is out of step with the reality most Canadians are living. That is the central issue. While we debate in this chamber, Canadians are making impossible choices. They are skipping meals. They are delaying care. They are taking on debt just to survive.

Canadians are not asking for miracles. They are asking for fairness. They are asking for leadership. They are asking for a government that is on their side.

This moment calls for courage. It calls for a willingness to challenge the status quo and to build an economy that finally works for everyone. This economic update, unfortunately, does not meet this moment. However, it is not too late to choose a different path, a path that puts people first, a path that builds a fairer, stronger and more resilient Canada. That is the path New Democrats will continue to fight for. It is the path we will work on collaboratively with the government, should it choose to pursue it, because Canadians deserve nothing less.

• (1820)

**Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague and I disagree on a great many

things, but if I extract the essence from it, which is that the Liberal government cannot be trusted, I think he and I are probably in alignment here.

My question for my hon. colleague, though, stems from the fact that many of the problems he describes from the last several years of the Liberal government have been because the NDP offered the Liberals a blank cheque. When the NDP leader in the House gets up and talks about the Liberals' failure to deliver pharmacare, for example, how is that not a failing of the NDP, given that this was supposedly one of their concessions, to offer that support? Even last night, the NDP voted with the Liberal government to stack parliamentary committees, to give it, once again, *carte blanche* to run the parliamentary table.

Why has the NDP not learned its lesson?

**Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague talks about what the NDP did last Parliament. I think we stand in this place, and in our communities, with great pride. With the caucus of 2025, we brought in dental care to nine million Canadians. In the House, the NDP brought pharmacare to over 10 million Canadians and established the first public delivery of diabetes and contraceptive medications. There are people today in this country who are walking into pharmacies and walking out with their diabetes meds, using only their health care card, because of what the NDP did in the House. The NDP also brought an anti-scab law to this place, finally protecting workers who risk violence on the picket line.

I cannot point to a single accomplishment of the Conservatives. With their vaunted official opposition last Parliament, they cannot point to a single thing, not one, that they delivered for Canadians.

What I will say concerning the support of the Liberals is that it was not the NDP that voted for the government's throne speech. That was the Conservatives. It was not the NDP that voted for Bill C-2 and Bill C-5 and helped the government pass major economic programs in the House. It was the Conservatives who voted with the Liberals. There is only one coalition that I see in the House, which is the far-right Conservative Party sitting to my right and the progressive conservative party I see across the aisle.

• (1825)

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the fact that, right now, Canadians across this country are really struggling to pay for groceries, to pay for rent, to find housing and to pay for gas. The Liberal government brought forward a spring economic statement that completely missed an opportunity, an opportunity for the government to show that it understood what Canadians were dealing with, the challenges that Canadians were facing. There is nothing for renters. There is nothing for people who use public transit. There is nothing that would help people with the affordability crisis they are facing. In fact, the government is just redoing announcements in the most typical Liberal fashion.

*Routine Proceedings*

One of the things my colleague spoke about was the health care system and the need for us to protect the Canada Health Act, as well as the need for us to look at those affordability things, such as dental care and pharmacare. If we want to talk about something that will make life more affordable for Canadians, it would be ensuring that their pharmaceuticals are paid for and that they are covered. It would be ensuring that dental care for themselves, their children and their families is covered. This is something that makes life more affordable.

What would it look like for people in my province of Alberta if the Liberal government had actually lived up to the promises it made to New Democrats and the promises it made to Canadians?

**Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to thank my hon. colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, who has been such a powerful voice for equity and for defending things such as public health care, which is under great threat from the Conservatives in Alberta. We can actually see what would happen if the federal Conservatives were to ever get power in this place. We can see what they would do by looking to places like Alberta, where there is a constant attack on the public delivery of health care and a constant push for privatization, and we know where that ends. That means that people with means and wealthy people will always get the health care they want and the rest of people, those who cannot afford it, will suffer. This is what Conservative approaches to health care mean.

However, what is more disturbing to me is the way the Liberal government, which is governing as a conservative party, has adopted, with slightly nicer language and perhaps less severe vocabulary, the same policies. Let us take pharmacare as an example. The government negotiated with us and signed a bill into law called the Pharmacare Act, which obligates the government to negotiate pharmacare agreements with every single province and territory in our Confederation.

Again, I will repeat that the Liberals insisted that we call it national pharmacare, but they have stalled at regional pharmacare. They refuse to sign anymore pharmacare agreements with any provinces and territories. All they had to do was put a few billion dollars into this budget, and they could have signed agreements with every remaining province and territory. They chose not to. They have put tens and tens of billions of dollars into military spending, so if they want to find the money, they can.

Politics is about choices. The Liberals had a choice to make. They could have honoured their word, honoured the Canada Pharmacare Act, honoured their 30-year commitment to public pharmacare and put some money in to make pharmacare a reality across this country, but they chose not to. That is why New Democrats are needed in this place. We are the only party that consistently stands up to protect, defend, sustain and expand public pharmacare, which we will do in the House until every Canadian can get the health care they need from head to toe.

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Vancouver Kingsway, the parliamentary leader for the New Democratic Party. I agreed with every single thing he said, right up until when he said the NDP was the only party in this place to stand up for universal pharmacare. We will continue to agree with him that the current Liberal government has

abandoned it by not concluding agreements with every province. We are the only country that has universal public health care but does not have complete coverage for prescription drugs.

I would like to ask the hon. member if he would like to expand on and explain how universal pharmacare would bring down health care costs across Canada.

**Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me a chance to correct the record and to agree with my hon. colleague, the leader of the Green Party. Yes, the Green Party is a staunch advocate for public pharmacare. I want to thank her and her party for that principled position.

Pharmacare is not just a moral imperative. We New Democrats believe that every Canadian should be able to get the medicine they need when they need it, regardless of the size of their bank account. This is simply an extension of the fundamental principle of our medicare system, and it is also economically smart. Study after study, seven of them in a row, has found that if we bring in universal public pharmacare in this country, we will save anywhere from \$4 billion to \$14 billion a year and cover every single Canadian.

It is not just me saying that. It is what the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health found. It is what the Senate committee has found. It is what the committee that was struck by the government and Dr. Eric Hoskins found. Dr. Hoskins is the former Liberal health minister of Ontario. The committee found that by making sure every Canadian has their medication, we would keep Canadians healthier and save money. It has been estimated that it would save \$500 to \$600 per person per year. If someone has a catastrophic illness, it would be far more than that.

Apparently only the New Democrat and Green members of the House are people who would take the wealth of this country and build our Canadian health care system, expanding it so Canadians would get coverage not only for hospital and physician care but also for mental health care, eye care, ear care, pharmacare and dental care. We are going to keep fighting for that.

However, the Liberals have done us a favour, through their fall budget and the spring economic update, by showing Canadians what they really believe in. When the Liberals do not have a minority government and other parliamentarians forcing them to do progressive things, they show us who they really are, and the government is showing us what it is. It is a right-wing, conservative government that does not believe in things like public health care.

• (1830)

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise at this later hour, having had some hours pass since the Minister of Finance tabled the spring economic update.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

It is always an honour to rise in the House as leader of the Green Party of Canada. It is a great honour for me.

I did not have high expectations or much hope for the 2026 spring economic update—it is not a budget—but still, I am disappointed. No explanation was provided concerning the measures we were expecting. The government promised to provide details on measures it had already announced. They are not in this update.

I want to explain the things that are most important to the Green Party, including the challenges facing Canada right now. It is clear that the Prime Minister and the Liberal majority government are facing major challenges related to global events beyond their control.

[English]

It is very clear, and I do not want to suggest that the situation would be easy if I were in the Prime Minister's chair. It would not be easy for any government to deal with the fact that our greatest ally and trading partner, our neighbour to the south, is no longer a reliable ally, which is a gross understatement.

We are not just dealing with our regional relationships, as neighbours here on Turtle Island, between the United States and Canada. We are dealing with much more than that. What Donald Trump represents to the world is the source of geopolitical instability.

The United States and Israel together launched a war on Iran. I agree with my colleague from the New Democrat Party, and it needs to be acknowledged every time we talk about the impacts of the war in Iran, that it is an illegal war. It did not have even the minimal justifications under international law of necessity for a war. It is a war of choice. It was reckless.

Much of the spring economic statement talks about the economic uncertainty created by what is now happening, the disruption of the war against Iran and how it spread with Israel's attacks on Lebanon and Iran's retaliation against numerous gulf states. There is no question that there are challenges for any finance department or any central bank anywhere in the world in trying to project and predict what the world holds, what the economy is going to be like even six months from now, much less on a usual budgetary horizon of budgeting out and forecasting four years' worth of spending.

Still, despite those challenges, I am surprised at this spring economic statement's overall tone. It is remarkably sanguine, as if we do know what is ahead and can confidently predict that the government has done a great job already.

For instance, there are numerous graphs and charts throughout this spring economic statement that present a picture that is not real. Even in examining the pictures that are in the budget and looking at the graphs, there are claims that we have done a great job of expanding markets outside of the United States for our fossil fuel exports. It is suggested in graphs and bar charts. To the casual observer, it might seem that we had made a major difference in how much of our fossil fuel exports do not go to the United States anymore. Those bar charts are misleading. They say there has been a big increase in non-U.S. exports. Yeah, from 3% to 10%, and when we present percentages in bar charts, we can make that look like a lot,

but the reality is still the same. About 90% of our fossil fuel exports go to the United States.

• (1835)

It is the same thing for exports of our other products. Our economies are still very interlocked. We are mutually dependent on each other's exports and imports. We do want trade diversification; Greens do as well. Again, the tone of the spring economic update is remarkably sanguine.

There is a comment on page 27 that suggests that longer-term oil price expectations are now more firmly anchored. I am baffled by that. Certainly, global energy economists do not share that sense of assurance that we now have more firmly anchored oil price expectations. On the contrary, around the world, energy economists are saying that it is extremely volatile, that it does not seem to be settling down and that there is no way we would possibly know that. Given that, the appropriate things to do are not necessarily where the government is heading.

There is much discussion in the spring economic update of how the Middle East uncertainty, the illegal war against Iran launched by the United States and Israel, is going to affect Canada's future. In reading the spring economic update, it is as though the most we can say about it is that it has been some kind of blip and that we can almost say we are going to be past it soon. That is completely contradicted by the opinion of experts.

I am saddened by the fact that there is no mention in the spring economic update of the conclusion of one of the world's leading energy economists and experts, the executive director of the International Energy Agency, Fatih Birol. He has said very clearly that the oil crisis triggered by the Iran war has changed the fossil fuel industry for ever.

What the International Energy Agency is saying is that the days of fossil fuels are now very limited and it is not just by the climate crisis. We should have said the days of fossil fuels are limited some time ago, the days are drawing to a close. Former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau did say that at one point, that we know that we are moving away from fossil fuels.

*Routine Proceedings*

However, this is interesting. We are at a tipping point in terms of climate science and we are at risk. Global scientists are saying we are at a significant risk of hitting a tipping point. There is a whole system called the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, AMOC. The Gulf Stream is part of it. It is basically a vast conveyor belt of ocean currents in the Atlantic Ocean. We are at the point where global scientists are saying we are perilously close to where it becomes inevitable that the AMOC is going to stall or collapse. This is not just startling or alarming, it is terrifying.

The scientists who have done this work say they now see that the chances are not less than 5% as previously thought, but are approaching fifty-fifty. That is a global tipping point in climate science, which should be moving us off fossil fuels quite rapidly and toward tree planting and anything we can do to avoid, as the lead scientist on this report said, the collapse of the AMOC. We must avoid its collapse "at all costs" because the impact of this would be a rapid climatic shift that is planetary and would soon become inevitable and unstoppable.

That is a tipping point in global climate science, but here, we have the head of the International Energy Agency saying we have basically hit a tipping point due to geopolitical instability, and that economies around the world are not going to want fossil fuels because of the instability and because they are inevitably and inextricably tied to wars and instability.

This spring economic update is tone-deaf to even the possibility that Canada's future economic stability is not tied to boosting fossil fuels. We have new subsidies for LNG and new announcements for pipelines, and there is practically a hallelujah chorus for this, but not from the Green Party.

• (1840)

We are looking at what it means for Canada's economy, not just our survival, as if our survival as a human civilization is a small thing, to hard-wire itself to fossil fuels when we know what we know about the transition that is happening globally based on price alone. Price point alone is moving investment dollars away from fossil fuels and rapidly to renewable energy, to solar, wind and geothermal, but particularly solar because solar electricity is now cheaper than coal.

It is astonishing that in the spring economic statement, renewable energy is not mentioned or increased. There is no commitment to expand it. We do have a commitment here that we have been waiting for, for some time. The November 4, 2025, budget, said, at page 19, that one of the great building Canada strong kinds of projects would be "building clean power grids for a sustainable future". We have been waiting for announcements for a green electricity grid for some time. The Prime Minister has hinted at it at various points at press conferences. He said we would see this commitment to a green electricity grid strategy very soon.

In this spring economic statement, it is mentioned, all right, that something we are looking at is building "a stronger grid" for Canada, but what we get is not a commitment to fund it, build it or put it on the major projects list. What we get is that very soon we will see a discussion paper. That is not just underwhelming; it is appallingly negligent. We need to do more than have a discussion paper about a key piece of infrastructure that has been promised over

and over again without details, and now, after all of that, what we get in today's spring economic update is the promise of a discussion paper to be released soon. The ways in which this disappoints are quite numerous, and I know I have enough speaking time to get to some of them, but not all of them.

Let us look again at what was one of the big-ticket items announced yesterday. Before we got the spring economic statement, we were told that Canada is unveiling a new Canadian sovereign wealth fund. It sounds wonderful. It sounds very patriotic. It sounds like a new idea. Of course, it immediately brought to light and raised comparisons with Norway's sovereign wealth fund. We were told that there would be details in the spring economic statement of how this was going to work. The Prime Minister said yesterday that the sovereign wealth fund was also going to give individual Canadians a chance to invest, and that was going to be part of this. The sovereign wealth fund would allow individual Canadians to be part of putting together the investment dollars that we need for a sovereign wealth fund.

First of all, let us compare it to Norway. Norway's sovereign wealth fund was built on taxation of oil revenues. Ironically, it was the Norwegian experts who came to Alberta who understood the rules of Peter Lougheed, who was a visionary, for developing the oil sands: "act like an owner" and "don't live on oil rents but set them to the side". The sovereign wealth fund has allowed individual Norwegians to have millions of dollars of assets in a sovereign wealth fund built on North Sea oil. Ironically, that Norwegian sovereign wealth fund was developed based on what Peter Lougheed was doing in Alberta, which was then cancelled by Ralph Klein. It is interesting how leaders of the same party can follow such radically different approaches. In any case, Norway's sovereign wealth fund was built on oil taxation with revenues for the benefit of all.

What is the Canada Strong fund going to be? We do not know yet. We do know that it is not based on revenues from taxation of oil wealth. It is, rather, the opposite. It is based on borrowing \$25 billion, again public borrowing and debt, to call it a sovereign wealth fund. We do not have any details in today's document. The spring economic statement has no details on how this is going to work.

• (1845)

We do know that we have created a new entity once again. It is very common in the current government for all kinds of new offices to open, and the Canada Strong fund now would have a Canada Strong fund transition office. The Canada Strong fund transition office, once established, and of course it does not exist now, would consult widely and then tell us how the Canada Strong fund would work.

*Routine Proceedings*

If it is not ready to be announced, the Liberals could wait until they had answers before announcing things, but that is just me. I would like to know the details about something that is basically the top-line headline for the spring economic update: that we have a new, first time ever, Canadian sovereign wealth fund.

Just as advice to the government, I will say that it might be useful to figure out how to do this, because the Green Party already did the research. We asked the Parliamentary Budget Office to figure out how we could have funding for Canadians and for our own resources, and create it based on the concept of Canada savings bonds. We called them “saving Canada bonds”, and we had the Parliamentary Budget Office cost this out for us.

If we have strategic reserves of our resources, to avoid having them shipped to the U.S. and tariffed or whatever, we could, for instance, buy up all of Canada's potash at the price that potash producers want to receive, at market prices, and we could store it. We actually had the Parliamentary Budget Office include reasonable estimates for what it would cost to store the potash until we wanted to sell it to someone. There would be a guaranteed return on investment to individual Canadians of 5%.

Therefore, I recommend to the Minister of Finance that he have a look. I have already mentioned this to the Prime Minister. On the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's website is the research that was done, because once the PBO does research for a political party, it does not belong just to the political party for which it did the research. It is publicly available information. The government could find out how to generate \$50 billion in revenue from wealth taxes or how to use financial transaction taxes at basically 20¢ for every \$100 in stock market transactions, and how that would create new sources of government revenue to afford the things we need.

We need to address rapidly what is happening with youth unemployment. We need to address what is happening in the affordability crisis. Yes, we should have excess profit taxes on the grocery chains and, yes, excess profit taxes on oil and gas companies and wealth taxes on the very wealthiest people, not affecting most Canadians. These are things we could do. By asking the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer to cost them out, we have proven they can be done.

Actually, it is striking to me that the Green Party, with our rather abysmal lack of resources compared to the Government of Canada's resources, did a better job pointing out how we could protect our economy, protect our natural resources, avoid Trump's tariffs and have better economic sovereignty than the Government of Canada has done to date. Members can please check if they do not believe me. We actually brought the deficit down more as a party than did any other party, not by cutting, but by generating new revenue for the Government of Canada.

The government claims that there is revenue. It is a shocking claim in the spring economic update that there is more revenue by expanding a subsidy. This goes back to one of the main reasons that the former minister of the environment resigned over last year's budget. At page 348 of the November 2025 budget there was a commitment that investment tax credits would apply for carbon capture, utilization and storage “but not [for] enhanced oil recovery”.

In this spring economic update, we finally find out, because it was very clear that the commitment made to Danielle Smith in the November 27 MOU with Alberta very specifically said that there would be investment tax credits available for enhanced oil recovery. This is a little tricky, and I will try to get through it quickly. We had to ask a lot of questions in our off-the-record lock-up with the Department of Finance Canada officials, because I just found it too perplexing for words to hear that now the Liberals were going to admit that, as of today, there will be investment tax credits available for enhanced oil recovery.

• (1850)

Astonishingly, at page 64, it says that this will, “increase federal revenues by \$395 million over four years”. I had to press. I asked how increasing a subsidy to the oil and gas industry would increase federal revenue. The government had to admit that it might be considered misleading because it does not actually increase government revenue. What it does is decrease some government spending as against the system of November 2025, the carbon capture, utilization and storage piece. The Government of Canada was supporting keeping carbon in the ground, which meant it was paying to help the oil and gas industry store carbon. When it does not store as much, because with enhanced oil recovery it takes it out of the ground, it increases the profits of the oil industry by allowing that oil to come out of the ground and be sold and burned. I kept pressing on how that would increase federal revenues, as the spring economic update claims at page 64. Finally, it was admitted that it was not exactly that it increases the revenue, but decreases the spending, as the federal government no longer has to provide as much money to the oil industry for the purpose of keeping carbon in the ground. It just creates more profits for the oil industry and somewhat reduces the spending of the federal government. It is not new revenue.

There is so much here that I found difficult to absorb and hard to accept, particularly the government's vision on artificial intelligence. I have to say, from yesterday's protests of young people on the lawns of Parliament, that they are concerned about the impacts of artificial intelligence and screen time on their mental health and well-being. Here we have the government's vision, “Artificial Intelligence for All”. That is just plain tone-deaf. We need legislation that regulates online harms from this development. We are not going to be able to stop AI, but the idea that we are going to have a homegrown AI industry that creates lots of jobs for Canadians is hokey. However, it is a big part, apparently, of the vision of the government for the future of Canada's economy.

*Routine Proceedings*

I will close by saying this. There are opportunities for Canada, even in this world of geopolitical instability. There are opportunities for us to stand up for human rights, to stand up for other democracies, to only trade with other democracies that respect human rights and to be a beacon of hope and sanity in this world. However, to decide, as though we are still living in the 1950s, that our future lies in fossil fuels, and that economic growth and growing the GDP is enough to make Canada a more prosperous country with greater societal well-being, is simply wrong. It does not lead us there. History has taught us that. What makes Canada's economy strong is economic sovereignty. What gives us resilience is to not be dependent on the United States to the degree we are, but to broaden our links and link arms with democracies that respect human rights and climate action. That is not too late to achieve.

● (1855)

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I saw in this budget that alarmed me was the change to the contributions for the Canada pension plan. I have been very concerned about the Canada pension plan because in my province of Alberta there has been a serious attack on it by the Conservative government in that province. I brought forward legislation, Bill C-207, that would protect the CPP, but the government did not choose to do that. In fact, it chose to reduce the contributions. I wonder if that is because our current Liberal government, or should I say Progressive Conservative government, sees the CPP the same way the Conservatives do, as a business tax instead of deferred wages that, in fact, workers have contributed to so they can

have a dignified retirement. The CPP is something we should all be proud of in this country. We should be contributing to it so we can ensure that people in our communities can retire with dignity and have that security for their senior years.

I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts on this reduction in the contributions for the CPP.

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with my hon. colleague from Edmonton Strathcona that this is also worrying. It appears that the government thinks there is enough of a surplus in the Canada pension plan that it is okay to reduce contributions. We need to know that there is not going to be a reduction in the benefits to which senior Canadians are entitled, and we need to know that it is not seen as a business tax.

Also, there is one quick thing, if I may. The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act is one of the pieces of legislation that should be amended. There is \$80 billion in the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board. It has access to \$80 billion, and most of it is invested in the United States. All it looks at is the return on investment, not thinking of Canada first in regard to where we invest our Canada pension plan dollars. It is shocking.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6:58 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, April 21, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:58 p.m.)





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