



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

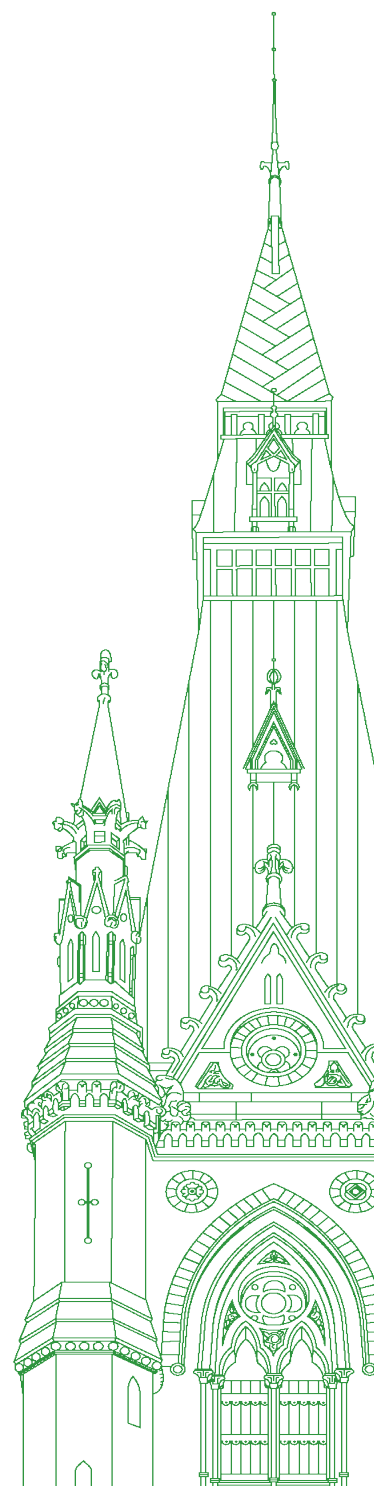
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, led by the member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ANDREAS ARSONIADIS

Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, British Columbia and Vancouver's Greek community lost a giant earlier this month with the passing of Andreas Arsoniadis.

Those of us who grew up in Vancouver remember Andreas not for his incredible skill with numbers or his entrepreneurial spirit but as the guy who was responsible for feeding us some of the most incredible food: Greek food, pizzas and the most generous portions one could ever imagine. He always greeted us with a big smile and welcomed us into his restaurant like we were coming home. For decade upon decade, he made sure that each and every one of us felt like we belonged when we walked into Andreas Restaurant.

He leaves a massive hole in the heart of the Greek community, of which he was a pioneer and a builder, and a massive hole in the hearts of his loved ones, including sisters Marikoula and Parthena; his children, George, Dimitrios and Kaity; his grandchildren, Mati, Anna, Mia, Amalia, Andreas and Adriana; his first great-grandchild; and so many people in our community who celebrated his life in Van Gran's St. George's Greek Orthodox Cathedral on April 15.

We will all miss him dearly. May he rest in peace.

COMMUNITY LEADERS IN SIMCOE—GREY

Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce this year's recipients of the Simcoe—Grey MP Community Leader Awards.

Nelly Galifi manages the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul food bank and volunteers for its response line, helping many community members in crisis.

Mary Beth Sharpe, for 19 years, managed the books at and lent her sewing skills to our not-for-profit Theatre Collingwood, as well as volunteering with local youth charity Home Horizon and the annual Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser.

Donna Baylis has for a decade organized the Creemore Community Christmas Dinner, as well as the annual Christmas markets and Breakfast with Santa events.

Congratulations to Nelly, Mary Beth and Donna. I thank them for their selfless dedication to our community.

I also want to recognize Nilo Ciotti, Canada's oldest living former CFL player, who turned 100 yesterday. I look forward to celebrating this milestone with him and his many family members and friends this weekend in Collingwood.

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● (1405)

POLICE OFFICERS

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to meet Superintendent Locke and Sergeant Peterson of the Toronto Police Service 33 Division, join a ride-along and see first-hand the important work our officers do every day to keep our community safe.

Given heightened tensions, local police are increasing patrols around places of worship. We visited Temple Emanu-El synagogue, which faced multiple gunshots last month. Whether at a mosque, synagogue, church or gurdwara, everyone should be able to practice their faith in peace and safety.

I am grateful for the dedication of officers in protecting residents and responding to incidents with care and diligence. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking our frontline police officers, firefighters and other first responders for their hard work to keep our communities safe.

*Statements by Members***SENIORS**

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more than two years ago, Earl Moberg, a beloved husband, father and grandfather from my community in Winnipeg, went missing in the middle of winter. He was living with dementia and, despite extensive search efforts, he was never found. He is presumed deceased.

Unfortunately this tragic story is not unique. By 2030, nearly one million Canadians are expected to be living with dementia. Many will go missing, and when they do, every minute matters. The risk of serious injury or death rises dramatically the longer they are not found.

Canada already has the infrastructure to issue rapid, geotargeted emergency alerts. What we lack is a coordinated national framework to use it for missing vulnerable seniors. My private member's bill, the silver alert national framework act, would fix that and require the federal government to work with provinces and police to ensure that alerts can be issued quickly and consistently across Canada.

This is about giving families a better chance to bring their loved ones home safe and alive. I urge all members to support the bill. Canadians who agree should contact their local MP and ask them to support Bill C-263.

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*[Translation]***CEGEP LIMOILLOU TITANS**

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to highlight the success of the CEGEP Limoilou Titans, a women's hockey team from my riding of Beauport—Limoilou.

Last week, after dominating the playoffs from beginning to end, the Titans won the provincial college championship for the third year in a row. This victory is the result of strong teamwork, supported by the inspiring leadership of captain Rosalie Breton, who received the honour of being the playoff MVP. Aside from their great win, the Titans bring prestige to Limoilou and remind us of the importance of supporting and promoting women's sport, which plays a key role in the development of our young people.

I want to congratulate the players, coaches and staff on an exceptional season. Congratulations to the girls. Go, Titans, go!

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*[English]***VOLUNTEERS IN STORMONT—DUNDAS—GLENGARRY**

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many people in our community know the decades of service to The Children's Treatment Centre by the legendary Angelo Towndale. I rise today not only to acknowledge his continued contributions but also to highlight someone else who is making a difference in the city of Cornwall and making lives better. His wife, Margaret Towndale, was recognized last week for celebrating an incredible 50 years of volunteering at the Cornwall Community Hospital as a valued member of the Auxiliary. For half a century, Mar-

garet has been a constant presence every week, offering her compassion and unwavering commitment to patients, family and staff.

Fifty years of volunteering is not just a number. It is a lifetime of kindness, generosity and quiet leadership. It speaks to a deep sense of duty and care that has touched countless lives in Cornwall and beyond. Margaret's service reminds us all of the impact one person can make.

I thank Margaret and Angelo for everything. Their inspiration and dedication continue to motivate us all.

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DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, I had the honour of taking the floor at the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Istanbul. As an Asian, an immigrant and a proud gay member of the House, I stand here as proof that representation is about challenging barriers and changing systems.

Let me be very clear: The most powerful force in system change is mindset. Policy reflects mindset, funding follows mindset and programs are built on mindset. If we do not change how we think, we will reproduce inequality more efficiently. If we want different outcomes, we must redesign the system with intention. That means new voices, inclusive leadership and courage over comfort. When we change who decides, we change whom the system serves, and that changes everything.

I urge all members of the House to address barriers facing youth, women, persons with disabilities, immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and to act with urgency to remove those barriers.

* * *

● (1410)

*[Translation]***CLOSURE OF BUSINESS IN LOTBINIÈRE**

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "if we turn our backs on the Canadian wood products industry, we are sacrificing our industrial sovereignty and collective pride in favour of cheap imports". That is a quote from Charles Laflamme, the general manager of South Shore Furniture, who sent a letter to the Liberal Minister of Finance in February. It was a cry for help from Mr. Laflamme, who was dealing with a shrinking U.S. market due to Trump's tariffs, as well as dumping by China and Vietnam, which are currently selling off products at fire sale prices on the Canadian market.

Statements by Members

During the last federal election, the Liberal Prime Minister created the illusion that he was the best person to make a deal with the Trump administration. Here is where we stand one year later: Aluminum and steel tariffs have doubled, and new tariffs have been imposed on finished products and mould makers.

South Shore Furniture announced on Monday that it will be shutting down after 86 years serving Sainte-Croix, in Lotbinière. That means 126 people are going to lose their jobs. It is time for action, not illusions. It is time to get real results for our businesses and for Canadians.

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ANGINE DE POITRINE

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, are you familiar with Angine de Poitrine, which roughly translates to “chest pain”? I am not referring to the medical condition, but to the duo made up of Saguenay natives Khn and Klek de Poitrine, the hottest music phenomenon on the planet.

They are blowing up on social media. Their song *Fabienk* has become the most viral hit on Spotify worldwide, and they top the charts in 50 different countries, including Canada, the U.S., France, Spain, Australia, and Chile. This is hardly surprising, considering that their music travels more than the Prime Minister.

In the Saguenay region, music is by no means a simple matter of “lah, lah, lah”. With Angine de Poitrine, it also includes “dada pythago-cubist mantra-rock”. Even the most eminent music experts are enthralled by all this innovation. The band's creativity would make Salvador Dali blush, and if Mozart were alive, he would call them geniuses.

Angine de Poitrine is a sign of Quebec's artistic ingenuity and offers further proof that where culture is concerned, our nation knows how to raise the roof and, who knows, maybe even build a country.

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[English]

SCARBOROUGH WALK OF FAME

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am so proud to rise to congratulate the newest inductees to the Scarborough Walk of Fame. This year's honourees are Trevor Godinho for arts and culture, Jesse Asido for business, Geetha Moorthy and John and Cathy Phillips for their community work, Andre De Grasse for his sports efforts, Stan Farrow and Dr. Malloy for education, and Fefe Dobson for entertainment.

Each of these remarkable individuals has demonstrated excellence, leadership and a deep commitment to giving back. Their contributions have left a lasting and positive impact in our community. Scarborough is so proud of them. They reflect the best of our community and indeed the best of Canada. I thank all this year's recipients for inspiring us to dream bigger, to give back and to continue to build a stronger, more vibrant Scarborough.

FUEL TAXES

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are moments in life when one looks back and says, “I could have. I would have. I should have.” We just could be at one of those moments.

The Liberal government is only cancelling a third of the gas tax and for only a third of the year. Canadians do not want to get fooled; they want to get fuelled. Inflation is hurting, and the government can make the right decision to change that. Removing the full 25¢-per-litre of gas taxes could help families get to their child's activities, drive to work and pick up groceries.

Conservatives want a country where Canadians do not have to choose between a full grocery cart and a full tank of gas. Removing all the taxes on gas and diesel for the rest of the year would save the average Canadian family \$1,200 per year. That is a huge amount.

Let us not look back on this moment with regret. The Liberals must seize the moment, take our Conservative plan and provide real relief for Canadians today.

* * *

CAREER COLLEGES

Maggie Chi (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important work of the National Association of Career Colleges and its member institutions.

Career colleges are an important part of Canada's workforce strategy, delivering practical, hands-on training for jobs in high-demand sectors. Across the country, demand is growing for skilled workers in fields such as health care, skilled trades and technology. Career colleges are helping Canadians to build practical skills they will use on the job. This is where career colleges are making a real difference. They expand training capacity, respond quickly to evolving industry demands and create accessible pathways for working adults, newcomers and career changers, people who are ready to contribute and succeed.

As we look to the future, supporting the institutions that are training Canadians for in-demand careers will remain essential to our plan to build Canada strong for all.

* * *

● (1415)

FINANCE

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Pete Townsend of The Who wrote the song *Won't Get Fooled Again*, which has these lines:

Meet the new boss
Same as the old boss

Oral Questions

This costly credit card budget confirms that. Can members believe that the man who claims to be the smartest person in the room has doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit?

The Liberals are spending more on their servicing of the debt than they are on health care. These debt-servicing costs will be borne by our children and grandchildren, and they are going to bankers instead of being invested into the health care system to support Canadians from coast to coast.

For all the Liberals' new spending, there was no mention of Niagara, no mention of previously promised funding for the Shaw Festival, nor was there an extension of the critically important wine sector support program.

The self-proclaimed new Liberal government is just more of the same. It spends more and taxes more while Canadians get less and ultimately are simply left holding the bill. Canadians deserve so much better.

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[Translation]

GÉRARD LÉVESQUE

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to pay tribute to Gérard Lévesque, who passed away recently. He was a committed Franco-Ontarian and active member of the community in my riding of Eto-bicoke—Lakeshore.

Gérard dedicated his life to defending and promoting Ontario's francophone community. As a seasoned lawyer, he was a strong advocate for access to justice in French and for French-language education in Ontario. We owe him a debt of gratitude. Gérard was a man of courage and conviction who never hesitated to take decisive action to advance language rights. His commitment has had a real and lasting impact on our community. I had the privilege of working with him, and he really believed in advancing the cause of the francophonie.

[English]

Beyond his career, Gérard also was a brilliant writer whose words inspired reflection and dialogue.

Today, we deeply feel his absence, but his legacy remains very much alive. It will continue to inspire future generations.

[Translation]

We offer our deepest condolences to his family, his friends and the entire community. We thank Gérard for everything he did.

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians hoped for relief, but this spring economic statement delivers more of the same. The costly credit card budget means more debt, more costs, more spending and more taxes. Nothing has changed. After years of reckless Liberal policies, families are stretched thin and small businesses continue to struggle.

The CFIB said this update leaves “small and medium-sized firms stuck in the same old mix of red tape and high taxes”.

A year ago, the government promised major infrastructure to drive growth. It has failed to deliver, and there is still no credible plan to make its promises a reality. Instead, it has doubled Trudeau's deficit so life is more expensive for Canadians, and no major infrastructure projects are being approved.

* * *

[Translation]

RON HALLMAN

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ron Hallman on his retirement and thank him for his outstanding contribution to Parks Canada.

Ron has been leading this iconic institution with vision and rigour since 2019, and he has worked hard to protect and promote our natural and cultural heritage. He has held a number of important positions throughout his career in the public service, and he has always been driven by a deep commitment to Canadians.

[English]

His leadership has contributed to reinforcing conservation, enabling reconciliation with indigenous peoples and bringing Canadians closer to nature. As president and CEO of Parks Canada, Ron Hallman has demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication to public service. His work has helped to protect some of our country's most treasured landscapes and historic sites for future generations.

On behalf of all Canadians, I thank him, but also his family, for years of service and wish him a well-deserved retirement.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more costs, more taxes, more debt, more money on the credit card: This Prime Minister is just another Liberal. He has doubled Justin Trudeau's \$31-billion deficit to \$65 billion, with \$27 billion in new spending this year alone. Now he is forcing Canadians to pay \$3,400 per family in interest on the debt.

Is there any limit on the Liberal credit card?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are no limits when it comes to what is possible for Canada. The economic update is the next step in our plan to make Canada stronger, more resilient and more independent. Half of the initiatives that we are implementing are designed to make life more affordable for Canadians, and we are strengthening Canada's fiscal position, which is the strongest in the G7.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he just stole Justin Trudeau's talking points, although he has doubled Mr. Trudeau's deficit. Not only has this Prime Minister left Canadians with the worst food inflation in the G7, but his costly credit card budget is forcing Canadian families to pay \$60 billion in interest on our debt. That is more than the government spends on health care and more than it collects in GST.

Canadians are paying more to bankers than they are to nurses and doctors. Why?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can sort of understand why the Leader of the Opposition is obsessed with my predecessor and obsessed with the past, but our government is focused on the future of this great country. We have a plan to strengthen our economic growth, which is the second fastest in the G7, and to strengthen our fiscal position, which is the best in the G7. We are going to build Canada strong for all.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is just that the Liberal Prime Minister has gone from writing Justin Trudeau's policies to plagiarizing his talking points. Actually, that is not fair to Justin Trudeau. This Liberal Prime Minister has done the impossible: He has doubled the deficit that Trudeau left behind. There is more cost, more debt, more taxes, more on the national credit card and more interest payments for Canadians.

Once again, with Canadians spending \$3,000 per family on interest for the debt, is there any limit on the Liberal credit card?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the face of a tariff war, and in the face of an actual war, this government has reduced the deficit by \$11 billion. This government has reduced the level of debt across the entire forecast horizon. This government is on track to deliver \$60 billion of savings for Canadians. This government is on track to reduce spending on consultants by 20%. This government will build Canada strong for all.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the deficit Justin Trudeau had provided for this year was \$31 billion. Yesterday, the Liberal Prime Minister provided a deficit of \$65 billion, and 65 is bigger than 31. I will speak slowly for the Liberal mathematicians on the other side of the House.

As The Globe and Mail said, "In the upside-down land of the Liberals, a spending spree is a spending cut, blowing a windfall of billions of dollars is prudent and failing to prepare for a fiscal storm is, well, just good management."

• (1425)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will not go there.

This government is focused on affordability. Half of the measures in the update are to make life more affordable for Canadians. On June 5, I look forward to 12 million Canadians getting a cheque to help with groceries and essentials. There is also the lower cost of gasoline.

We are building the country strong for all, including Canada's youth with the biggest investment in apprenticeships in our history.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these Liberals are like the Bourbon dynasty: They learn nothing, and they forget nothing.

Over the last decade, they told us that if we racked up the credit card, somehow it would grow the economy. What did we get? We got the worst growth in the G7, the highest housing costs in the G7, the worst household debt in the G7 and the worst investment per worker in the G7. Now, it is déjà vu all over again with the Prime Minister repeating exactly the same policies: more debt, more costs, more taxes. He is just another Liberal.

Will the Prime Minister recognize that Canadians are paying for his mistakes?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will not forget that the member opposite voted against child care, voted against pharmacare, voted against dental care and voted against the groceries and essentials benefit, for which Canadians are going to see \$500 cheques in a few weeks.

Canadians will see the second-strongest growing economy in the G7.

Conservatives would like to forget.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal Prime Minister has been wrong about every major economic issue of the last decade. He was wrong to push for bigger and broader carbon taxes, wrong to say that we should leave 50% of our oil in the ground, wrong to oppose the northern gateway pipeline, wrong to say COVID would lead to deflation, wrong to say money printing would not raise the cost and wrong to say that affordability is the best that it has been in a decade. He keeps getting it wrong. Yesterday, he repeated the same mistakes.

When will he realize that the more he gets it wrong, the more the Canadian people have to pay?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he was wrong on crypto, wrong on Brexit and I could go on.

Oral Questions

However, does he know what this government is right on? It is about co-operative federalism. We are working with the great Province of Alberta to make sure that Canadian energy powers the world. It is about ensuring our competitiveness. It is about working with the Province of Ontario, and a premier who picks up my phone calls and works with us to put Darlington new nuclear into power. It is about building Canada strong for all.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the past few days, the Prime Minister again claimed that 85% of Canadian exports to the United States are protected by CUSMA and that the tariffs applied to Canada and Quebec are the lowest the United States is imposing. It seems that, as of April 6, these are now the highest tariffs the U.S. is imposing on any country in the world, but yesterday's economic statement contained no measures.

Will the Prime Minister sharpen his pencil and make some changes to help businesses?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interest in this situation.

The government is currently developing measures to assist workers and businesses in the steel, aluminum, copper and derivative industries. We will announce those measures in the coming days.

• (1430)

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that sounds like good news, but to err on the side of caution, I would remind the House that the way tariffs are calculated changed on April 6.

Two weeks ago, I asked the Prime Minister if he would take action. What I got was pretty much radio silence. I asked him again the following week. He said that there would be measures to help businesses in the economic statement. However, there was no help for businesses in the economic statement.

Can I believe him this time?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a good idea to believe the Prime Minister of Canada.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we dealt with Justin Trudeau for 10 years.

As a result, I sincerely hope that the Prime Minister will accept the offer I made at a press conference earlier today and set partisanship and performative politics aside to ensure that, given the serious distress they are in, the businesses that account for roughly half of Quebec's exports to the United States will receive significant, adequate and timely assistance.

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, my colleagues and I can assure Canadian workers and businesses affected by the new U.S. tariff threats that our measures will be swift and sufficient.

[English]

FINANCE

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is just another costly Liberal. He gave himself a gold medal for the highest deficit outside of COVID in Canadian history in his November budget. Yesterday, he gave himself a silver medal for having the second highest with his credit card budget. He spends more tax dollars on the interest on his debt than what goes to provinces in health care transfers.

Why is the Liberal Prime Minister's priority always to make bankers, bondholders and Brookfield richer?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have great news for skilled workers all across this country and everybody who wants to join the skilled trades. A \$6-billion investment in getting people into the trades is helping apprentices right now to finish their training with up to \$16,000 in support, while making sure employers have the support to hire those workers. In fact, Robert Kucheran from the Canada's Building Trades Unions says that it "is a strong statement of support and respect for Canada's skilled trades workers".

I guess they will vote against those workers too.

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for a party that gave Canadians the second-highest unemployment in the entire G7, it is hard to believe those tradespeople will actually have a job after they graduate. This credit card budget has more debt, more costs, more spending and more taxes, all by the same old Liberals. Now Canadians have the highest food inflation, second-highest unemployment, highest consumer debt and highest housing costs in the entire G7.

Will the costly Liberal Prime Minister just finally admit he is a worse money manager than Justin Trudeau was?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is what Sean Strickland said. He is the executive director of Canada's Building Trades Unions. He said, "Our members work hard, often far from home, to build Canada. Today's measures will be felt at kitchen tables across the country." He also said, "This announcement demonstrates a strong commitment to helping Canada Building Trades meet the moment by investing in increased capacity for...training...apprenticeship supports, and [support for]...youth".

No matter what idea and no matter who endorses it, they vote against it. Shame on them.

Oral Questions

Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these same old costly Liberals have continued their decade of credit card budgeting: more costs, more debt, more taxes, more of the same. In fact, the costly Liberal Prime Minister is now doubling the Trudeau deficit. He is literally doubling down on the failures of the past, failures that have delivered the worst housing, worst food inflation and worst economic growth in the G7.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister end his costly credit card budgeting so Canadians can afford to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head?

• (1435)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives may be mired in the last decade or two of failure, this government is focused on the future and delivering today.

This spring update has an incredible opportunity for young Canadians. Up to 100,000 Canadians will have access to training and support to build the affordable homes and community infrastructure that this country needs to build Canada strong.

Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand why that minister would not want to talk about the past, given his horrendous record on housing in the city of Vancouver. It is the same old story with these same old Liberals. Even Liberal-friendly columnists like Andrew Coyne have finally taken notice, saying, “Canada's New Government is no more interested in arresting our economic decline than Canada's Old Government”. Canadians are maxed out. They cannot afford the same reckless Liberal policies of the last decade.

Why have the Liberals doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit, doubled down on costly credit card budgeting and forced Canadians to pay more for gas, groceries and housing?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Conservatives are attacking former mayors like they attack current mayors. They have no respect. For leaders of our cities and towns, leaders of our provinces and territories, leaders of our indigenous communities, they have zero respect. In my first seven years as a mayor in Vancouver, how much support did we get from the Harper Conservative government? Zero.

This government is focused on partnering with cities, towns and indigenous communities and delivering the affordable housing we need.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 11 years of Liberal deficits, Canadians are screaming to make it stop, but the banker Prime Minister is not listening. He said they just got started as they pile on another \$37 billion in spending, weakening our economy even more. This budget promises more costs, more taxes, more debt and more inflation for hard-working Canadians who are already maxed out.

Why are Canadians paying the price for the Liberal government's out-of-control spending?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member. We are optimistic about the future of our country. Let us hear from workers. Let us hear from Russ Shewchuk from the IBEW, who said that this economic statement “will super charge the Skilled Trades across Canada to help build and assist the much needed infrastructure and electrification of our country. It will transform apprenticeships in today's technology, safety and training, meeting the moment to supply a workforce for Major Projects from coast to coast to coast.”

That is how to build a Canada strong.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Strap in, Mr. Speaker, because Canadians are now paying \$59 billion in interest on the debt. That money is not going toward hospitals, highways or homes. It is contributing to the highest household debt, most unaffordable housing and second-worst productivity and unemployment in the entire G7. The Liberals are so far behind, they think they are in first place.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his costly credit card budget is rewarding bankers and lenders while making life harder for everyone else?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this new government is fiscally responsible, reducing the deficit by \$11 billion.

There has not been a single question today about workers. Let us hear from the workers. Let us hear from Marc Arsenault, the business manager for the building trades in Ontario. “The Federal Spring Economic Statement demonstrates that the Government is firmly committed to strengthening the skilled trades workforce at a time of economic uncertainty. The significant expansion of the Union Training Innovation Program including bricks-and-mortar investments for Red Seal trades, alongside enhanced incentive and completion grants and improved tracking, is a practical approach to supporting apprentices”.

That is how to build Canada strong for all.

• (1440)

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): Mr. Speaker, bankers make their money by having their clients enslaved to debt, and the banker Prime Minister is no different. He is just another costly Liberal. They even said the quiet part out loud. On their graph, they show that Canada's deficit-to-GDP ratio begins to skyrocket after the Prime Minister was appointed. Canadians now spend more money servicing the interest on Canada's credit card than all of our federal health care payments.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberal government commit to a real Conservative fiscal plan that spends less on bankers and more on doctors?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite, the Conservative member from Newfoundland and Labrador, reads his prepared notes and likes his bit of theatre, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are interested in the nearly \$1-billion investment in small craft harbours. That is just the beginning.

It is time the member listens to his constituents and puts the work first. The theatrics can come at the school play.

* * *

[Translation]

LABOUR

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in its economic update, the federal government is investing \$6 billion to train the construction workforce. The only problem is that workforce training falls under Quebec's jurisdiction. The Liberals say that they want to come to an agreement, but an agreement has already been in place for 30 years now. For 30 years, Ottawa has recognized that Quebec is responsible for determining its own labour market policies and priorities. For 30 years, Quebec has been designing, planning, delivering and evaluating the employment and training services that are right for Quebecers.

In short, will the government transfer Quebec's share to Quebec with no strings attached?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

First, it is important to know that we are investing in workforce training for skilled trades because there will be a need for it, especially in Quebec. The Commission de la construction du Québec is saying that there will be a need for 80,000 workers in the next five years.

Obviously, we will respect Quebec's jurisdictions. We have been doing so since 1997 with the agreement in principle on the workforce.

I am very pleased to be able to work with my counterpart, Minister Boulet, to ensure that we can quickly deliver results for Quebecers.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us be honest, the last thing we need is a squabble caused by the federal government.

As I said earlier, workforce training has been under Quebec's jurisdiction for 30 years. Quebec is the one that determines labour market needs and how to meet them. Ottawa's role is strictly to fund those measures. Quebec has both jurisdiction and the expertise. We do not need a government with no jurisdiction to interfere, especially given that the federal government is the undisputed champion of the anglicization of the workplace.

When will Quebec receive its fair share of the funds, without any strings attached?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April 29 is a historic day. This is the first time I have heard a Bloc member say that the last thing his party wants is a squabble between Quebec and Ottawa. For 10 years, I have seen them constantly trying to start fights between Quebec and Ottawa.

On this side, we want to deliver results for Quebecers in terms of workforce training, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

* * *

FINANCE

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants us to believe that he is creating a sovereign wealth fund. That is incorrect. A sovereign wealth fund is built with years of surpluses, budget surpluses and natural resource development. It is not built by charging \$25 billion to Canadians' collective credit card.

The Liberals just ran up a record deficit, the biggest deficit outside of COVID-19. They are running up a record deficit without proving that they can manage public funds well.

How can the Liberals use the credit card of future generations so shamelessly?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about future generations.

My colleague just mentioned the need for workforce training in Quebec and in the rest of the country. We also need to invest in ourselves and in major infrastructure projects. We are going to enable Canadians to benefit from construction and from building a better Canada. We are going to create job opportunities for our young people, job opportunities for the construction trades. We are going to benefit from our workforce and our investments.

That is what building Canada is about.

● (1445)

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about workforce training, and yet Quebec was not even aware of this program before it was announced yesterday.

A \$37-billion increase in spending is not a cut. That is more spending. The Globe and Mail reported this morning that, in the upside-down land of the Liberals, a spending spree is a spending cut and blowing a windfall of billions of dollars is prudent. I hope members are sitting down, because I have some disappointing news. By 2031, the Liberals will have saddled our children and grandchildren with \$321 billion in debt.

How can the Liberals spend so recklessly when Canadians are struggling to make ends meet?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only ones who are disappointed are that member, his inner circle and his party.

Over here on this side of the House, we are helping young people launch their careers, helping them buy an affordable home and helping them look forward to a better economic future in Quebec and Canada.

Over here on this side of the House, we are creating things and managing carefully.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are carrying on with their decade of costly budgets, which, of course, are being charged to the credit card. This Prime Minister has doubled the deficit left by former Prime Minister Trudeau. Who would have thought? The Globe and Mail condemns this upside-down land where this government's spending spree is considered prudent. The Liberals are spending more, but Canadians have less.

When will the Prime Minister put an end to his costly budgets so that Canadians can make ends meet?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are building a strong economy and we have all the data to prove it. We have the second-largest economic growth in the G7. We also have the most enviable fiscal position in the G7.

That being the case, what are we doing? We are helping our businesses and workers who are affected by the trade war. We are establishing a sovereign wealth fund to demonstrate economic nationalism, just as Quebecers did in the 1960s when we decided to take control of our own destiny. That is the vision that inspired us to stand up for ourselves and create prosperity here at home.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the way they have chosen to do it that is not right. The Prime Minister is following the same borrowing policies as his predecessor. Economists are sounding the alarm. Without measures to boost productivity, the weight of the debt relative to the economy will rise to a breaking point. We already have the worst food inflation in the G7.

Why are the Liberals stubbornly following this path that is forcing Canadians to pay more for gas, groceries and housing?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that my Conservative colleagues do not understand the sense of urgency in the Canadian economy. They would look at the trade war and twiddle their thumbs while standing back and doing absolutely nothing.

What we are doing, in essence, is reducing the government's operational spending. We are making sure that we are spending less while investing in capital projects. We are making sure that we create investments. It is all working, as the IMF has confirmed. We will continue creating prosperity here at home.

Oral Questions

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the more things change, the more they stay the same. These same Liberals have doubled the deficit in a single year. Under the former prime minister, a drama teacher, the annual deficit stood at \$31 billion. Today, with a Prime Minister who knows a thing or two about economics, the deficit has climbed to \$65 billion. That means higher taxes, more credit card spending and more debt for Canadians. The annual interest payments alone are more than the total health transfers to all the provinces.

Why is it that, with the Liberals, there is always more spending, more taxes and more risks being taken with taxpayers' money?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in yesterday's economic update, we proposed investing over \$6 billion to recruit and train more than 100,000 young people in the trades. These new workers will help us build a strong Canada and deliver major projects across the country. We are investing in our young people and in our country, and I hope that the members opposite will support the plan that was presented yesterday.

* * *

● (1450)

[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is making generational investments in major infrastructure projects that will support Canada's economic future. Within eight years, Canada will need more than 1.4 million additional workers—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

John-Paul Danko: Mr. Speaker, listen to that noise. It is so disrespectful to Canadians.

Canada needs more—

The Speaker: I know it is tempting—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Let us set a new tone.

The hon. member may continue.

John-Paul Danko: Mr. Speaker, I do not know why they are so afraid of good news.

Our government is making generational investments in major infrastructure projects that will support Canada's economic future. Within eight years, Canada will need more than 1.4 million additional workers in the trades to build these projects. Canada needs more than 20,000 trades—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I do not know if the minister heard the question, but I have a feeling she knows the answer.

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, it was hard to tell if the question was over or not, but I want to thank that member of Parliament for his constant advocacy for investment in the skilled trades. Yesterday, in the spring economic update, we announced over \$6 billion to mobilize skilled trades workers; up to 100,000 new opportunities for young workers across this country; a \$16,000 income top-up for apprentices, which will help them get through that training pipeline; and support for employers to make sure they can hire those apprentices. This is good news for the skilled trades.

The only question we have is, are the Conservatives going to vote against these workers, will they vote against Canadian workers?

* * *

FINANCE

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will share a quote: “In the upside-down land of Liberals, a spending spree is a spending cut, blowing a windfall of billions of dollars is prudent and failing to prepare for a fiscal storm is, well, just good [fiscal] management.” That is the scathing review from the Globe and Mail editorial board, because yesterday the Liberals promised Canadians that they would continue their decade of massive deficit spending, which means a rising cost of living for Canadians will also continue, with no end in sight.

When will the Liberal Prime Minister finally show some responsibility and some fiscal restraint so Canadians can afford to live?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Manitobans want, especially young people, is a job. They want opportunity, and that is what the government is delivering. The spring budget delivers real momentum for Manitobans. We are seeing infrastructure investments that keep the province moving in the right direction, from transportation upgrades to community facilities. We are expanding Red Seal training. The member opposite continues to deny what we are delivering on. They need to get on the side that we are on, which is delivering on affordability.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals can dress this up however they like, but there is a glaring omission in the fiscal update, which is urgency. They have no urgency in resolving the U.S. tariff dispute, which is costing thousands of Canadian manufacturing jobs. What is worse, according to the Financial Times, “Canada’s leading industry groups say [the Prime Minister’s] effort to cut red tape is floundering, costing the country billions more in trade losses than...Donald Trump’s tariffs.” Liberals have no urgency to resolve that issue either, despite it being 100% in their control.

Rather than massive deficits, why do they not cut red tape so our workers and industries can survive?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are investing so Manitobans can step into good jobs. What is she not see-

ing here? We are strengthening Manitoba’s aerospace sector. We are advancing the economic wealth fund. We are investing \$6 billion in the trades so young people can get jobs. The member opposite continues to downplay this work when these measures are directly supporting Manitobans.

• (1455)

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, Canadians were promised change after a decade of a costly Liberal government under Justin Trudeau. Yesterday, they did not get change; they got more of the same. The Liberals are asking every Canadian household to shoulder roughly \$3,400 of new debt from a Prime Minister who said he would be different. This costly credit card budget delivers more debt, more costs and more taxes, and it is doubling the deficit while life gets more expensive.

Which promise was false, the promise of change, or the claim that doubling the deficit would somehow make Canadians better off?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people in

Conservative and B.C. ridings are telling me this week that our new government is delivering the things they need. We are bringing major projects, such as LNG train 2 and Red Chris mine, which are going to invest in our natural resources and build B.C.’s economy. We are delivering the team Canada strong program, which is going to recruit, train and hire over 80,000 new skilled workers. This means jobs for British Columbians. This is good news.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the only thing the government delivers is more recycled talking points. Even The Globe and Mail says that, in this upside-down Liberal world, a spending increase of \$26.8 billion is not a spending cut. For every \$100 in new revenue, the government spends 97% of it.

Will the government admit this costly credit card budget proves nothing has changed, or are Canadians now supposed to believe that doubling the deficit is fiscal responsibility?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had a conversation with the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade this week, and we were talking about the need for skilled workers in British Columbia. In yesterday's spring economic update, we announced that we are investing in the recruiting, training and hiring of more than 80,000 workers in the skilled trades. We are going to grow the Canadian economy. We are going to invest in those projects. We are doing what B.C. needs.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those apprentices desperately need projects to go forward that they can work on.

Canada faces an unemployment crisis, most severe among youth, yet this Liberal costly credit card budget plans further increases to EI premiums. Increasing the tax on jobs now would make it harder for businesses to create jobs and would make the jobs crisis even worse. Why are the Liberals paying for their costly credit card budget with further tax increases on jobs?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives read only half the newspaper, obviously. If they had read the other half, they would have seen the CEO of Shell say that it has never been as attractive a time to invest in the energy sector of this country. They would have said that they are excited about the development of LNG in this country and that they are excited about the jobs that are going to be created. They should read the rest of the paper.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not at all surprised to hear that the minister spends a lot of time talking to CEOs. However, on page 122 of the Liberals' fiscal update, it is clear that they would increase the tax on jobs, at a time when we already have a massive youth unemployment crisis. This credit card budget proposes to squeeze small businesses and workers even more, at the same time as these Liberals are voting against allowing student grants to go to those at vocational institutions. They are attacking young people and attacking jobs. When will it end?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe instead of reading the paper, the member should go online and see that we actually cut CPP deductions from paycheques. We are making it cheaper and more affordable for people to work, and we are adding 100,000 new Red Seal jobs. Read the paper. Read all the paper.

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, Canada had a balanced budget and the richest middle class in the world. Coming out of a global economic meltdown, Canada's federal debt stood at \$616 billion. Yesterday, we found out that after a decade of Liberal economic experiments funded on the national credit card, our debt this fiscal year will hit \$1.4 trillion. The Liberals are trading away Canadians' future prosperity to fund this tiresome daily Liberal QP routine of riffing off ever-increasing lists of things they are charging to the national credit card. Is there someone over there with the courage to stand up and say, "enough is enough"?

• (1500)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Canada has one of the strongest positions

fiscally in the G7. In addition to maintaining and growing that position, we are also delivering for Canadians: \$6 billion for investing in the skilled trades; more than \$700 million for athletics in this country, from playground to podium; building Canada's homes by providing low-cost financing; and ensuring that there is a groceries and essentials benefit. We ask the Conservatives rationally to get on board.

Hon. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a mythical Liberal world, budgets balance themselves. In the current Prime Minister's theoretical world, the national credit card has no limit and the bill never comes due, but we live in the real world, where the Liberal government's addiction to borrowing has real consequences. This Prime Minister is now spending more on interest than on the Canada health transfer. According to his own economic update, and this is quite astonishing, in 2030, the entire deficit would go to paying interest on debt that the Liberals have added since being elected. In this new world, Liberal debt becomes self-generating. When will this experiment end?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. At the same time, in direct response to my colleague's question, we have reduced the deficit by \$11 billion, as announced yesterday.

One thing the Conservatives have failed to do is to vote for Canadians, vote for dental care, vote for pharmacare, vote for the groceries and essentials benefit, vote for housing and vote for supporting school food lunch programs on a permanent basis. I ask them to get—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no matter how much lipstick they put on this budget, a pig is still a pig. Liberals' costly credit—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Something is unparliamentary if it creates disorder. I think that kind of language has a tendency to create disorder. Perhaps the member could use other language.

Oral Questions

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' costly credit card budget is more of the same: more debt, more spending, more taxes and higher inflation. The Prime Minister has doubled previous annual deficits. He had still added \$54 billion in new spending, costing Canadians now \$59 billion in debt interest charges to cover it. His \$25-billion sovereign debt fund is just another deception. When will the Prime Minister set aside his illusions and bring his deficit under control 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, I know it is a lot to ask, but the Conservatives could finally give up their infatuation with our former prime minister and just face reality for once. Canada is strong and resilient, and only getting more so under this government's leadership. The evidence is in, in the spring economic update: \$11 billion less in deficit, and a fiscal track with a declining deficit-to-GDP. Operating expenses are being managed responsibly. Canada has triple the job creation and double the foreign direct investment per capita of U.S. counterparts. We have the most competitive tax rate in the G7 and the strongest fiscal position.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past year, Canadians have had to adapt to a rapidly changing world, one that is unpredictable, more complex, more unstable and, for many, more expensive.

Last fall, on this side of the House, we responded to these changes with a solid budget, budget 2025. It is a plan to build a stronger and more resilient economy, leading to lower costs for Canadians.

Yesterday's economic update is the next step. It is the next step in really continuing the work. I have a question for the Minister of Government Transformation.

Could he explain—

• (1505)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Government Transformation.

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Bourassa for the question.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance presented a plan for a strong Canada, a more prosperous Canada where the prosperity is shared by all. Our plan includes the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, which will help 12 million Canadians, who will receive their first payment on June 5. It includes historic investments in sport and in workforce training. It includes major projects that will unlock tens of billions of dollars, more than \$125 billion in investments that will support 60,000 jobs across the country. In short, this is the plan of a smart, caring government. It is a prudent plan, a confident plan and a responsible plan.

[English]

FINANCE

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister's costly budget is going to add another \$37 billion in new debt this year, continuing his Liberal predecessor's tradition of borrowing and spending. What is worse is that interest alone on the national debt will be an additional \$59 billion this year, which is \$3,400 for every Canadian, who is already struggling with the rising prices of gas, groceries and housing.

The Prime Minister has the opportunity to show that he is not just another Liberal. Will he instead break from type and offer relief and affordability for Canadians?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the former prime minister lives rent-free in Conservatives' heads, the current Prime Minister is focused on an economy for all Canadians. That is why in yesterday's spring economic update, we announced—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The member may continue.

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, the former prime minister lives rent-free in all of their heads. The current Prime Minister is focused on building an economy for everyone. In yesterday's spring economic update, we announced bold changes to the disability tax credit so more Canadians with disabilities can get the support they need. We also reinvested in the community volunteer income tax program, which is run by volunteers. It does taxes for our most vulnerable, over a million Canadians. Of those, 17% have not filed for—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that with the Liberal Prime Minister, just like his Liberal predecessor, Canadians are struggling now more than ever. Groceries, gas and homes have never been more expensive. Members do not have to take my word for it. The Globe and Mail said, in a scathing review, "Canada's New Government is no more interested in arresting our economic decline than Canada's Old Government." We should be the richest and most affordable country on earth, but instead the Liberals are borrowing today and making Canadians of future generations pay it back.

Why will the Liberals not deliver relief?

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, these guys will find any excuse to talk down Canada and talk down investing in Canada, even in a trade war. Our credit rating is the highest in the world. We have just lowered the deficit by \$11.5 billion, and we are using that money to invest in Canadians. We are making the largest investments in the skilled trades in our history: 100,000 jobs in the skilled trades. The Conservatives should support it.

Our plan is simple, and I will put it simply: build in Canada, buy in Canada, believe in Canada.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals claimed that in their latest update they would show discipline. Instead, Canadians got more debt, more spending and more of the same. The deficits are now projected to be double Trudeau's and as debt rises, taxpayers pay the price.

Public debt charges are predicted to be more than \$54 billion this year, rising to \$81 billion in five years. That is money that cannot go to tax relief, cannot go to housing and cannot go to health care. It is no wonder that The Globe and Mail said it is a bit rich for the finance minister to be claiming fiscal responsibility.

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

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is a bit rich is the fact that the Conservatives are not defending our auto workers. This spring economic update is all about our auto strategy and supporting our 5,000 auto workers, including those working in the parts sector of the auto sector.

I have good news today. GM just announced, in St. Catharines, more than \$690 million of investments in the next generation of engines. This is our plan working.

* * *

● (1510)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, respecting the spirit of truth and reconciliation, Richmond residents in my hometown are seeking clarity following last summer's Cowichan decision and recent federal agreements with first nations in British Columbia. To dispel the misinformation, it is important that we continue to provide clear, factual information and constructive leadership as Canada moves forward with the important work of advancing reconciliation.

Can the Prime Minister outline the government's position and explain how the government is working collaboratively to uphold reconciliation, while protecting private property rights for residents and businesses?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an important question. Private property rights are fundamental, and this government, indeed, this House, will always protect them. This government fundamentally disagrees with the B.C.

Oral Questions

Supreme Court's decision in Cowichan. We immediately appealed that decision, alongside the Government of B.C., the City of Richmond, and other first nations.

We will always advance viable legal arguments to protect private property. Federal agreements, including agreements about aboriginal title, have always protected and will always protect private property. No modern treaty, negotiated agreement or federal approach—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North.

* * *

FINANCE

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's statement proved nothing has changed: more debt, more costs, more spending, more taxes, more of the same. Canada has the worst housing costs, worst growth and worse food inflation in the G7. As The Globe and Mail said, "This 'New Government' has no interest in arresting our economic decline".

Why have the Liberals doubled Justin Trudeau's deficit and doubled down on costly credit card budgeting, forcing Canadians to pay more for gas, groceries and housing?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we conclude this question period with about 32 identical questions from the Conservative Party straight off of the Leader of the Opposition's desk, let us conclude it this way. Every time we propose what that member purports to want, such as lower costs, lower prices, higher salaries, new dental care or new social programs, every single support, they are against it. We are for it. We are going to go back and do the work of building Canada strong. They are going to go and write a new question for tomorrow.

*Privilege***VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's decision to end the Canadian Corps of Commissioners' preferential contracting threatens jobs for veterans who rely on it for stable work after service, while potentially shifting contracts to for-profit firms. For decades, Commissioners have supported their transition from serving our nation in the Canadian Armed Forces or the RCMP with dignity.

Why is the Minister of Veterans Affairs moving ahead without any consultation with the commissioners, and will she instead reverse these arbitrary procurement changes before veterans pay the price?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, government policies must evolve as the goals they speak to change. In 1945, the first right of refusal was designed to respond to the needs of soldiers returning from war. Today, this policy no longer meets the needs of veterans.

Today, the average age of a releasing veteran is 34. They have a range of transferable hard and soft skills. These skills are in demand in the Canadian economy. Guard services will continue to be one option for veterans, and I will continue to advance all options for veterans.

* * *

● (1515)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Brian Jean, Minister of Energy and Minerals, and the Hon. Nathan Neudorf, Minister of Affordability and Utilities, both for the Province of Alberta.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the finalists for the 2026 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing: Don Gillmor, Maggie Helwig, Brian Stewart, Ira Wells and Karin Wells.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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PRIVILEGE

MINISTERIAL COMPLIANCE WITH ORDER IN COUNCIL

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning I gave notice with respect to the question of privilege I am raising today. The question arises from the reporting obligations of the Minister of International Trade, specifically the requirement under the order in council that annual reports be tabled in each House of Parliament by the minister.

I am honoured to be one of the co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. We just held a parliamentary briefing with the International Justice and Human Rights Clinic from UBC. At that briefing, we learned from the former ombudsman that the Minister of International Trade has failed to fulfill this obligation to table annual reports from the

Canadian ombudsman for responsible enterprise. Not only was one report not reported, but three reports have not been reported.

I want to be clear. What we are discussing here is the annual reports of an entity empowered by the Crown to respond to potential victims of exploitation, forced labour and modern slavery being committed by Canadian companies operating in other countries.

I went to the CORE web page to verify this for myself yesterday, and the last annual report tabled in Parliament was the 2021-22 report tabled on March 22, 2023, by the minister. The former ombudsman confirmed that she sent the 2022-23 annual report to the minister in November 2023. She also confirmed to me that she provided a draft report to the interim ombudsperson at the end of her term in April 2024. That report has never been tabled in Parliament, nor has the 2024-25 report that would have been completed by the interim ombudsperson. Furthermore, the minister has left this position unfilled for over a year, and I doubt we will see a report later this year.

In accordance with Order in Council P.C. 2019-1323, dated September 6, 2019, which establishes the mandate of the CORE, section 13 states:

(1) The Ombudsperson is to submit an annual report to the Minister on their activities.

(2) The Minister is to table [that] annual report in each House of Parliament.

(3) The Ombudsperson is to publish the annual report after it is tabled in Parliament.

This raises concerns regarding the compliance with this order in council, which imposes a clear legal and fiduciary obligation on the minister to table these reports in both Houses each year. If the minister does not table these reports in the House of Commons, the CORE cannot release them publicly.

Furthermore, the failure to ensure timely tabling of these reports limits our ability as members to access this information, required for effective parliamentary oversight of an entity established by the Government of Canada. It also prevents members from engaging the House's established process for scrutiny of these tabled documents.

I recognize that orders in council are not statutes, but they do have force in law. Orders in council are indeed a form of subordinate legislation, deriving their power from a statute, an act of Parliament. In other words, they are legal instruments made by the Governor in Council pursuant to a statutory authority and take legal effect when signed by the Governor General.

There is a clear precedent in supporting this proposition that the failure to comply with the statutory tabling obligations may engage the privileges of this House.

On February 3, 1992, a question of privilege was raised concerning the failure of a minister of finance to table order in council appointments in the House of Commons required under the order of the Customs Tariff. In the ruling on February 5, 1992, at pages 6425 to 6427 of the Debates, Speaker Fraser affirmed, “It is through tabling that Members are officially apprised of the existence of a document....it is not done lightly but is done for a serious purpose.”

Speaker Fraser went on to state that “the tabling of documents...is one of the procedures on which hinges the ability of Members to discharge their functions” and recognized that the failure to table these required documents may impede both members and the standing committees in carrying out their mandate under Standing Order 108(1).

Speaker Fraser also noted that the House is the appropriate forum to address the deficiencies arising from non-compliance with statutory tabling requirements. In that instance, the Chair declined to find a *prima facie* breach because the matter had already been taken up by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.

That circumstance does not exist in the present case. No committee has been seized, however, with the failure to table the CORE annual reports.

• (1520)

As a result, members have been deprived of access to these reports that would have otherwise been subject to parliamentary scrutiny through the House's established procedures, including the referral mechanism contemplated under Standing Order 32(5), which depends on proper tabling in the House.

A further ruling, in 2001, similarly addressed a failure to comply with statutory tabling obligations. In that case, the Chair observed that where statutory deadlines exist, the *prima facie* finding of contempt would be more readily supportable, as the members' ability to scrutinize the government's action is directly affected by compliance with tabling requirements. The Chair also emphasized that the tabling obligations are central to Parliament's ability to function.

Unlike that circumstance, the present case involves a recurring statutory obligation to table annual reports. The concern here is not an isolated delay but an ongoing failure to ensure that Parliament is kept informed through the mechanism that it established. In this situation, I would remind members, we are discussing annual reports addressing potential situations of exploitation, forced labour and modern-day slavery being committed by Canadian companies operating in other countries.

I am sure every member of the House would agree that we need to have access to these annual reports, which the minister is obligated to table in the House of Commons and has failed to do for three years. The effect of this failure is to limit members' access to information required for effective parliamentary oversight of an entity established by the Government of Canada and to frustrate the operation of the House's own procedures for examining these reports.

It is on this basis that I submit that this matter engages the privileges of the House, Mr. Speaker, and I respectfully ask that you find

Routine Proceedings

a *prima facie* question of privilege, at which point I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the question of privilege that was raised, we would like to review the comments that the member put on the record and then report back to the House on the matter.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

TREATIES

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Korea on the Protection of Military and Defence Classified Information”, done in Ottawa on February 25.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, entitled “Structural Challenges in Canada's Beef and Pork Supply Chains: Toward Greater Food Sovereignty”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

• (1525)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, entitled “Main Estimates 2026-27: Vote 1 under Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Vote 1 under Canadian Energy Regulator, Vote 1 under Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, Votes 1, 5 and 10 under Department of Natural Resources, Vote 1 under Northern Pipeline Agency”.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I move that the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be concurred in.

Routine Proceedings

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

MENTAL HEALTH

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition on behalf of constituents on Vancouver Island.

Petitioners are highlighting that Canada is experiencing a mental health and substance use crisis that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. They highlight that too many Canadians are unable to access mental health or substance use supports in a timely manner, that the lack of access to community-based mental health and substance use services increases demands on hospital emergency rooms and primary care providers, and that untreated and inadequately treated mental illness carries significant social and economic costs.

Petitioners are calling on the government to support Bill C-201 and legislate parity between physical and mental health in Canada's universal public health care system to ensure timely access to evidence-based, culturally appropriate and publicly funded mental health and substance use services beyond hospital and physician settings.

Third, petitioners are calling on the government to establish the Canada mental health transfer that the Liberals promised to sustainably fund the provision of mental health and substance use services, and to immediately disburse an initial investment of \$4.5 billion for mental health care and substance use services to the provinces and territories.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by 8,089 residents from my riding of Oakville West and from across Canada.

The petitioners draw the attention of the House to individuals currently in Canada under the TS2023 temporary public policy who were welcomed on humanitarian grounds and have built their lives in Canada following the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

The petitioners highlight that despite ongoing reconstruction efforts abroad, the impending expiry of work permits is creating uncertainty for these individuals. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to extend work permits and to consider a pathway to permanent residency for those who are contributing to Canadian society and the economy. I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

JUSTICE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of concerned residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands and others. The petitioners note that what

we have learned from the empirical evidence is that for people who suffer from mental health issues and substance abuse, incarcerating them is not effective in alleviating the burden to society, the individual or their family.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the government to cease incarceration of people who suffer from drug abuse and to rehabilitate them back into society through treatment programs, as is done in Portugal.

• (1530)

SALMON FISHERY

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise again today on behalf of residents of Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford and surrounding constituencies who are concerned about the future of the recreational fishing industry in British Columbia.

Throughout our history as a province, we have seen salmon as a common property resource, managed in good faith by the Government of Canada. Proposed changes by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to deprioritize recreational access to coho and chinook salmon would damage our recreational industry, which supports businesses and the cultural way of life of all British Columbians who simply want to access our rivers and take part in something all British Columbians have always done: fish to feed their family.

FRESH WATER

Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table e-petition 7165, signed by hundreds of Canadians, in support of Canada water week.

Last month, people from around the world celebrated World Water Day on March 22, and petitioners are calling on the House to recognize every week in which March 22 falls as Canada water week. Leading up to World Water Day, a group of students at Toronto Metropolitan University affiliated with the Geoffrey F. Bruce Fellowship in Canadian Freshwater Policy led this petition to establish Canada water week, and I am happy to table it.

* * *

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 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]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 10

Hon. Rebecca Alty (for the Minister of Finance and National Revenue) moved that a ways and means motion to introduce a bill entitled An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026 be concurred in.

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

[Translation]

Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[English]

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1615)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 107)

YEAS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Auguste	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Battiste	Beech
Begum	Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Bendayan	Bittle
Blois	Brière
Carney	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Chang
Chartrand	Chatel
Chen	Chenette
Chi	Church
Clark	Connors
Cornier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dandurand
Danko	d'Entremont
Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Duclos

Duguid
Earle
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fuhr
Gainey
Gerretsen
Gould
Greaves
Guilbeault
Hajdu
Harrison
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Idlout
Jeneroux
Joseph
Kelloway
Klassen
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lauzon
Lavoie
Leitão
Long
Ma
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Martin
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Petitpas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rocheftort
Royer
Saini
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sodhi
Sousa
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Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
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Fergus
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
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Gaheer
Gasparro
Gladu
Grant
Guay
Gull-Masty
Hanley
Hepfner
Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
Jaczek
Joly
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lambropoulos
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
May
McKelvie
McKnight
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Ntumba
Olsewski
Osborne
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sari
Schiefke
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Solomon
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Weiler
Yip
Zerucelli

NAYS

Members

Aitchison
Allison
Anstey
Au

Government Orders

Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bonin	Bonk
Borrelli	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Champoux
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Niagara South)
Dawson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	DeRidder
Deschênes	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Duncan	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Groseau	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Hardy	Ho
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Johns
Kelly	Khanha
Kibble	Kirkland
Kmiec	Konanz
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kronis	Kuruc
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lawton	Lefebvre
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Mahal	Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Martel	Mazier
McCauley	McKenzie
McLean (Calgary Centre)	McPherson
Melillo	Menegakis
Moore	Morin
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perron
Plamondon	Poillievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Reynolds
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ross
Rowe	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seebach
Shipley	Simard
Small	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stevenson
Strahl	Strauss
Stubbs	Thomas

Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Williamson
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PAIRED

Members

Hoback Sarai— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.*[English]*

Hon. Rebecca Alty (for the Minister of Finance and National Revenue) moved that Bill C-30, An Act to implement certain provisions of the spring economic update tabled in Parliament on April 28, 2026, be read the first time and printed.

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

* * *

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT

Hon. Rebecca Alty (for the Minister of Industry) moved that Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Weights and Measures Act, the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the Weights and Measures Regulations and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Regulations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to speak to this bill, which has come to us from the other place and would amend various acts related to weights and measures here in Canada. This piece of legislation is in the context of the historic work of this organization.

The Speaker: I must interrupt the member for just one moment to give members who wish to leave the House the opportunity to do so in relative silence.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry may continue.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure, as I mentioned, to speak to this bill, which came from the other place. This bill is a significant set of amendments to our weights and measurement system. It is a set of amendments that really looks to modernize our trade instrumentation, which is so important to the smooth functioning of our economy, the information of consumers and the clarity and transparency needed by businesses and consumers alike.

This brings to mind my first experience of this as a worker in the weights and measures system. I was a new arrival in London, England, on a working visa and chose to find employment, as many people do. I got a job at a cheese shop called Bloomsbury Cheeses in London, England. The first act of work in any retail business that involves a deli with meat or cheese of any kind is to put the cheese on the scale. I remember putting that cheese on the scale, whether it was Cornish yarg, a nice Stilton or a Lancashire. In the English context, people love their cheeses and they love their English cheeses.

I would engage with customers. The customers would look at what was provided, what the weight of the item was and how much it cost. We used to put a little piece of wax paper under the cheese to make sure the cheese was not contaminating the scale and vice versa. I remember one customer asking me, “Well, what’s the weight of that wax paper? Are you charging me for the wax paper and not just the cheese?” I did not have a good response for that customer. Perhaps it was a good sign that retail was neither my forte nor the sector I should be in. I was soon dismissed by both the customer and Bloomsbury Cheeses.

However, that was a good reminder of the trust that is needed in this sector. It is also a good reminder and a good opportunity to mention two of the very finest cheese shops in my riding of Taia-iako’n—Parkdale—High Park, the Cheese Boutique, a legendary cheese shop on Ripley Avenue, as well as the Thin Blue Line in my neighbourhood of Roncesvalles on Roncesvalles Avenue.

This work of weights and measures is really related to trust, especially when we are amending a piece of legislation like this, which is related to an organization that goes back to the 1870s. In fact, weights and measures are in the Canadian Constitution. Section 91.17 of the BNA Act, now the Constitution Act, puts the responsibility for weights and measures solely in the federal eye.

In 1873, we had the first Weights and Measures Act of Parliament. That set up the system for the kind of work that is done to help the economy operate in a smooth way and in a very important way. Of course, we may remember the most recent major amendment that was done before the set of amendments we are talking about now, which was the 1971 set of amendments to the Weights and Measures Act, which very crucially, and I think to the ultimate satisfaction of most Canadians, recognized the use of the metric system in Canada. It also required metric measurements on most product labels.

Some of us may have lived through those times and remember the kinds of measurements, the kinds of things that were provided in that era, or we may have parents or grandparents who lived through those times. Canadians embraced the metric system. It is not just for athletic measurement. It is for all kinds of measurement. The U.S. remains a bit of an outlier, although in the trade system we will notice that the Americans, in fact, do adopt the metric system.

This is about trust. This is about the trust of the tools and the information that is provided in this very key part of the goods-facing economy. Measurement Canada, is a significant organization of 320 hard-working Canadians from coast to coast to coast, with offices in many communities in our country.

Measurement Canada, which used to be called weights and measures Canada, is probably best known by Canadians for those labels on the consumer gas pumps, which we have been visiting. Each of those visits is a bit more painful of late since the war in the Middle East. I am very glad that our government has brought forward measures to bring real excise tax relief in this challenging moment for Canada, and Canadians are seeing the benefits of that.

We will see Measurements Canada’s work on those consumer gas pumps, but its work spreads far more widely. It touches a number

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of sectors. It touches energy sectors. It touches export-oriented sectors. This piece of legislation is a very important piece of work that does a couple things.

● (1620)

I will just read from the summary of the bill. It is important to outline what we are talking about here in this bill from the other place. It states:

This [bill] amends the Weights and Measures Act to, among other things, clarify existing powers, duties and functions of the Minister of Industry and inspectors, provide the Minister with certain powers, including with respect to sampling when devices are examined and with respect to corrective and preventive measures, and provide inspectors with certain powers.

It also amends the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act to, among other things, broaden the definition of “meter”, provide the president [of Measurement Canada] with the authority to grant certain exemptions, clarify the steps required to put a device into service, clarify existing powers, duties and functions of the Minister and inspectors, provide the Minister with certain powers, including with respect to sampling when meters are examined and with respect to corrective and preventive measures, and provide inspectors with certain powers.

This is a significant modernization of this piece of legislation, which again has not been looked at in a major way since the era of digital measurement, the era of, in fact, our metric system. It takes place in the context of the major 1971 modernization. There was a whole lot of infrastructure and a whole lot of process necessary to prepare Canadians for the conversion to metric.

Canada’s History magazine writes:

Chaired by former Canadian Pacific Railway executive Stevenson Gossage, [there was a Metric Commission, which] oversaw more than 100 sector committees that monitored and prepared conversion plans for a wide range of interests and industries. There were problems figuring out which sectors should convert fully and which, especially industries reliant on American materials, should take it slowly.

Again, we have this system of weights and measures, which is really the lifeblood of the economy, that is supporting sectors far and wide in the energy space, in the consumer product space, in the retail space and beyond. Why do we need this modernization? Why are we bringing this piece of legislation forward today? Conversations about modernizing this act and the other acts started before the COVID era. The hard work to accelerate this work really started in 2023 with Measurement Canada, with 320 hard-working public servants from coast to coast working on this on the front lines at the gas stations, examining hundreds of devices a year.

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I just want to pause and give a tribute to the work of Measurement Canada and its workers. On an annual basis, Measurement Canada calibrates and certifies approximately 1,529 standards of mass, volume, temperature, electricity and gas, as well as tests equipment to certify measuring devices. We measure things and we need to test the things themselves that do the measurement. On an annual basis, Measurement Canada evaluates and approves around 300 new prototype measuring devices and the technology for use in trade in Canada. Each organization audits and oversees more than 230 authorized service providers and 700 registered technicians to inspect and certify approximately 95% of measuring devices used in trade on its behalf, including all those gas pumps and all these measuring devices in the trucking sector, in the goods movement sector and in the consumer movement sector for all kinds of goods. Obviously, there is a key relationship here with our exports and the need not only to diversify our exports but also to protect ourselves from the tariffs that we are being faced with right now.

Measurement Canada is at the centre of all this work, and it is really important to point out and to celebrate the hard-working men and women who do this work on the front lines. These are frontline workers who are doing this work as part of a broader sector of weights and measures and technical professionals. There is a relationship, obviously, to the standards sector.

Why are we doing this now? What is the cause? The reality is that devices today have capabilities that were not possible decades ago. They are not strictly mechanical or a very simple digital interface. I referred to that scale at Bloomsbury Cheeses, from my short-lived time as a cheese retailer. There is now lots more sophistication. Scales now include sensors and lasers. Devices have software updates that happen instantly. Smart communities transmit data about electricity and natural gas use in milliseconds.

The context of all this is trust. When someone receives a bill for a consumer product that involves some sort of weight or measurement, they want to know that the measurement is correct. In this increasingly digitally connected era, Canadians are somewhat removed. Some of the benefits of this technology are that it allows this work to happen instantaneously, or practically instantaneously, and remotely. Canadians have an expectation that the inputs into the decisions that are informing how much they are paying for any consumer product, whether at the pumps, in their homes or elsewhere, is reliable.

• (1625)

I think it is really important to have a trusted institution like Measurement Canada at the centre of this work. The good news is this is not just about regulation and the kinds of changes that we need to make to keep up with the changing digital technologies. This is also about the potential benefit to Canada from the innovation in this sector of measurement, digital measurement in particular.

The reforms that we are bringing about here would increase competitiveness. Temporary permissions, for instance, would encourage innovation and allow industry to test out new devices in the marketplace under specific conditions, instead of waiting to be fully evaluated and approved. We hear from our innovators constantly that they want to get their device or product out into the market. They

want to have a controlled setting. They want to have regulatory sandboxes or other places where there is equipment to show that their product is available, often Canadian products and digital products, and then find a market for that.

If we do that here in Canada through this amendment to the legislation, then we will have created a test bed, a set of experiences for these digital product innovators in particular, as well as other innovators, to then take their market experience, take the effective endorsement that might result from their deployment in the marketplace in this new accelerated way, and then look to export. Another reform we are bringing is to bring in the flexibility to reduce the regulatory burden, which we know takes place in a variety of sectors. This set of legislative amendments is part of an attempt to reduce the regulatory burden in the measurement sector, which touches pretty much all goods-servicing sectors.

It is also fiscally prudent. We know that when these devices come on board, they come on board in batches and bulk. If we require inspection of every single device, that is an undue burden. If we can inspect a sampling of the devices and ensure that the manufacturing processes of all devices being produced under that line meet a certain quality, then maybe we do not need as much of a burden on inspecting every single device, taking a risk-based approach to inspection work. The proposed amendments would allow inspectors to inspect thousands of devices of the same type using any means, including statistical sampling, to align the acts and increase the overall efficiency of the agency's operations.

There is a competitiveness to industry with a bill like this. There is also quite a bit of efficiency that can be enabled with this work. I think this kind of legislation is a very interesting window into the full continuum of transportation- and energy-related sectors. We sometimes hear from the other side a celebration only for conventional energy. On this side, we have taken a more well-rounded position that we can have both conventional and clean electricity, and clean energy generated.

A fun fact about Measurement Canada is that it was one of the first, or perhaps the first, federal government agency to acquire electrically powered trucks in its fleet. Measurement Canada is on the front line of acquiring an asset that is both good for the planet and good for the pocketbook, but is also on the front line of the work that it is doing.

I recently announced on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, significant funding toward electric vehicle charging infrastructure across Canada. Canadians know that we are coming out with an electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy, as well as a national electricity strategy. These technologies and this work of bringing the electric vehicle experience to as many Canadians as possible requires standards and it requires a different form of measurement.

I was at the EV & Charging Expo in Toronto a few weeks ago, making that announcement on behalf of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. The number of companies that are popping up with digital solutions to our electric vehicle charging demands, needs and potential is truly impressive. Through the amendments to the legislation I am talking about today, we would have the opportunity to catalyze an economy that is coming into being and is ready to do its part for Canadians and to help create new companies on behalf of Canadians.

● (1630)

I have some other facts about Measurement Canada and where it is engaging. I mentioned the electricity sector. The Canadian Gas Association has shown its support for this legislation in its comments when it went through the other place. Electricity and natural gas utilities and other energy suppliers are keenly interested in the legislation, as are other agencies and departments like the Canadian Grain Commission, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Transport Canada and Natural Resources Canada.

I am looking across the aisle. I know that some of my friends across the aisle represent some of these communities. Measurement Canada has offices in Vancouver, Kelowna, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, London, Stoney Creek, Mississauga, Markham, Belleville, Ottawa, where the laboratories and headquarters of Measurement Canada also exist, Montreal, Quebec, Moncton, Dartmouth and St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The work is resource-, travel- and labour-intensive. It depends on specialized, purpose-built test equipment and it continues to expand into new areas, as I mentioned, not only electric vehicle charging but also clean fuels and even things like the automation of measurement-based financial transactions.

This is really important public service work and it is all in the context of trust. If Canadians can trust the inputs into their economic decisions, they are more likely to trust the outputs. I think this piece of legislation plays a very important role in doing that.

[Translation]

I am going to say a few words in French about the changes outlined in Bill S-3, an act to amend the Weights and Measures Act, the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the Weights and Measures Regulations and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Regulations.

The purpose of this bill is to modernize laws that have not been amended for more than 50 years. The last significant change was when Canada adopted the metric system, the International System of Units. That was over 50 years ago. Our system now is more digital and automated.

Workers at this thriving organization that serves the public need tools to keep up with changes in the weights and measures system. In my opinion, this bill, which amends several acts, gives the government and the private sector the tools they need to bring business innovations to market and make business services more positive for Canadians.

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● (1635)

[English]

This piece of legislation would modernize an essential system of trust that Canadians have been relying on for many years, not thinking about it but taking it for granted. When we see that Measurement Canada sticker at the gas pump, we know that we are going to get the authoritative and correct measurement.

We want to catalyze and create an economy that allows the digital tools to be deployed so that we can accelerate the deployment of tools for weights and measures in more sectors, especially the electric vehicle sector, so that we can create opportunities for Canadian businesses to participate in this very important digital economy, and so that Canadians can continue to trust the information they get, whether as consumers or as businesses, and so that we can do the work of continuing to protect Canadians, the very important work that the hard-working men and women of Measurement Canada do every day, which develops our economy, creates competition, creates efficiencies and builds trust for everyone.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was riveting. He kind of lost me, though, after he moved away from the cheese explanation. I realize it is not an easy subject to carry. He spoke a lot about trust and trust in the system, and I appreciate that.

We have seen, recently, reports of large grocery chains robbing Canadians knowingly because they had scales that were not working. The CFIA and the government have known about this issue for years and yet have done nothing. In fact, the CFIA has not even issued fines to these large grocery companies.

How does that instill trust in Canadians, when the government knows that taxpayers and Canadians are being robbed but has done nothing about it?

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, I think all Canadians, when they hear stories of the kind that my hon. colleague describes and that have been brought to the House, share a significant amount of concern. It is not acceptable. As someone who used to teach students who were working part-time in the grocery sector, they would tell me stories about some of the practices that were being suggested to them, with respect to related practices like shrinkflation or perhaps more overtly problematic practices like the one the member is talking about.

I will share that while this piece of legislation does not address that directly, I would also commend the House for recently passing the bill brought forward by the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells, which does some work to address this problem around transparency. There are also tools through the Competition Bureau.

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The kind of practice the member is talking about is unacceptable and we will get to the bottom of it.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I met a business owner in my riding who was a Measurement Canada authorized service provider. He even made his own calibration carts. He had extensive experience and had issued over 450 certificates.

One day, Measurement Canada suddenly changed inspectors. The inspector did a test, but it was not based on the specifications of my constituent's calibration cart, which he had invented and which was approved by Measurement Canada. He was told that his workers had failed the test. He asked for a review. Measurement Canada stood firm. He was suspended.

I met with the minister's parliamentary secretary. The president of Measurement Canada told me that this business owner was entitled to an independent appeal, but basically, that never happened. He was suspended and lost his business.

Is there a mechanism in Bill S-3—

• (1640)

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the hon. member to give the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry a chance to respond.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, the story my colleague just told is very disappointing. The effect of the bill will be to help providers participate in the economy. I am willing to talk to the member after or during the debate to get a better understanding of what happened with that particular business. The purpose of the bill is to help providers have a good relationship with Measurement Canada so that they can bring their products to market.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the comments the member has put on the record with regard to Bill S-3, because it is a very important piece of legislation from a consumer awareness perspective. A member from the Conservative Party highlighted an issue, which I believe was in a CBC report, where an investigation was done and there were some grocery chains with questionable behaviour. Hopefully, we understand and appreciate just how valuable this legislation is when it comes to trade and commerce. Whether it is from a consumer point of view or in terms of broader trade, the tools that are used for weights and measurements are critically important. This is why it is important that we modernize the act.

I wonder if the member can provide his thoughts on the importance of the modernization aspect.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, yes, this is about modernization. It has the intention to both protect consumers and unleash new innovations. For instance, the provision to allow businesses to introduce a new measurement device into the marketplace while awaiting evaluation and approval by Measurement Canada is a real game-changer. It allows those innovations to come to market, to be tested and to be deployed. Again, I am thinking of the comments from my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île. We can hopefully get the kind of relationship between providers, Measurement Canada

and the end users of these products, which are other businesses, as this is generally in the business-to-business space, where we can create a more dynamic economy where these devices are coming on board more quickly, while doing the key consumer protection work that is at the core of what Canadians expect.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to correct something that my colleague across the way mentioned in his speech. He mentioned that his party was the one that was for all sorts of energy, and that the party across the way was the one that was stuck on only one form of energy. I will directly contradict that, because my party, this opposition party, His Majesty's loyal opposition, believes strongly in all forms of energy and how they fit in a mix that is both sustainable, which is very important, and affordable, which is very important to Canadians, but also reliable. The number one thing in any energy system is the reliability of that energy system.

I also note that my colleague's background was to visit a policy upon the people of Ontario that cost them billions of dollars and ramped up the Province of Ontario to the highest debt of any subnational jurisdiction in the world because of horrible energy policies. It has taken the Province of Ontario a decade to try to dig out from those horrible energy policies.

I ask the member if he would like to consider the broad mix, and why his party would continue to be so prejudicial against one of the most sustainable forms of energy we have in Canada and around the world.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, I want to inform my colleague from Calgary Centre and the House that Alexandre Moreau, our parliamentary internship program intern, who was in his office, assisted me with some of the research for this speech. However, any errors, including the one the hon. member is alleging, are definitely my own.

Perhaps I will take the opportunity to talk about the record of the Wynne and McGuinty governments, in which I served as a staffer, another time, but I will invite my colleague, if he is indeed supportive of that broad range of opportunities in the clean energy space, to get behind our clean electricity strategy, the rebates for electric vehicles and our electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy.

• (1645)

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, to add to what I said earlier, there does not seem to be an independent appeal process at Measurement Canada. Every time a business in my riding has filed an appeal, it is always the same people issuing the same judgment every time. I even participated in a third hearing, which was supposed to be independent, but they completely disregarded the case file and the reasons why my constituent—who is an entrepreneur—had been suspended. He then took the matter to court, but he did not have the same level of resources as Measurement Canada. He lost on a technicality. In the end, he lost his business, which was his life's work.

We could discuss this further, and I thank my colleague for his openness. However, should there not be an ombudsman or an appeal process? I would think that is important.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, the idea of an appeals process when Measurement Canada and suppliers are in dispute warrants further consideration. We can look into that in committee.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Riding Mountain, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, Taxation; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Pharmacare.

[English]

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I start my speech, I would like to make sure that I get unanimous consent from the House to split my time with the member of Parliament for Edmonton Southeast.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, at first glance, Bill S-3 looks like one of those technical bills that only policy specialists would read cover to cover, but the truth is that it touches something Canadians care about very deeply: fairness in everyday transactions. Measurement is money, and we cannot manage what we do not measure, at the end of the day. The two go hand in hand.

When a family pulls into a gas station, the number on that pump is not an abstraction. It is the difference between what they plan to spend and what they actually spend. When a parent buys groceries priced by weight, such as fruit, vegetables and meat, the number on the scale and the label is not a suggestion. It is the basis of the price at the checkout. Thinking about product inflation, that is what this means at the end of the day. That is why trade measurement laws exist in the first place: to protect consumers, to ensure fair competition and to maintain confidence that the marketplace is honest.

Bill S-3 is presented as an update to that system, an attempt to modernize the Weights and Measures Act and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act and to repeal outdated fee provisions in the regulations.

“Modernization” is not a bad word. In fact, it is necessary. These statutes were last substantially updated decades ago, and the world has changed. Measurement today is more digital, more software-enabled and more complex than the world of paper processes and legacy devices that shaped the original framework. The key question is not whether modernization is needed, because it is. The key question is whether Bill S-3 would modernize the system in a way that improves transparency, protects affordability and avoids creating new layers of red tape, or whether it shifts too much power into discretionary processes that Canadians cannot easily see, understand or challenge.

My Conservative colleagues and I support modernization that protects consumers and supports innovation, but Parliament must ensure that the tools are accountable and not overreaching. That is the lens through which I will address this bill today.

Bill S-3 contains a set of targeted amendments that can be grouped into a few themes.

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First, it would update and clarify the roles and authorities of the minister, inspectors and, under the electricity and gas statute, the president of Measurement Canada in the approval, verification and inspection of trade measurement devices.

Second, it would introduce the ability to inspect devices and meters by sampling: examining a representative set of devices of the same class, type or design and applying the results accordingly.

Third, it would create temporary permissions to allow certain measuring devices and certain electricity or gas meters to be used on a temporary basis under conditions set by the regulator, even without the usual approval or examination steps: again, under defined conditions and with notice and an opportunity to make representations in the event of suspension or revocation.

Fourth, the bill would expand and modernize inspection powers, including the ability to access and reproduce data from computer or telecommunication systems, and it would treat remote access by telecommunication as a form of entry for the purposes of inspections. It would also enable telewarrants in certain contexts.

Fifth, it would add compliance tools aimed at preventing or remedying contraventions, such as orders requiring corrective or preventive measures and directions regarding compliance procedures.

Sixth, it would repeal certain outdated regulatory provisions, including prescriptive fee schedules and legacy requirements, and it would introduce mandatory reviews every 10 years, with reports to be tabled in Parliament.

That is the architecture of the bill, and it is precisely because the bill would create new tools, new flexibilities and new forms of rule-making that transparency and affordability have to be at the centre of our scrutiny.

For Canadians, the system works only if it passes what I call the trust test. Do Canadians believe that when they pay for 50 litres of fuel, they get 50 litres? Do Canadians believe that when government changes the rules, those changes will protect them, not increase costs that get quietly passed on?

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Let me give the example of biofuels. When we bought 50 litres of fuel at a gas station, it used to be petroleum fuel, and we got a certain distance with it. When it is watered down with biofuels, we get less distance. Therefore, when buying a tank of fuel, are we really buying a tank of fuel or are we buying the distance from A to B? Suddenly, that distance got shorter with the government-imposed clean fuel regulations, and Canadians did not seem to notice.

That is where governments lose trust. Suddenly, we are paying more and getting less. That leads to inflation. It leads to costs to society. It leads to inefficiencies throughout society.

● (1650)

Those questions may sound simple, but they are fundamental, because the moment consumers lose confidence, it is not merely a technical failure. It becomes a cost-of-living issue, and that is why I want to highlight something that came out clearly during the Senate committee study of the bill.

During the banking, commerce and the economy committee's hearings, Senator Elizabeth Marshall, an auditor by profession, put her finger on the public mood. She noted that when she spoke to people about what Parliament was studying in Bill S-3, people were suspicious and feared it would end up costing them more. It comes as no surprise, but that cynicism exists for a reason. Canadians have lived through too many examples where modernization meant new administrative costs, new compliance burdens and new uncertainty, and then those costs appeared later in higher prices. The task before the House is not simply to update a framework. It is to ensure that the updated framework actually produces confidence, clarity and affordability.

I want to step back for a moment, because there is a broader principle here, one that connects directly to consumer trust and affordability.

Trade measurement works, because people believe the rules are fair and the system is transparent. When the rules are clear, published and consistently enforced, people have confidence. The same principle should apply to government itself, especially when it comes to public money. Canadians deserve clear, transparent reporting about how government presents key fiscal indicators, because those indicators are used to justify spending decisions, borrowing decisions and policy decisions that affect affordability for every household.

One reason Canadians get frustrated is that fiscal headlines can be built on different definitions that produce very different impressions. Even in the public debate, we can see dispute about how to measure debt and how to compare it across countries.

For example, Statistics Canada reports net debt measures in ways that can include or exclude major public pension funds, like the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan, precisely because those funds are different from other financial assets and are not supposed to be available for general spending to the government. These are Canadians' pensions, not the government's slush funds. Commentators have pointed out that when we include pension fund assets in net debt comparisons, it can materially change the picture, sometimes making the country appear less indebted on

that metric than it would under a normal debt approach. At the same time, reporting bodies like the Parliamentary Budget Officer may treat pension plans differently when assessing assets held by the federal government.

My point is not to litigate every accounting standard in a speech. My point is simple: Canadians deserve transparency. They should be able to see what measure is being used, what is included, what is excluded and why. When definitions change and when headline numbers rely on assumptions that are not clearly explained, trust erodes. When trust erodes, cynicism grows. Cynicism matters, because it shapes how Canadians respond to policies that touch their wallets and therefore their lives.

The message is: Show your work, publish the assumptions, use plain language and make it easy for taxpayers to understand. That is how governments earn confidence, and that is how we protect affordability, not just at the pump and at the checkout, but in the long-term decisions that shape our economy.

Lastly, the bill before us deserves serious committee study focused on transparency, guardrails and cost impacts, and why the Liberal government should proceed in a way that has put consumers and affordability at the centre of the work here.

● (1655)

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

Mr. Speaker, consumers and the issue of affordability is the primary motivation for bringing the legislation forward and looking at what the Senate has done. I welcome the opportunity to see the bill go to the standing committee where some of the questions can be posed and concerns can be expressed. I do believe in the importance of the legislation and how it would protect trade and commerce here in Canada.

Does the member have some specifics already that the Conservative Party is looking at bringing forward in the form of amendments, or is it just more of a general comment at this point in time?

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, the specifics are going to be determined at the industry committee, so there are many questions here about how we make sure we maintain trust in the measurement systems across the country. Those analyses, as my colleague across the way knows, happen when we dig into the legislation and make sure we bring forth the amendments that would maintain trust. In the House here today, we have gone through a question and answer session about how we need to build on the principles, but the details, as he knows, will be ironed out at the committee level.

I believe it is the industry committee. If he would like to attend, I am certain the committee would enjoy having him there.

[Translation]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for a very interesting speech.

I have two questions for him.

First, in my colleague's constituency of La Pointe-de-l'Île, there is a company that has had problems with Measurement Canada. The appeal processes proved to be truly ineffective, inefficient and flawed, and justice was not done. I wonder if my hon. colleague would be in favour of creating an appeal process for Measurement Canada decisions that is more accessible so that businesses can defend their right to have their say and to have decisions reconsidered. Would an ombudsman be an option?

Second, Bill S-3 appears to grant greater powers to the minister. Is giving the minister more powers in this area a good thing for us, as parliamentarians?

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague on the first question, namely whether there is too much red tape in the Measurement Canada process for our colleague's constituents. Yes, we need to be more efficient in resolving the situation.

Regarding the second question, which touched on the minister's regulatory powers, I believe Parliament is more focused on legislation. Perhaps this aspect will be explored in greater detail by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, which is due to examine this matter.

• (1700)

[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Calgary Centre for bringing some more information to this very interesting subject.

Is he aware whether the government has done a cost analysis on the cost to government and industry for these changes in the regulations?

Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I have not asked the government for any kind of cost analysis. Whenever we see these bills, and often as parliamentarians we get to see these bills, we get to scratch into them. I did not know before I looked at this bill that there was a president of Measurement Canada and a whole bureaucracy around it. I imagine the cost of the administration of that is one thing. I hope that cost is not going to go up in this bill's examination, that it contains the cost of that structure and does not build another empire here. That is one of the main things I want to make sure we accomplish at the committee level.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians hear that Parliament is debating a bill about weights and measurements, gas pumps, grocery scales and utility meters, they might assume this is a technical issue, but the bill touches something Canadians experience every day, the moment they pull up to the gas pump, the moment they scan their groceries and the moment their utility bill arrives at the end of the month. The bill touches on trust, because at the most basic level, Canadians expect one simple thing: that if they pay for something, they should get what they paid for.

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Bill S-3 promises to modernize Canada's trade measurement laws, legislation that has not been touched meaningfully nor updated since the 1980s. The bill would update how we regulate gas pumps, grocery scales, electricity and gas meters. It would introduce tools like sample-based inspections. The bill presents reasonable objectives. Modernization is necessary. Technology has changed. The economy has changed. Our laws should reflect this reality.

Conservatives believe in a fair marketplace. We believe in protecting consumers. We believe that when Canadians pay for a litre of gas, a kilogram of food or a unit of electricity, they should receive exactly that.

We support the bill, but there are some concerns. We are right to ask whether more government power means better outcomes for Canadians or just more bureaucracy. We support fairness. We support modernization, but we need to look closely to ensure that the bill does not come at the expense of accountability, transparency and affordability. This is exactly why the bill needs to be studied in committee.

Committee is where Parliament does its real work, but committees in this place are changing. Over the past number of days, serious concerns have been raised about how committees would be structured and controlled. Conservatives have been clear that if the government uses its forced, unelected majority to limit scrutiny, it could weaken transparency and accountability. If committees stop functioning as places of independent scrutiny, then where does accountability happen?

I sit on the science and research committee. We have worked well together and addressed important issues because there has been a balance. We can have critical views of current policy, as this is how we test these policies. Like many committees, that balance is at risk. There may be two new Liberal members. While I have no ill will toward the individuals, changes to committee composition would give government the power to shut down debate and critical thinking in the committee room.

The bill would expand powers. We need to examine how these new powers would be used and whether Canadians would be properly protected. That only works if committee is allowed to be critical. The government cannot ask for more government powers while controlling the very committees meant to hold the powers accountable.

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The bill is very important, because it is about ensuring Canadians get what they pay for, but Canadians across this country are asking a much bigger question: Can they afford what they are paying for at all? Right now, Canadians feel like they are paying more and getting less. Grocery prices have risen dramatically. Food inflation has reached levels not seen in decades. Gas prices have gone up. Utilities have gone up. At the same time, wages are not keeping pace, savings are shrinking and families are relying on credit just to get by.

Families in my riding are having to choose between paying their bills and putting groceries on the table. Grocery prices are up 25% over just a few years. Prices are still rising year after year. Beef, vegetables and dairy continue to climb.

● (1705)

The average family is expected to spend over \$1,000 more for food this year alone. Families are cutting back. Parents are making difficult choices. Seniors on fixed incomes are stretching every dollar.

What is the government doing about this? Canadians got the answer yesterday. The Prime Minister's spring economic update unveiled what can only be described as a costly credit budget that would double the deficit left by the previous Liberal government. That means more cost, more taxes, more debt and more inflation for Canadians. Canadians are now paying \$59 billion a year just in interest on the debt. That is up by 10% in a single year. It is now more than we spend on health care transfers and more than the government collects in GST. Members can think about that.

Every Canadian family is effectively paying about \$3,400 a year just to service the federal debt. That is money not going into groceries, not going into housing and not going into savings. Yesterday alone, the government added another \$37 billion in new spending. At a time when Canadians are struggling with affordability, the government is pouring more fuel on the fire, so when Canadians feel like everything costs more, they are right.

This bill would modernize the inspection framework at the gas pumps. The government regulates these pumps to make sure that people are getting the exact amount they are paying for. This would make sure that Canadians are not being ripped off, but Canadians are not thinking about inspection frameworks when they are standing there watching the numbers climb. They are thinking, "How much is this going to cost me?" Gas prices do not affect just commuters. They affect everything. They drive up the cost of food, goods and transportation. Those costs are built into the price of everything Canadians buy.

That is why the Conservatives are calling for real relief. We are saying to scrap the federal taxes on gas and diesel for the rest of the year, remove the fuel excise tax, remove the GST on gas and diesel, remove the industrial carbon tax and remove the fuel standard tax. That would mean real relief of up to 25¢ per litre and over \$1,200 of savings for a family this year. The bigger issue is not just whether the pump is accurate; it is whether Canadians can afford to use it. Instead of following our plan, the Prime Minister cut only a third of the taxes for a third of the time. Again, the Liberals care more about regulations and control than they do about Canadian wallets.

This bill is about trust, but trust is not built through regulations alone. Trust is built through outcomes. At its core, Bill S-3 is about trust in the marketplace. It is about making sure that, when Canadians pay for something, they receive what they pay for. Canadians deserve a marketplace that is fair. They also deserve a government that is transparent, restrained and focused on making life more affordable.

We will support this bill moving forward. We will ask hard questions, push for accountability and work to ensure that the legislation serves Canadians.

● (1710)

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

Speaker, I can assure the member that this legislation's primary purpose is to not only modernize a very important aspect of our measurement and weight system but also to protect our consumers. The government is very, very much aware of the affordability issue. It is one of the reasons, for example, that we have the groceries and essentials program. It is one of the reasons that we continue to support relief at the pump. It is one of the reasons we are giving a substantial tax break to literally millions of Canadians.

This legislation is meant to continue to reinforce the importance of consumer confidence. We recognize that there are some serious issues out there. It is important that the legislation passes.

I understand the member opposite supports the principle of the legislation and would like to see it go to committee. I applaud him on that, and I look forward to the bill going to committee.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, we, in essence, support the legislation. We support the rationale behind the legislation. Conservatives support the idea that consumer fairness should be at the core of every step the government takes.

The hon. member raised two questions: one about the rebates that they are offering to Canadians and one about the bill being studied in the committee. Our position is to scrap all of the carbon taxes. The Liberals are just half listening to us. They only decided to get rid of 15¢ per litre. We are asking for 20¢ per litre. That would save a family over \$1200 per year.

Why do we not leave more money in Canadians' pockets so they do not have to look to the government for rebates and they do not have to look to the government for handouts?

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, regarding Bill S-3, I want to hear my colleague talk about the context in his province. At home in Quebec, we have Hydro-Québec and Énergir. In the new context of a majority government, we are going to see more than ever the government, in this federal system, try to interfere in Quebec's jurisdictions and give itself more powers. The Bloc Québécois wants to make sure that Hydro-Québec and Énergir are at least heard in committee. We want to ensure that Quebec's jurisdictions are respected and that the minister refrains from interfering even more.

What does my colleague think about our desire to ensure that Quebec's jurisdictions are respected in this area?

[English]

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to provincial jurisdiction, we must respect it. For any bill that comes to the House and goes to committee, the committee should decide, based on its rationale and based on logic, why the bill should or should not be passed and what changes should or should not be made.

Answering the question, yes, any subject that comes under section 92 of the Constitution of Canada shall be left to the provinces, and anything that has a larger impact on the entire nation shall be dealt with accordingly.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has noted that red tape alone is costing businesses \$18 billion a year. Red tape and regulations are strangling Canadian businesses.

I wonder if my colleague thinks that perhaps the Liberal government could introduce legislation to reduce some of this burdensome red tape rather than relying on the Senate to bring in a bill that has a relatively low impact on supporting businesses.

• (1715)

Jagsharan Singh Mahal: Mr. Speaker, my seasoned colleague has experience working in the House, debating on different committees and going through different pieces of legislation. That is a genuine concern.

Let us get rid of red tape. Instead of building it, let us get rid of red tape and focus on the results. Let us make sure that the legislation that we pass does not burden the common Canadian with additional red tape. Rather, let us focus on the results. Let us cut it short and focus on the results, so that Canadians can afford to pay their mortgages, buy a an affordable home and have an affordable life.

[Translation]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to be by saying that the Bloc Québécois supports the idea of modernizing the Weights and Measures Act. We have a lot of questions, and there will be a lot of work to do in committee in order to hear from a number of experts on the matter, given that this is a highly technical and specialized issue.

Before discussing the substance of the bill itself, I would like to share a story about a business that ran afoul of Measurement Canada. It demonstrates that the current appeals process and the lack of an ombudsman pose a major problem. This took place in the

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constituency of my colleague and friend, the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île. I want to share the sad story of an entrepreneur from his constituency who ran afoul of Measurement Canada.

This is the story of Mr. Lamontagne, president of a company called C.E.L.L. Inspection Inc., which was incorporated at the time these events took place. The company inspected commercial gasoline dispensers for accuracy and compliance. It was suspended by Measurement Canada in 2018 through a procedure that appears unusual and less than transparent.

Here is some background information. Between 2006 and 2018, Mr. Lamontagne was president of C.E.L.L. Inspection, which became an authorized service provider employing a number of technicians accredited by Measurement Canada. The company issued over 450 certificates, some of which relied on a method that Measurement Canada had approved. That method eventually led to the company's suspension.

C.E.L.L. Inspection worked with various types of volumetric standards, including some leased from Mr. Lamontagne, who also manufactured patented volumetric standards approved and certified by Measurement Canada. The use of these volumetric standards is what led to the problem. According to Mr. Lamontagne, these vapour retention volumetric standards were more accurate than the major brand-name volumetric standards recommended by Measurement Canada. In some respects, this may have worked to the advantage of the big oil companies. They were therefore using a more accurate technology that was recognized by Measurement Canada, and that would end up causing a problem.

Here is a brief review of the facts. In February 2018, a new inspector came to evaluate two C.E.L.L. Inspection company technicians, although she refused to consider the methods used for the vapour retention volumetric standard by the manufacturer, Jacques Lamontagne, even though these methods were approved by Measurement Canada. The Measurement Canada inspector abruptly ended the inspections after telling one technician that she had failed, but without offering a clear explanation or discussing the matter, meaning that she did not provide the usual guidance.

C.E.L.L. Inspection repeatedly requested the results and detailed reports on the tests from Measurement Canada, including through its lawyers in April 2018. Measurement Canada responded more than three months later with two notices of violation. The company responded to both violations, completed three corrective action plans and attended a meeting at which the company still did not receive a detailed report. Instead, it received its own corrective action report, which was amended with certain passages withdrawn and a few notes from the inspector.

C.E.L.L. Inspection then received an email from Mathieu Parent, a senior program officer at Measurement Canada, notifying it of its suspension. At that point, there were still two other certified technicians who could have continued to do tests for the company.

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As member of Parliament for La Pointe-de-l'Île, my friend and colleague became aware of the issue and contacted the office of the then minister of innovation, science and industry, Navdeep Bains.

My colleague then held a conference call with Marc Gervais, director of parliamentary affairs for the Hon. Navdeep Bains, Measurement Canada president Diane Allan and Mr. Lamontagne. It was stated during the conference call that an independent appeal process could be undertaken.

C.E.L.L. Inspection therefore filed an appeal. However, this procedure consisted solely of an internal review of the case, without a hearing at which Mr. Lamontagne and his attorney could have presented their case. The revised decision was communicated on December 6, 2019, in a letter from Nathalie Campeau, regional director of Measurement Canada. It stated that the suspension was upheld, still in general terms, without specifically addressing the arguments put forward by Mr. Lamontagne and his lawyer.

• (1720)

C.E.L.L. Inspection filed a second appeal in January 2021, where Mr. Lamontagne was able to discuss his case via a conference call and email exchanges. The second review resulted in a brief two-page document that reiterated the suspension and indicated that, if his specific calibration setup required a unique operating sequence, then he should inform the regional volumetric specialist, even though his technology had already been approved and certified by Measurement Canada's chief engineer. It was just a formality when he was told that he needed to mention this.

My fellow MP then attended Mr. Lamontagne's third appeal hearing. Initially, the president of Measurement Canada said that she wanted to exclude the parties involved in the first and second appeals along with their reports. Excluding the previous parties from the decision-making process may have seem justified since this was an independent appeal, but failing to review and use the information on the facts that led to the suspension and resulted in it being upheld during the previous appeals was unusual to say the least. Looking into the facts that led to the suspension was clearly no longer a priority. Instead, the president tried to get C.E.L.L. to take further steps to regain its certification by refusing to compensate the company. She then broadly reiterated the previous decisions.

Ultimately, Mr. Lamontagne took legal action, but he did not have the same resources as the team of lawyers at Measurement Canada. As a result, he lost his first appeal on a technicality. For lack of resources, he could not pursue a long process in court to win. Faced with an army of lawyers, he was forced to concede.

In short, there is the appearance of serious misconduct and an abuse of power by Measurement Canada, which caused significant harm to C.E.L.L. Inspection and the calibration trolley manufacturer Jacques Lamontagne. Even trolleys with designation certificates were suspended by Measurement Canada, as they even cancelled the meeting for their certification. There does not seem to be a formal appeal process in place for the decisions of Measurement Canada, the agency responsible for certifying gas pumps at big oil companies' stations.

My colleague and friend, the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île wrote letters requesting meetings with the successive ministers responsible at various stages of the process involving Mr. Lamontagne and C.E.L.L. Inspection, as suspensions fall under the minister's authority pursuant to the registration agreement. His first request to Minister Bains led to a meeting with the minister's director of parliamentary affairs and Diane Allan, president of Measurement Canada, during which it was agreed that Mr. Lamontagne could initiate an independent appeal process. Subsequently, during a meeting with the minister's parliamentary assistants, my colleague indicated that the company had merely been referred to Measurement Canada's supposedly independent appeals process. More recently, the former minister of industry, now Minister of Finance, was reluctant to intervene, noting that Measurement Canada is a quasi-judicial body.

I have just outlined the unfortunate situation in which a Montreal-based company was apparently the victim of an error by Measurement Canada, and where it did not appear possible to correct that error. This is a serious problem. Does Bill S-3 adequately address the changes needed to the laws to ensure that this situation does not happen again? That remains to be seen. It needs to be examined. This is very technical. Would it be helpful to establish a genuinely independent appeal process in the event of a dispute? We say yes, without a doubt. Should an ombudsman position be created for this purpose? That is also quite possible. This is worth pursuing and I urge the government to improve how appeals are handled in disputes and to improve the impartiality of the process when decisions that appear unfair are challenged. We will see.

To my knowledge, the company had to cease operations because a technician intervened. Measurement Canada swapped out their technician during the assessment, and this technician failed to recognize an instrument that was, in fact, more accurate and certified by Measurement Canada. Using her discretion, she was able to drive a business into bankruptcy. That is unacceptable. Subsequently, my colleague, accompanied by company representatives, met with the team of the minister responsible, who informed them that an independent appeal process was an option. In the end, there was nothing independent about it. The case had to go to court, pitting a small business against an army of lawyers employed by Measurement Canada.

In my view, a grave injustice has been done here. While it is, unfortunately, too late to rectify it now, I do hope that the legislation passed here will enable us to approve rules, practices, procedures and safeguards to ensure that unfortunate stories like this never happen again.

• (1725)

As I said at the outset, we will be voting in favour of the principle of the bill at second reading so that this highly technical bill can be studied in committee and so that the committee can hear from key witnesses such as Hydro-Québec and Énergir. Manufacturers of measuring instruments such as Mr. Lamontagne, president of C.E.L.L. Inspection, will be able to share their stories.

As usual, we will try to keep a close eye on this government, which, with each new bill, is giving itself more and more powers, in particular in the hands of ministers, as Bill S-3 proposes. Yes, this bill does give the minister greater powers. We will try to act responsibly and ensure that Quebec's prerogatives are not undermined by this bill.

Given the technical nature of this bill, its scientific jargon and the many provisions it contains, we will ensure that the work done in committee is as rigorous and thorough as possible. We realize that the legislative and regulatory framework needs to be modernized, and that Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada has called for just that, because the department believed, as the parliamentary secretary said in his speech, that the current framework lacked flexibility and was becoming outdated with the advent of new technologies.

Digital measurement systems and all software that can be associated with trade are not implicitly covered by the current legislation. Budget 2024 talked about the government's intent to modernize this legislation, in particular to ensure that the minister has the authority to “establish standards and provisions related to calibration, inspection, contractors and certification.”

As members may know, the bill has 59 clauses. The first few, clauses 1 to 27, amend the Weights and Measures Act to modernize the framework that governs measuring devices used in trade. While most of the amendments are technical in nature and consensus-based and seek to ease the bureaucratic burden, others deal with expanding the minister's authority, which must be justified, as I was saying. Questions are also being raised about the proposed suggestions regarding the authorization, certification and use of certain measuring devices. For example, clauses 3, 5 and 10 of Bill S-3 propose giving the minister new powers to approve and review measuring devices. One of the measures that is of concern to us at the moment is that the minister could designate an entity other than the National Research Council of Canada to calibrate and certify reference standards for inspections. Why is that necessary? That is the type of question we are going to ask her in committee.

As for clauses 12 and 13, despite the fact that the Department of Justice has indicated that the bill complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, this bill grants significant powers when it comes to inspections and telewarrants. In light of the story I just told, it will be interesting to hear the reasons why it is absolutely necessary to grant the government such powers.

I see that I am running out of time. I think I covered the key issues. I prepared a 20-minute speech, but I had a little less time than I thought, so I will stop there.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[English]

PREVENTING COERCION OF PERSONS NOT SEEKING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING ACT

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC) moved that Bill C-260, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medi-

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cal assistance in dying—protection against coercion), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we are familiar with the problem of people facing stereotypes based on immutable characteristics like race and gender, people being told that they are better suited to a particular kind of career path or that they are not fit to pursue certain subjects simply because of their personal characteristics.

Here in Canada, governments undertake to push back against this kind of stereotyping and to give life to the reality that people should not be pushed into presupposed categories. We pursue together an ideal of a Canada free from discrimination, of a truly just society. However, while this discourse and recognition is well developed across many dimensions of potential discrimination, we repeatedly fall short when it comes to recognizing and affirming the dignity, uniqueness, value and capacity of people living with disabilities and the elderly.

For too many people living with disabilities or aging, their experience is one not merely of being pushed into narrow boxes or categories but of something much worse. I ask colleagues here to imagine something. Imagine living a life in which interactions with people in positions of authority and other prominent social institutions often carry the explicit or implicit message that one is an object instead of a subject. All people think of themselves as, and indeed are, the protagonist of their own great story. Persons are not merely the potential recipients of someone else's support. Every person has a potentially heroic story arc of their own, a story arc that involves successes and setbacks and that brings triumphs and contributions that are consequential for the lives of others and for the communities in which they live.

Persons with disabilities are persons in this profound sense, yet many forms of discourse, rarely directly but often subtly, deny the agency, power and full humanness of those with disabilities. This is evident in the fact that those with disabilities are the only community wherein facilitated dying is offered to those who are not dying. The implication of this often unsolicited offer of death is not merely that they are better suited to a certain kind of vocation or career path but that these changes in capacity mean their life is no longer worth living, that they are useless and good for nothing.

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Members may be able to imagine regularly experiencing this kind of discourse directed toward them, the kind of extreme stereotyping and presumption that the famous playwright George Bernard Shaw defended in 1931. In his defence of eugenics, Shaw said, "I don't want to punish anybody, but there are an extraordinary number of people whom I want to kill, not in any unkind or personal spirit, but it must be evident to all of you, you all must know half a dozen people at least who are no use in this world, who are more trouble than they are worth."

There is a direct line between arguments about eugenics and uselessness presented by people like Shaw and the gas chambers, to which many with disabilities and others deemed "more trouble than they are worth" were ultimately consigned. The implication of some utilitarians is that people and things are to be valued based on their usefulness rather than on their inherent qualities. This way of thinking is wrong and dangerous, because it degrades people to something less than the bearers of inherent rights and instead regards them as mere tools for some other purpose.

As a friend once told me, "My greatest suffering doesn't come from my disability. It comes from trying to live up to the ideal of independence. It has taken time to realize that I am valuable for who I am and not just what I can do."

Moreover, it is always incorrect to think of any person as useless. Every person bears the capacity to shape the world through their love and connection with others. The process of losing some capacities and developing others can be a difficult and painful transition, but it remains true that all human beings have the power and the capacity to shape the world around them in meaningful ways at all stages of life and at all levels of ability.

Many of us will experience this transition. The community of those with disabilities is one that many of us will join later in life. It is very likely that I will one day be living with disabilities, as will many of those currently able-bodied who are listening.

I ask members of the House to reflect on what it would be like to be treated as if their life was without value or meaning. They likely would know, at least initially, that this was not true. They would know that they have meaning and power and significance and the will and ability to be part of a community in which they both give and receive love and care. However, the constant, contrary implication, especially from those in power who are supposed to be helping, would be wearing and painful. At some point, because of the social context in which all choices are made, someone might start to believe and accept these lies and contemplate things that they would never have contemplated before.

● (1735)

I know that there are some people who deny that this sort of dehumanization happens at all. They are like the people who suppose that racism must not exist because they have never experienced it. If someone is not part of a victim community in question, chances are that they have less familiarity with the phenomenon, but people who doubt these realities need only to open up and listen.

Listen first to Miriam Lancaster, a woman from Vancouver in her eighties. Last year around this time, she woke up with severe back pain and was taken to hospital. Miriam was immediately offered

MAID. Before any tests, diagnosis or discussion of symptoms, someone took one look at her and asked if she had thought about dying. Miriam made a full recovery. Six weeks later, she was walking her daughter down the aisle. I understand that her daughter joins us on the Hill today.

Miriam just celebrated another birthday. In the intervening time, she has travelled the world and even climbed a volcano on horseback.

There are many more of these stories. Meet David Baltzer, a Canadian hero from St. Catharines who did two tours of duty in Afghanistan. While struggling with a post-traumatic stress injury, he called Veterans Affairs Canada for help. Instead of receiving the help he was seeking, he received the unprompted suggestion of facilitated death.

Consider the story of Heather Hancock, a successful author living with cerebral palsy who had every desire to keep living. She was told by a nurse that she should do the right thing and consider MAID. The nurse told her that she was being selfish and that she was not living but merely existing.

There is the well-known case of Christine Gauthier, another heroic former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, and a Paralympian, an accomplished, successful, powerful woman who was simply fighting for a home wheelchair ramp. Instead of giving her the equipment she needed in order to live, bureaucrats proposed facilitated death and offered her the equipment for that instead.

Meet Kathrin Mentler. She faced mental health challenges and wanted to become a counsellor in order to help others. The Tyee reported on how she was treated in the midst of crisis:

Mentler found herself in crisis and took herself to Vancouver General Hospital's Access and Assessment Centre to get help.

"That day my goal was to keep myself safe."...she says

Mentler says she told the counsellor she was scared she'd "never not feel horrible." She also [discussed] her history of mental illness and self-harm.

Mentler says the counsellor then told her the mental health system was "completely overwhelmed,"...

"It was pretty disheartening and made me feel helpless," Mentler says. "I'm coming here because I'm looking for help and you're telling me there is no help."

That's when the counsellor [suggested to] Mentler [that she consider] medically assisted suicide.

Mentler says she was "shocked" and "sickened" because she came to the Access and Assessment Centre for help, "not for recommendations on how to kill myself."

These stories are not one-offs. They reflect the regular experience of many people with mental health challenges and with disabilities here in Canada, and also the experience of some people who are aging, as they interact with the health care system and other systems that are supposed to be providing them with services. As Krista Carr from Inclusion Canada told the finance committee, "People with disabilities are now very much afraid, in many circumstances, to show up in the health care system with regular health concerns." She later identified that she heard complaints from people with disabilities on a weekly basis about this problem.

This is the sad reality of what has come to happen in our Canadian society. People with challenges but also with immense potential and capacity are repeatedly being told when they try to access unrelated public services that they should die instead. On their behalf, I am begging colleagues in the House to listen to these cries for help and to work constructively on solutions.

Moved and angered by these stories, I have brought forward Bill C-260, a bill that would begin the vitally necessary process of affirming the dignity of the human person confronted by MAID coercion.

The current law allows people to pursue MAID, and it defines who can provide MAID, but the law is completely silent on the question of who can propose MAID. Due to this gap in the law, anyone can propose MAID: a counsellor, social worker, teacher, professor, parole officer, veterans services worker or CRA call centre employee. Literally anyone in a position of authority could tell a person seeking help that maybe they should die instead.

• (1740)

This gap in the law has left the door wide open for people who are seeking unrelated public services, who do not want to die, to have death repeatedly pushed on them, simply because of characteristics like age or disability. My bill seeks to begin the necessary process of filling this gap in the law by proposing legal limitations on what MAID and when MAID should be proposed to a person seeking public services.

Now, my bill is narrow in scope. It provides that a person cannot have MAID proposed to them by a bureaucrat in a case where they have not first asked for information about it. It only applies in cases involving a government employee in a position of authority or trust, and it exempts doctors and nurses. In cases where a bureaucrat in a position of authority or trust proposes MAID to a person who is not seeking it, Bill C-260 introduces a new Criminal Code offence, punishable on summary conviction. The penalty is minimal. The goal is not to punish people but to establish a standard and deter behaviour so that people with disabilities, the elderly and all Canadians can access public services without being treated as useless or expendable.

This bill is indeed modest. It starts a conversation and it establishes a minimum standard, something that all members of Parliament, I hope, should be able to get behind. If people do not think that Veterans Affairs Canada, caseworkers and other bureaucrats should be, out of the blue, proposing MAID to those who are seeking access to other public services, then please vote for Bill C-260 at second reading.

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Since tabling this bill, I have had a lot of conversations with veterans, people with disabilities and groups that represent them. Many people are very supportive of this bill. The biggest complaint I have heard about Bill C-260 is from those in these communities who say that the bill does not go far enough. MAID coercion is a massive problem for these communities and the bill's limitations and exemptions, particularly the blanket exemption for doctors and nurses, leave open the possibility for MAID coercion to continue in many contexts.

Now, from my end, I actually completely agree with those who would like this bill to go further. I agree that this bill does not address every instance of MAID coercion, and that there are many instances of coercive behaviour involving those who are not included in this bill. I also see this bill as a meaningful step forward. Today, people with certain characteristics are bombarded with the suggestion that they die, suggestions potentially coming from anyone and everyone who is responsible for offering them public services. My bill would significantly narrow the number of instances in which these suggestions can be made. It is an important step because it reduces that pressure and introduces a new concept into law, providing additional protection, even if it leaves certain kinds of situations unaddressed.

Bill C-260 does not seek to prohibit all conduct that is problematic or potentially problematic. It does not pretend to. However, the scope of this bill is designed to respond to the realities of this Parliament. I cannot pass a bill without at least some votes on the government's side. I have proposed therefore a bill that I believe is realistically calibrated to the sentiments here and a bill that would have a chance of helping us take a step towards confronting this problem.

I would also note that action to confront MAID coercion involving licensed professionals like doctors and nurses is possible at the provincial level. I was very pleased to see the passage of Bill 18 in Alberta, for example, which goes further than Bill C-260 by using provincial jurisdiction over health care to introduce protections which likely would not receive enough support to pass at the federal level. I want to congratulate justice minister Mickey Amery and all who have made this happen. Alberta is a safer place for all people as a result of their work.

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I hope that legislators in other provinces will join the fight against MAID coercion with their own provincial changes. Every legislator must look realistically at the chances of getting something passed in the place where they serve. Some provincial environments provide an easier context for more action. I hope that these opportunities will exist here in the near future, but I am doing my best with what we have for the time being.

The work of a legislator is always to try to turn their visions of an ideal society into practical and incremental steps towards a better world. I would like to see a society in which the dignity of the human person is always recognized and defended, but piling all aspects of such a vision into one piece of legislation is not the most productive way to move forward in the real world. Still, there is always the possibility of amendments that remove or adjust exemptions, and I will be supportive of those amendments as long as they do not imperil the bill as a whole. I invite those, who wish we had gone further, to support us at second reading and to make their case for those amendments when we come to committee. However, we need to win this vote in order for us to have that opportunity.

This is where high principle meets the world of practical politics until, perhaps, the configuration of Parliament allows us to do more. For my part, I will always defend the immutable dignity of the human person: the simple idea that human rights are for humans, including the elderly, the sick, those with mental health challenges, those with disabilities, the very old and the very young. This is something that a truly just society must ultimately recognize.

• (1745)

Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we believe in evidence-based decision-making as opposed to decision-based evidence-making. We heard language like “often unsolicited offers of death” and people being “bombarded with requests”. We heard several anecdotes that came well short, in my view, of coercion, but we only heard anecdotes.

My question for this member is this. This is proposing an amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada. What is the evidentiary basis? Is there anything more than second- and third-hand, unproven anecdotal stories?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am very surprised to hear the parliamentary secretary for veterans affairs speak in this way given the preponderance of testimony we have heard on this subject. He should know that the veterans affairs committee has heard from many veterans who have raised this concern. They have highlighted friends of theirs who have had the same issues who are afraid to speak out, for understandable reasons. We have had many instances involving multiple different caseworkers in different provinces where these concerns have been brought forward. I mentioned testimony from Inclusion Canada that weekly hears complaints from people living with disabilities who bring these issues forward.

I would say this as well to the parliamentary secretary. He is wrong, but let us suppose that he is right, let us say this happens very rarely, my bill says it should not happen at all. Therefore, even if he thinks this does not happen very often, then he should still

support the bill, because it prevents this from happening in the cases where it does.

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech. The intent of the bill is to amend the Criminal Code to make it an offence for certain people, in an end-of-life situation, to initiate a discussion about all the options available to a person who is suffering. This is based on discussions. Instead of the offence being based on an employee's behaviour, something else should be done. There are people everywhere, maybe even here, who would not be beyond reproach, yet this bill would amend the Criminal Code to make that an offence. It makes no sense.

[English]

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I will explain again what the bill does. Those in positions of authority who are not doctors and nurses, that is, who are not supposed to be involved in the provision of MAID at all, are not to bring up MAID to a person who has not asked for information about it. If one is calling Veterans Affairs Canada, visiting their parole officer, consulting with a professor or meeting with a social worker and seeking help for unrelated services, and out of the blue that service provider tells that person that they should pursue MAID, this bill says that is inappropriate. If the members of the Bloc do not agree with it, they are welcome to vote however they like on this bill. However, I think most Canadians would say that it is common sense that if one calls Veterans Affairs Canada asking for help getting a stairlift, and the person on the other end of the line who is in a position of authority says they cannot get that stairlift for them, but asks if they have ever thought about dying instead, that is inappropriate. That should not be happening. The fact that it happens a lot means it should be stopped.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his work and his advocacy for the vulnerable. I do not think there is a stronger voice in this House for that, so I thank him very much.

I wonder if perhaps he could comment on some of the other groups that are supportive of his measures. He mentioned Inclusion Alberta, which is wonderful, but I wonder if he could mention some of the others. Apparently, people on the other side of the House think this is not an issue to be attended to.

Private Members' Business

● (1750)

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I want to be transparent with the member that a lot of the feedback I have received from Canadians living with disabilities and organizations that represent them is that they want us to go much further. They would rather the bill did not have the exemptions it does and would like it to go much further. I am very sympathetic to that. I would like it to go much further as well, but I think we hear from the questions that we are still at a level where people in this House are struggling to listen to those with disabilities and even understand and appreciate that this is a problem at all. Therefore, I would encourage members to open their ears, to talk to people with disabilities in their communities and to understand the problems they are facing in this regard.

Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, medical assistance in dying is deeply personal. It is also exceptionally complicated, with ethical, religious, constitutional and political elements. Members should make no mistake: Bill C-260 is the most recent instalment in the Conservative pattern of repeatedly sowing fear among communities of faith.

During last year's election campaign, many Canadians bought into the Conservative messaging that the Liberals planned to remove charitable status for faith-based organizations. This, of course, was not true and has never come to pass, but the fear stoked by it mobilized voters and donors. The mission was accomplished, I suppose. Off the success of that misinformation campaign, we witnessed the drawn-out spectacle of the debate with respect to the exemption for religious speech as hate speech, where logic and precedent had no place, only fear, hyperbole and, yes, fundraising.

Communities of faith deserve better. They deserve respect. They can handle the truth. They can appreciate and understand nuance.

Today, then, is the latest attempt to use anecdotes and either anonymous or unverified accusations to build a case designed with fear in mind and faith communities as the target. Members should make no mistake: Bill C-260 is a solution in search of a problem. Nowhere is this more true than in the allegations we just heard with respect to veterans.

[*Translation*]

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, I can assure the House and all Canadians that the very foundation of Veterans Affairs Canada, its purpose, is to honour and commemorate those who have served in the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and to ensure that they receive the support they need after leaving the military.

Veterans have dedicated their lives to serving our nation, sometimes at great personal sacrifice. Canada owes them respect and care, as well as a commitment to help them live in dignity after their service ends.

It must be understood that medical assistance in dying was never a Veterans Affairs Canada program or service, and that employees were never directed or encouraged to discuss the subject with veterans. It has never been that way. It will never be that way.

[*English*]

In 2022, when it was brought to the department's attention that a Veterans Affairs employee spoke inappropriately about medical assistance in dying, VAC immediately apologized to the veterans involved, launched a comprehensive investigation and put safeguards in place to prevent something similar from ever happening again, including but not limited to robust training and unambiguous expectations of conduct. Simply put, MAID is not and never will be a policy of Veterans Affairs Canada. The investigation reviewed over 400,000 files dating back to 2016. It found that the inappropriate statements were not indicative of a systemic problem; rather, they were isolated incidents involving a single employee who raised the issue four separate times. That person is no longer employed at Veterans Affairs Canada.

If someone seeks advice on or assistance with medical assistance in dying, employees are trained to refer them to their primary care provider, as they do with respect to any other request for medical guidance. These measures, communicated clearly in writing and supported by ongoing training, reinforce VAC's commitment to providing veterans and their families with high-quality, respectful and appropriate support while maintaining strict boundaries regarding medical assistance in dying. Understanding the concerns, circumstances, needs and wishes of individual veterans allows VAC staff to then advise them on all of the benefits, services and programs for which they may be eligible.

● (1755)

[*Translation*]

Frontline staff also receives training on how to de-escalate difficult situations with clients and report significant incidents that require further attention. This ensures that any inappropriate comments are dealt with immediately. Training for employees who interact with veterans and their families includes official courses and structured on-the-job training.

Discussions and consultations with subject matter experts will help to reinforce the knowledge and skills of Veterans Affairs Canada employees as they carry out their duties. The department also sends regular reminders to frontline staff to ensure that expectations are clearly understood.

What is more, Veterans Affairs Canada provides additional on-the-job training specifically for case managers. These employees work directly, one-on-one, with veterans and their families to assess their needs and objectives, identify challenges and develop plans to help them access the information and services they need.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

Before interacting with clients, case managers must pass an intensive seven-week course. This practical, interactive learning experience allows them to learn while working with active, real-life cases as opposed to scenarios. The result is that case managers can hit the ground running, delivering services to veterans in as timely a manner as possible. Despite all of this, there are still moments when a veteran may raise the issue of medical assistance in dying. VAC officials are trained to explain the implications of such a decision on their families.

If a veteran has chosen to pursue medical assistance in dying with their primary care provider and shares this information with a member of the veteran service team, VAC staff can support the veteran in navigating benefits and services that are available. Support can include resource coordination and navigation, such as connecting a veteran and their family to community resources, mental health practitioners, grief counsellors, pastoral outreach or other local resources. It also includes a broad range of supports to help veterans and their families adjust to life after service.

[Translation]

If there are veterans who need help, I encourage them to contact Veterans Affairs Canada. One of Veterans Affairs Canada's core priorities is, and always will be, to provide practical and compassionate services to ensure that veterans have access to services tailored to their specific needs. These services include programs designed to promote physical health and well-being, as well as rehabilitation services. Medical costs, as well as compensation for service-related illnesses or injuries, may be covered by Veterans Affairs Canada.

I can assure members that every interaction with veterans is designed to help them thrive in life after service. Frontline staff at Veterans Affairs Canada undergo rigorous training to ensure they can guide clients to all the services, benefits, and programs to which they may be entitled.

● (1800)

[English]

High-quality compassionate support is a foundational part of the covenant our nation has with those who have worn the uniform. Ensuring that those who have served are served well is and always will be an unwavering commitment of this government.

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply moved by the topic of our discussion. Allow me to explain why. I will start by asking those present and those watching at home to raise their hand if they have cared for someone at the end of their life who sought medical assistance in dying. We are not alone.

We can ask people who have lived through the experience and people who are as afraid of this word as they are of the name "Voldemort". Some people are afraid of discussing death, but death is part of life. This evening, we are talking about a change to the Criminal Code and a serious offence because it involves talking about death. That is exactly the issue.

I would like to look back over Quebec's experience. The Parti Québécois opened the debate on medical assistance in dying back in 2012, as my colleagues will remember. Not only was it a human-centred process, it involved a highly collegial approach to human dignity. I want to commend Véronique Hivon for setting partisanship aside. Today, that approach is paying off.

In 2014, three years before my father passed away, the minister of health and social services, Gaétan Barrette, was spearheading this file with Ms. Hivon. All parties in the National Assembly reached an agreement, because they showed a willingness to understand. No one can understand what the individual is going through. Even I cannot understand, and I lived this experience for 20 years.

Quebec is not alone. MAID is also available in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Colombia, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Portugal and several of the U.S. states, to name just a few. Some of those places have had it for decades.

I would like to share my own story. It will make it clear that our issue is not with proposing a change to the Criminal Code. In 1997, I was very, very young. I still am, but that will not last forever. In 1997, we received devastating news. My father was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Those who knew Mauril Bélanger, who was a member of the House of Commons, know that it can progress very quickly.

In my case, in our family's case, it lasted 20 years. Over the course of 20 years, my father gradually lost his ability to move and take care of himself, and he had to rely on others. I had many discussions with my father. We never had an inclination to talk about the reality of what happens to all of us, that is, that we are born, we live and then we die. When the time came, when his physical and psychological suffering became unbearable, it made perfect sense to talk about it, but it was still extremely difficult.

Here is what I learned. I could not imagine losing my father, who was of sound mind but was suffering. He was the one who told me that we needed to talk about it and learn what options were available.

● (1805)

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but this is a very sensitive subject for me, and I can hear people having conversations. If they want to discuss medical assistance in dying, we can talk about it later outside the House—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I am going to interrupt the hon. member for a moment.

[English]

For colleagues who may not be listening to the interpretation, I would just that, if they are having conversations, to take them into the lobby.

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[Translation]

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle may continue her speech.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, we all have different abilities to focus. I tend to hear everything and see everything. It may be a character flaw, but noise bothers me. Members do not have to listen, but I would ask them to be quiet.

I will continue by sharing what I experienced and what I have seen over the past few years. I hope that my colleague who introduced this bill has had the opportunity to openly discuss the scope of the issue we are talking about. If someone is pushed to seek MAID as a way to escape suffering, that is of course unacceptable. We all agree on that.

However, in this case, the bill seeks to punish someone for having a discussion about possible care options that a person may turn to over the course of their life. That is something else entirely. We should be examining the behaviour of certain people who are supposed to show compassion to those at the end of life but who engage in unacceptable behaviour, such as systematically suggesting MAID on the grounds that the person seems to no longer be able to endure their suffering, as if we could simply offer them a way out. It is not as simple as that. I have experienced it. Those who raised their hands earlier have experienced it too.

There is a problem, and I hope that we will really take care of it. We are talking about treatment and care. We have been hearing about this for quite some time. The Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs is currently studying the partners in Canadian veterans rehabilitation services program. Right now, we are learning that some specialists do not have what it takes to support veterans, because they do not understand the realities, the trauma or the wait times veterans face. Some veterans have to wait three years.

I can understand when someone comes to the point where they are no longer able to endure what they went through after serving their country. They were told that they mattered, they dared to defend their homeland to the point of risking their own life, and then when they came home, they were told to take a number because they could not be served right away.

We are currently assessing whether the program is worthwhile and whether the service providers have the skills to meet the standard that veterans deserve. I think it is truly unfortunate that another tactic is being used today to avoid addressing the core issue. A committee is currently meeting. If we can speak openly together, people will understand that this bill makes no sense if the goal is truly to hold those who act maliciously toward people at the end of life accountable.

• (1810)

[English]

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sometimes when we debate bills such as this, we are debating a problem that could exist in the future or that may exist. In this case, that is not at all what we are talking about. We are talking about something that is not a hypothetical problem. We are talking about something that has happened and is happening to veterans in this country.

This is something that was raised quite publicly a few years ago. It was shocking and appalling, frankly, to have heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs stand in this House just a few minutes ago and say that this is a solution in search of a problem. He knows full well, and the government over there knows full well, that this has happened to veterans in this country. The men and women who bravely served this country are looking for help in order to live their lives. Instead, they have been asked if they have considered medical assistance in dying. I have heard from countless veterans who have told me that they, or others they know, have been offered this kind of thing.

When this veterans scandal broke a few years ago, the Liberals' response at the time, to something that I would say is a very massive scandal, frankly, was to say that they investigated themselves and it was just one public servant, whom they then fired. We heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, not too long ago, say that they put in place measures to ensure that this would never happen again, and that is it. They just washed their hands. That is great; all is wonderful.

However, the problem with this is that it contradicts the testimony and the claims of several other veterans who, both before and since, have claimed that they were also offered medical assistance in dying by different public servants. This includes being offered MAID by bureaucrats who were male, despite the government claiming it was only one female employee who had gone rogue, apparently.

Despite the government claiming that this issue has been put to rest, we put forward an Order Paper question, which returned a few months ago and revealed that there were behind-the-scenes lawsuits by families whose loved ones were, in fact, offered MAID by the Government of Canada, and that there was even a settlement paid and non-disclosure agreements signed. Do lawsuits, settlements and non-disclosure agreements sound like this issue has been put to rest? I think not.

We can establish the following three things. First, Canadians, certainly veterans, do not trust the Liberal government. Second, the Liberals have been far less than honest about the scope and prevalence of this issue. Third, they already had bureaucrats who were pushing medical assistance in dying on veterans who did not wish to have it, and veterans are continuing to raise the alarm that this issue is still occurring.

At the very least, we can dismiss the Liberal talking points that this issue has been put to rest and that there is no need for this legislation. On the one hand, Canadians have the Liberals' claims that this has stopped, despite the evidence to the contrary. On the other hand, we have dozens of veterans who are coming forward and pleading for help.

Private Members' Business

I will just engage for a moment in hypotheticals. Let us suppose the Liberals were telling the truth, that this issue was simply a rogue public servant and that they are entirely opposed to offering MAID to Canada's veterans. If this were the case, then they should be happily supporting this legislation, as it would codify what they claim to believe, which is that public servants should not be pushing euthanasia on veterans who do not wish to have it, especially those who are vulnerable and looking for help. In every case that I have heard about, that is exactly the situation that we are talking about here.

The Liberals like to claim, and we heard it even here today in the House, that this issue is just being manufactured, that veterans are making this up and that opposition MPs are making this up. They cite the fact that no veteran has approached them to reveal that these cases are happening. What they are failing to consider is that the dozens of veterans who have reached out to me and others concerning this issue are completely terrified of the retribution they will face if they come out publicly. This is not something they are imagining in their minds, because it has happened.

● (1815)

When these veterans are implored to come forward, they can easily look to the case of Christine Gauthier, a veteran and a Canadian Paralympian who bravely went public about being offered medical assistance in dying in 2022 when she was simply asking for help to get wheelchair access to her home. As a result of not having this, she would literally have to drag herself across a gravel driveway, because she is in a wheelchair, and up a couple of flights of stairs to get into her home. Instead of offering her the wheelchair access that she was looking for, the government said to her, "How about we offer you medical assistance in dying instead?"

After that story went across this country, and after Christine came to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs to tell her story, she was targeted by the government, which made her life a living hell. In the end it was other veterans groups, despite promises that were made by the Liberal government, that had to raise funds to build her a wheelchair access, because Veterans Affairs was refusing to process any of her claims.

Christine showed up at committee with a suitcase full of paperwork that Veterans Affairs had forced upon her as an excuse not to provide her with the help she needed. It offered her medical assistance in dying instead when she was not seeking it. She claimed that the burden VAC was putting on her and the difficulties it brought upon her were worse than any injury she had sustained.

How can the Liberals smugly sit there and say that they will not act unless veterans come forward, when the last veteran who did come forward was subjected to years of administrative abuse and sanctuary trauma by the very department she called out? It is clear that the Liberals cannot be trusted to have veterans' best interests in mind.

I would like to touch on veterans issues just a little more, because it is not just about this issue. In the time the Liberals have been in power, there have been nine different ministers of Veterans Affairs, and some of those ministers served in the role for only a few months before being shuffled on, which makes things clear to veterans. They see how unseriously the role of minister of Veterans

Affairs is being treated and how it is treated as a secondary role for Liberals.

All nine of those ministers claimed they would eliminate backlogs and would make sure veterans are helped, and that this would be their top priority, but in all cases those backlogs continued to increase. In fact 90% of the claims that are denied by Veterans Affairs are then later approved, decided in the veteran's favour, when they go to the Veterans Review and Appeal Board, which tells us that there is something clearly wrong with what is going on there. It is like an effort to deny veterans the help they deserve.

There is clearly a systemic issue, and ultimately it takes many years for most veterans to go through the whole appeals process. I think there is an attempt to frighten veterans off so the government does not have to pay them. Veterans often talk about a triple-D policy: delay, deny, die. Their claims are delayed, then their claims are denied, and what is really happening is that the government is hoping they will just go away and give up the fight.

Now, to make matters worse, officials are even offering to help with their death. No matter what one thinks about medical assistance in dying as a policy, I think we should all be able to agree that it should not be offered or pushed on those who do not want it, and that is what the bill would ensure. The bill seeks to make sure that people who do not wish to have medical assistance in dying do not have it pushed on them by government bureaucrats. Veterans should not have these kinds of things done to them when they are seeking help to live their lives. They should not instead be offered medical assistance in dying.

That is what the bill would do. It is all it would do. I hope all members will support it, because it is right for veterans and right for all Canadians.

● (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Resuming debate, we will go to the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. I will just inform the member that I will have to cut him off towards the end of his speech.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there is a great sense of disappointment from across the way. I am sure we could arrange to have unanimous consent so I would be able to finish the entire speech.

Having said that, I am a bit discouraged by the member who just spoke because he is trying to give a false impression. There are two issues that I would like to address: the very serious issue of MAID and the very serious issue of veterans.

I had the honour and privilege of serving in the Canadian Forces for just over three years. All of my postings were here in Canada, but I did walk side by side with World War II veterans in parades and had discussions in the legions immediately following the parades, as well as elsewhere. I can tell those who are following the debate that individuals will always carry their own personal opinions in regard to veterans, but to try to label the Government of Canada or the Prime Minister as anti-veteran does a great disservice.

If members want to make a comparison, I am all game. I sat in opposition when the leader of the Conservative Party of today was part of the group that cut nine Veterans Affairs offices in Canada. There were no apologies, no sincere, "We have to do this" or anything like that. There was no justification. It took having an election and having the then prime minister, Harper at the time, no longer in office to fix it. One of our first actions was to reinstate those Veterans Affairs offices that the Conservatives closed.

I have often seen members across the way try to argue a case that is just not true. We give the deepest amount of respect to the veterans of Canada. We recognize the valuable sacrifice that they have made for our nation. They are, in part, what make us the great nation that we are. I just want to be very clear on that particular point.

The parliamentary secretary who spoke prior to me talked about the report that shows that the department took an interest in the issue when it was brought to its attention. In fact, there was a consequence to it, and the department looked into the tens of thousands of files. We need to make sure that, as a government, we are clear that that sort of behaviour, for which the employee was released, is not acceptable. We made it very clear that there is zero tolerance for that sort of attitude.

Let us go now to the issue of MAID. Over the years, I have appreciated the different types of debates that take place on the floor of the House of Commons. They vary significantly. I recall the discussions that surrounded the MAID debate. Those who were around will know full well the degree to which the House took the issue seriously. They know of the many mechanisms that were put into place so that we could hear from professionals and from the many individuals experiencing having to make very difficult decisions, whether they were the individual having a medical issue, a family member or a very close friend. Members know of the many hours that were put in at the standing committee and of the overflow of emotions at the standing committee, from all political parties.

One of the first issues that we had to deal with when we came into government back in 2015 was the need to bring in MAID legislation because of a Supreme Court decision. I can recall very clearly when we had members standing up on all sides of the House, in tears, talking about personal experiences or reflecting on what was taking place in our standing committees.

● (1825)

I believe every single member who has been part of that debate, from the very beginning to this moment today, feels no one should ever feel pressured into a decision about their own health. This is something all of us agree on.

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This is a very personal decision. We should respect and look to those individuals who have the expertise, the understanding and the compassion. Human life is the most valuable thing we have. I would think that every member of Parliament, no matter what side of the House they are on, understands and appreciates that and would make decisions based on the information that has been put on the table and ultimately on the consensus that has been built.

Our courts have been very clear: As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility. Part of that responsibility is to work with other jurisdictions. We can establish laws, but we also need to recognize that provinces have a critical role to play. In fact, it is often a starting point when it goes to a court or a superior court. For example, there is the Province of Quebec and a follow-up decision that came after we had actually passed the legislation.

As a government, we have looked at ways we can review and have been open to the idea of changes, if needed. This is not something we should be taking lightly. At the end of the day, I believe it is about listening and responding in a loving, caring way. It is about doing the right thing.

In previous debates, we heard a lot about issues like hospice care, palliative care and the types of disability supports that exist. These are all things that were part of the original discussions and that continue to be discussed. We should continue to work at improving the conditions, but that means working with other jurisdictions like the provinces, which are responsible for the administration of health care. There are a lot of things we can do on this issue.

I need to wind up, so I will leave it at that for now.

● (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to do the late show. I want to begin with a brief comment, given that we are discussing the work of the health committee. We just received word that the CEO and president of Canada Health Infoway, Michael Green, has been fired by the Infoway board. As Canadians are finding out, Canada Health Infoway is a taxpayer-funded organization the Liberals funnelled \$300 million through to run the failed PrescribeIT program.

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This news comes just hours after Conservatives uncovered that Mr. Green pocketed over \$830,000 in taxpayer-funded compensation last year, which included a maximum performance bonus of over \$215,000. The only reason Michael Green was fired from Canada Health Infoway is that Conservatives exposed the Liberals' \$300-million PrescribeIT failure. The health minister had every tool to audit and evaluate Infoway, but instead she let the CEO of a failing program pocket millions in taxpayer-funded compensation, including maximum performance bonuses. Conservatives will not stop investigating PrescribeIT until we find out where every dollar went and who else got rich.

We are not here to discuss the \$300-million PrescribeIT scandal, though. We are here to discuss the \$1.5-billion interim federal health program scandal. Thanks to my colleague from Red Deer, Conservatives have uncovered that the Liberals have spent more than \$275 million on health benefits for asylum seekers whose claims were rejected by the government's own Immigration and Refugee Board. According to the Liberal government, rejected asylum claimants remain eligible for deluxe health benefits like physiotherapy, home care and speech therapy.

As such, my question is simple. Does the Liberal member believe it is fair that a rejected asylum claimant receives better taxpayer-funded health benefits than the Canadians who are paying for them?

Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians rightly expect public programs to be fair, responsible and sustainable. They expect that when people are seeking protection in Canada but are not eligible for provincial or territorial health insurance, the government manages that transition in a way that protects public health while maintaining the integrity of our health care system. That is the role of the interim federal health program, a program that has existed in some form since the 1940s.

The IFHP provides temporary limited health coverage to certain migrants in Canada who are not eligible for provincial or territorial health insurance, including those who are waiting for a final decision on their asylum claims or for their removal to be safely carried out. The program exists to ensure access to urgent and essential services. Without it, vulnerable people may delay seeking care, which can lead to more serious health issues, higher costs later on and added pressure on emergency rooms and public health. That is why the program must be understood as both a public health measure and a system management tool.

Let me be clear. The IFHP does not determine who is ahead or behind on health care wait-lists. Those decisions are made by provinces and territories based on medical needs. IFHP beneficiaries face the same wait times as all other residents. The IFHP provides health coverage, not faster or better access to health care. Moreover, the health needs of those seeking protection in Canada are important principles behind the program, and those who have filed asylum claims have the right to due process, which includes the right to appeal.

The IFHP is tightly managed. All claims are monitored, audited and subject to integrity controls so that the program remains available only to those who qualify. Pressures on the IFHP are largely

driven by higher asylum claim volumes and the length of time people remain in the system while awaiting a decision or removal. That is why our government has also taken action to reduce pressures on the asylum system. These actions are working.

Comparing January and February 2024 to the same period this year, asylum claims are down by almost two-thirds, and with Bill C-12, we introduced new eligibility and efficiency improvements, which will reduce the time individuals rely on temporary federal support. We also announced co-payments in budget 2025 to help keep supplemental health care accessible for eligible beneficiaries while responsibly managing growing demand. This will support the long-term sustainability of the program as it continues providing essential support to current and future beneficiaries. The co-pays, set to come into effect on May 1, could result in approximately \$126.8 million in savings in 2026-27 and \$231.9 million on-wards.

In short, the responsible way forward is not to create confusion about who is ahead in line. Instead, we need to keep the IFHP targeted and well managed to avoid increasing the burden on our publicly funded health system while reducing pressures through stronger system integrity and faster processing. That is exactly what our government is doing.

• (1835)

Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member did not answer my question, so I will ask it again.

Does the parliamentary secretary for health believe it is fair that rejected asylum claimants receive better taxpayer-funded health benefits than those Canadians who are paying for them, yes or no?

Maggie Chi: Mr. Speaker, the interim federal health program provides temporary limited coverage until beneficiaries are eligible for a comparable provincial or territorial health insurance. It is a bridge, not a substitute, and it does not determine placement on health care wait-lists, which are managed from provinces and territories based on medical needs. Without that bridge, vulnerable individuals may delay seeking care, which can increase the risk to public health and wait times in hospitals and emergency rooms. In this way, the IFHP actually helps reduce pressure on our health system. The program is tightly managed and only available to those who qualify.

Comparing January and February 2024 to the same period this year, we also see that asylum claims are down by almost two-thirds. Recent measures and legislation such as Bill C-12 ensure the IFHP remains fair, targeted and sustainable.

TAXATION

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the taxes that residents in my community pay every single day, specifically gas taxes.

I have requested this opportunity to speak in light of the Minister of Veteran Affairs' recent response to my question on April 14. Her response to my question on these gas taxes was as follows:

British Columbians are happy to hear that...we are making a reduction in fuel costs from now until Labour Day. British Columbians are going to use that to go and enjoy our country as they can this summer. Maybe they will also combine that with the Canada Strong pass as they go and explore this wonderful country.

The Liberal minister seems to be suggesting that the purpose of gas tax relief is to encourage more people to take a vacation or to go camping. As fellow British Columbians, she and I agree that our beautiful province certainly is a place families should explore, but it is not the main reason residents in my communities fill up their cars, trucks, vans or SUVs.

A family in Hedley does it to get to the grocery store or a hockey practice. A senior in Rock Creek fills up to attend medical appointments or check in with friends. A forestry worker in Christina Lake needs fuel to get to work and then to get home safely.

Driving is a fact of life for tens of thousands of residents in my community. That is not to mention the hauling, the transporting or the towing that empties our tanks even faster. Subways, electric buses and public bicycles, which I often hear Liberals talk about, are not available in the communities I serve. A job in the forestry, mining or agriculture sector does not just happen right down the street. It takes a lot of gas to get rural school buses going or to get essentials to rural supermarkets, not just in the spring or summer, but in the autumn and winter. That is why it is now costing a lot more.

Higher gas prices truly punish rural communities. That is why Conservatives are offering a full-year gas tax relief plan with zero federal tax on gas and diesel for the rest of 2026, paid for by ending Liberal spending on the gun buyback program, consulting fees and wasteful foreign aid. Our plan would eliminate the fuel excise tax, 10¢ a litre; the clean fuel standard, seven cents; and GST, eight cents, to save every driver 25¢ a litre. This would not just be savings at the gas station as people would also save when they buy an item that has to be shipped to our shelves, where higher transport costs mean bigger receipts.

The Liberal plan offers no excise tax on gas until Labour Day. Presumably, that is when Canadians will stop camping. Even now, with the Liberal plan in effect, Castanet reports that "prices at the pumps soared to their highest levels in years" today in the Okanagan, rising roughly 30¢ a litre from just the night earlier. In my home community of Penticton, every gas station today has it above \$1.90 a litre.

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My question to the government is as follows: Given these sudden and shocking increases and the instability in the Middle East, why does the member think Canadians will not need gas tax relief past Labour Day?

• (1840)

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, it is shocking to me to hear the hon. member talk as if somehow she believes we operate in a vacuum and apart from global forces beyond the government's control. Certainly, we do not control oil price shocks that are the direct result of the Strait of Hormuz being blocked. We did not start the war in Iran. It is not a conflict, unfortunately, that we can stop or control.

What we have done, and the members opposite know this very well, is suspend the excise tax on fuel. We cut the consumer carbon tax. Those combined are 28¢ per litre. That is saving families money.

What is concerning to me is that Conservatives do not stand up to support the very measures that we put in place to help families out with the cost of living challenges that the member rightly points out. It is not as if the government is somehow blind to the fact that Canadians are experiencing challenges due to shocks in the economy and that the prices of almost all goods have been rising for quite some time, since the aftershocks of the global pandemic. There has been one shock after another.

Again, we have offered the groceries and essentials benefit, which the members opposite did not support. They do not seem to want to put more money back in people's pockets. We offered a middle-class tax cut for 22 million Canadians. We also offered the Conservatives the opportunity, multiple times in the House, to support a national school food program, which feeds 400,000 kids per year. When the member opposite is talking about food prices and is concerned about the cost of living, she has actually chosen not to support feeding 400,000 kids and not to take those kids out of food bank lineups. What is strange to me is that the hon. member can stand in the House and lecture Liberals. It seems a little bit hypocritical for the hon. member to say that she cares about people's expenses and their cost of living challenges when she would not take 400,000 kids out of poverty.

We offered a package of supports with the groceries and essentials benefit—

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An hon. member: You do realize how ridiculous you sound.

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind the crosstalk. It actually encourages me quite a bit to keep telling the truth in the House. I know it is hard for the Conservatives to accept the truth sometimes.

We announced a package of supports, including the groceries and essentials benefit—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I am going to ask the member for Riding Mountain and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health to please cut the crosstalk.

I will let the hon. parliamentary secretary conclude.

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, the groceries and essentials benefit that we announced will put almost \$1,900 into families' pockets this year, which is significant support. I would offer that this is significant direct support to 12 million Canadians. We also offered immediate expensing for greenhouses and an injection of funds to the local food infrastructure fund, as well as \$500 million more in support through the strategic response fund geared toward supply chains in Canada.

We are also developing a food security strategy. I have long advocated for the fact that the Government of Canada needs to have not only a national food policy, which we developed back in 2018, but an actual food security strategy for the country. It is great to see us having made that commitment. Consultations are under way. I know that this plan will provide benefits to Canadians in the future, so that is exciting.

With all that said, we are also doing it well, managing the resources of the country in a responsible way. We have seen that the deficit, just in the spring economic update, is down by \$11 billion. That is significant. We have brought operational spending back into check, with reducing day-to-day operational spending over the time horizon.

• (1845)

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, we agree that recent gas price hikes were helped by the war in Iran, but will that be over by Labour Day, as the Liberals' policy suggests? Even if the U.S. and Iran ended the war tomorrow, the Pentagon has said it would take up to six months to fully clear sea mines from the Strait of Hormuz to restore shipping. That is not to mention the damage to oil and gas infrastructure hammered by missile attacks.

Conservatives believe it is more prudent to provide Canadians with higher, longer-lasting relief at the pump, given the uncertainty abroad. Nations like Australia, Spain and Ireland all cut their taxes more than Canada has in response. On average, Americans currently pay less at the pump.

Will the government take note of our Conservative plan and other plans abroad and cut the tax on gas for longer than just the summer?

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, it is great to have the member ask the question again. What I have pointed out in my response is that, every time the Conservatives say they want to do more for Canadi-

ans, we actually propose to do more, and they vote against it, so I do not know how to take the comments of the member opposite in the House at face value.

We offer opportunities, such as the groceries and essentials benefit, the national school food program and the Canada child benefit. There are so many supports the government has stepped up with. One that I am particularly fond of is the reductions in the cost of child care for families, which is saving families in my riding at least \$1,200 a month. That is significant support, and the Conservatives voted against that.

Here we are. We are at a moment where we have suspended the excise tax on fuel temporarily. We will evaluate at the end of Labour Day—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

PHARMACARE

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just like last week, and just like the week before, I am here tonight to drag the government in here to hold it to account and to ensure that it protects and enhances our public health care system and follows through with its promises. I will just serve notice that I will be dragging the government back in here again next week if it does not take some action.

No one in Canada, not our kids, parents or grandparents, should have to worry about the cost of medication they need to stay healthy, but that is exactly what is happening today. Canadians were promised the beginning of a national pharmacare program. We actually voted on it. They were promised a single-payer system that serves people, not a patchwork system that leaves millions behind.

The promise was that we were going to start with universal free access to diabetes medicine and birth control. It was highly celebrated by the Liberals. Right now, only three provinces and one territory are covered. That is about 17% of Canadians. More than four out of five Canadians cannot access the federal pharmacare plan today. This means access to life-saving diabetes medicine or birth control coverage depends on where someone lives. It depends on their postal code.

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While I hate to do this, I must mention that this inaction comes while many Liberal MPs are bragging about a national pharmacare program that their own constituents cannot even access. In Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, the provincial health minister said that the federal Liberal government has closed the door on negotiations. Meanwhile, the Liberal MP for Labrador defends pharmacare as putting money back in Canadians' pockets. On Prince Edward Island, the federal government has moved slowly, and its provincial health minister says that the federal government has told them that pharmacare funds will expire in 2029 and will not be renewed.

Meanwhile, the member for Cardigan claimed that pharmacare is a key program for all Canadians. Nova Scotia is ready to negotiate, but it is still waiting for an invitation. Meanwhile, the member for Cumberland—Colchester described pharmacare as an essential service that Liberals will continue to protect. Their premier says he cannot even get a meeting to negotiate a deal.

These provinces want in. They are ready to work, but they are being shut out while these Liberals pat themselves on the back. That is not nation building. The Prime Minister was just on CBC two days ago touting his commitment to pharmacare. Even today in question period, he rightly criticised the Conservatives for voting against pharmacare, but only three provinces and one territory actually have an agreement.

Yesterday we saw that, in the spring economic update, the word pharmacare is mentioned only once. It signals that the Liberals are walking away from their commitment to the national pharmacare plan they ran on during the last election. This has real consequences. People are skipping prescriptions. They are cutting pills in half. They are choosing between paying rent and filling a prescription. In a country as wealthy as Canada, this should never happen. This is not what Canadians were promised, like I said in the last election.

New Democrats in the House and across Canada are fighting to ensure Canadians can access the medicine they need while the Liberals continue to delay and side with powerful industry interests. In B.C., pharmacare coverage began on March 1 because the B.C. NDP government pushed for it and the provincial health minister Josie Osborne acted quickly. She signed a deal. Families in B.C. are getting that relief, but families in the rest of the country are still waiting. They are waiting because the federal government is refusing to negotiate.

A truly national pharmacare program would guarantee the security Canadians need at a time of economic uncertainty. If the Liberals fail to meet their commitment, they are going to have to explain to Canadians why they are breaking yet another promise.

The question is simple: Will the government reopen negotiations with provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia? Will it commit to expanding pharmacare to every province and territory that wants in, or will it continue down this path where access depends on one's postal code or where one lives? Canadians deserve better than this patchwork.

• (1850)

Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend the member for Courtenay—Alberni has long been a strong advocate for better health outcomes in his community and across Canada, and I am honoured and fortunate to work with him in the House for the betterment of Canadian health outcomes.

Those outcomes are possible thanks to our investments in health care, just as yesterday's spring economic statement was our government's next step in our plan to build a stronger, more independent and resilient Canada. We know that we are only stronger and more resilient if we have healthy Canadians, which is something I think everybody here agrees on. That is why our government came to office with the pledge to protect existing pharmacare agreements. We know the role that they play in keeping Canadians healthy.

In fact, starting last month, my colleague's constituents in British Columbia are seeing the effects of their province's pharmacare agreements first-hand, since it came into effect on March 1. Thanks to this agreement, more Canadians have free and low-cost access to a range of contraceptives; Canadians living with diabetes can get essential, life-saving drugs for their condition; and Canadians are keeping more money in their pockets while improving their health outcomes.

I know the member opposite would like us to go full speed ahead, but recent years have taught us that we need to be mindful of the broader context, both within Canada and beyond our borders, as we make decisions and as we consider the changing fiscal environment, how policy decisions in other countries impact our pharmaceutical supply and what we hear from our provincial and territorial partners. All of these things matter.

For our part, our government will continue to control what we can. That means working closely with our health partners, including provinces, territories and indigenous people, to see how we can help them deliver health care for all Canadians. As we have always said, we cannot build Canada strong without healthy Canadians.

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for coming. I know it is inconvenient, but I will continue to drag her and her government here to debate this issue, because what we heard does not match the reality that Canadians are facing.

It is great to hear that British Columbians are getting access to pharmacare. The government says pharmacare is moving ahead, but only four out of five Canadians are accessing it. That is not progress; that is exclusion.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Liberals say it takes time, but provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia are ready now, and the federal government is refusing to negotiate. We just heard the parliamentary secretary say it is too expensive, but pharmacare actually saves money for families and for provinces. The real cost is forcing Canadians to go without the medicine they need.

Let us be clear. Mentioning pharmacare once in a major economic update is not a plan. It is a signal that the government is walking away from its promise, and it is not nation building. Canadians were told that this would be a national program, not a patchwork or something determined by postal code. No one in this country should have to choose between paying rent and filling a prescription.

The question remains. When will the government stop delaying, start negotiating and deliver pharmacare for all Canadians?

Maggie Chi: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that it is never an inconvenience but always an honour to come to the House and debate important issues. I am never dragged here, because it is

also my honour to debate important issues and work on behalf of all Canadians for the betterment of their health with the member opposite.

Our government remains committed to building Canada strong by investing in healthy Canadians. That means protecting pharmacare agreements that provide access to contraception and vital medications while also keeping more money in the pockets of Canadians.

We will continue to work with our partners on all sides, including the member opposite, to build a health care system that meets the needs of Canadians.

● (1855)

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

(The House adjourned at 6:55 p.m.)

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