



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

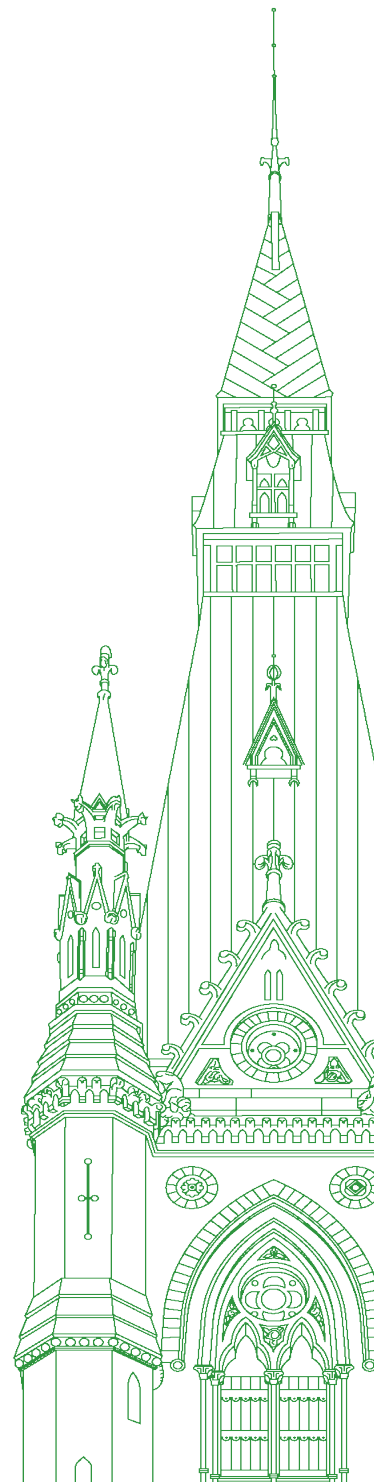
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

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Monday, September 21, 2026

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 21, 2026

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

● (1100)

[*English*]

VACANCIES

NORTH VANCOUVER—CAPILANO, SAINT-HYACINTHE—BAGOT—ACTON, CHICOUTIMI—LE FJORD, BEACHES—EAST YORK, SCARBOROUGH NORTH, ROSEMONT—LA PETITE-PATRIE, LAURIER—SAINTE-MARIE, YORKTON—MELVILLE AND BRANTFORD—BRANT SOUTH

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that vacancies have occurred in the representation: namely Jonathan Wilkinson, member for the electoral district of North Vancouver—Capilano, by resignation effective Friday, June 19, 2026;

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay, member for the electoral district of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, by resignation effective Friday, June 19, 2026; Richard Martel, member for the electoral district of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, by resignation effective Tuesday, July 7, 2026;

[*English*]

Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, member for the electoral district of Beaches—East York, by resignation effective Tuesday, July 7, 2026; Shaun Chen, member for the Electoral District of Scarborough North, by resignation effective Saturday, August 15, 2026;

[*Translation*]

Alexandre Boulerville, member for the electoral district of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, by resignation effective Tuesday, August 25, 2026; Steven Guilbeault, member for the electoral district of Laurier—Sainte-Marie, by resignation effective Friday, August 28, 2026;

[*English*]

Cathay Wagantall, member for the electoral district of Yorkton—Melville, by resignation effective Monday, August 31, 2026; Larry Brock, member for the electoral district of Brantford—Brant South, by resignation effective Friday, September 18, 2026.

Pursuant to paragraph 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed warrants to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of writs for the election of members to fill these vacancies.

It is also my duty to inform the House that, based on a medical assessment available to the Chair, and in accordance with subsection 70(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, the Chair has determined that Mr. Chen is eligible for a severance allowance.

* * *

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Braeden Caley, member for the electoral district of North Vancouver—Capilano.

* * *

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Braeden Caley, member for the electoral district of North Vancouver—Capilano, introduced by the Right Hon. Mark Carney and the Hon. Gregor Robertson.

* * *

● (1105)

[*Translation*]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Daniel Gobeil, member for the electoral district of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

* * *

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Daniel Gobeil, member for the electoral district of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, introduced by the Right Hon. Mark Carney and the Hon. Joël Lightbound.

* * *

[*English*]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Tanveer Shahnawaz, member for the electoral district of Beaches—East York.

*Private Members' Business***NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED**

Tanveer Shah Nawaz, member for the electoral district of Beaches—East York, introduced by the Right Hon. Mark Carney and the Hon. Gary Anandasangaree.

* * *

ORDER PAPER

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that in accordance with the representation made by the government pursuant to Standing Order 55(1), I have caused to be published a special Order Paper giving notice of a government bill.

I therefore lay before the House the document in question.

It being 11:08 a.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SKILLED TRADES AND LABOUR MOBILITY ACT

The House resumed from April 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-266, An Act to establish a national framework respecting skilled trades and labour mobility, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I start talking today about Bill C-266, I would like to first take a moment to thank all the wonderful people in South Shore—St. Margarets. It was wonderful to be back home in the riding over the summer, getting out into our communities, meeting with constituents, listening to their concerns and celebrating the incredible work happening across the south shore.

It was also a real privilege to help deliver some exciting investments to our communities, including \$6.2 million to the Lunenburg Opera House and over \$15 million to Hawboldt Industries, which received the Davie contract. Of course, I loved getting out to meet our students in the Canada summer jobs program, where young people are gaining valuable experience, building confidence and contributing to their communities. I want to thank everyone who opened their doors, shared their stories, invited me into their workplaces and to their community events, and reminded me every day why I am here to serve. I am grateful to be back, and I am excited to bring the voices of South Shore—St. Margarets to Ottawa.

I am pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of Bill C-266 and to the importance of making it easier for skilled trades workers to take their skills, experience and hard work with them wherever opportunity exists in this country. I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Richmond East—Steveston, for the bill.

At its heart, the bill is about something very simple: opportunity. It is about making sure that if a Canadian has the skills and training to do a job in one province, unnecessary administrative and regulatory barriers do not prevent that person from doing the same job in another province. Bill C-266 proposes the development of a national framework on skilled trades and labour mobility. The objective is

to reduce barriers, improve credential recognition, identify those equivalencies between jurisdictions and find, as I said before, opportunities to harmonize certification processes.

Importantly, this is not about Ottawa telling provinces how to regulate their skilled trades. It is about governments working together. It is about provinces and territories, industries, unions, apprenticeship organizations, indigenous partners, employers and training institutions sitting at that same table and asking one very practical question: "How do we make it easier for Canadians to work?" That question matters enormously in a country as large and diverse as Canada.

I come to this conversation with a very different professional background from many of the members of the House. Before becoming a member of Parliament, I was a teacher. I spent many years working in the education system, including as a high school principal.

One of the things that experience taught me is that when we talk about workplace development, we cannot start at the point where someone wants to get onto the job site. We have to start much earlier. We have to start with the young people. We have to start with the students sitting in a classroom wondering what kind of future is possible for them. We have to start with the young person who is incredibly capable with their hands and who can build, fix, design, operate, and solve problems but who might not see themselves already reflected in a traditional academic pathway.

We have to make sure young people understand that there are many different ways to build a successful life here in Canada. A good education system should not tell every student that success means following the exact same path. It should open doors, and that means universities, colleges, apprenticeships, skilled trades, entrepreneurship and technology. It means creating opportunities. There is a theme here for young Canadians to develop skills that are valued in their communities across this country.

I represent South Shore—St. Margarets. It is a beautiful riding, but it is also a riding that knows very well the challenges that come with being rural.

• (1110)

Young people have enormous potential. We have people who are working in construction, transportation, marine industries, forestry, fisheries, energy and manufacturing. I could go on. We have small business owners who are looking for workers, and there are communities that need housing. Infrastructure needs to be built, and we have employers who tell us that finding people with the right skills is one of the biggest challenges.

At the same time, we have young people who are asking themselves whether they can build a future in the community where they grew up. That is an important question, because if a young person has to leave their community to find opportunity, sometimes they never come back. What does that mean to a rural community? It loses more than just a young worker. It loses volunteers, parents, future business owners, coaches and community leaders, and we lose people who would eventually become the next generation of teachers, tradespeople, nurses, entrepreneurs and public servants. Therefore, when we talk about building Canada's workforce, we have to talk at the same time about building strong communities. That is why labour mobility matters, but it is also why education and training matter.

I am a former member of HUMA, which completed a study on youth employment. One of the lessons that came through very clearly is that young people do not experience the labour market in the same way that many of us did growing up. There are young people who are ready to enter that workforce but cannot find the first opportunity. There are young people who have the education but not the experience that employers might be looking for. There are young people who need access to training, and, most important, there are young people in rural and remote communities who face additional barriers simply because of geography. There are many young people who have the trades, but they also need a pathway to put those to work, and that is what the bill would try to do.

The last point is particularly important, because when we talk about the skilled trades, we talk about how we can train people. We encourage through apprenticeships, we invest in education, and we can help young people enter the workforce, but if unnecessary barriers prevent these workers from taking their skills where they are needed, we have not solved that problem. We have simply moved the problem, kicking the can down the road. Canada's workforce needs to be flexible. A worker in Nova Scotia might have an opportunity in Alberta, a worker in Quebec might have an opportunity in British Columbia, and a worker in Newfoundland and Labrador might have the skills that are desperately needed in other parts of the country.

All Canadians should be able to make these choices. That does not mean we eliminate the safety standards. It does not mean that we lower training requirements. It does not mean that we undermine provincial authority. It does not mean that every certification system needs to be identical. What it does mean, though, is that we should be asking whether these differences between jurisdictions are genuinely necessary or whether they come from simply creating duplication and the old red tape that we talk about a lot in the chamber.

Bill C-266 takes a framework approach to this problem. It proposes mapping equivalencies across jurisdictions. It proposes identifying opportunities for harmonization. It proposes modernizing certification processes, and it proposes bringing the right people together to have these conversations. That is important because the young people who understand these barriers best are the ones who encounter them.

Unions also understand the importance of safety, wages and working conditions. Provincial regulators understand their responsibilities. Indigenous communities and organizations have impor-

tant perspectives on workforce development and economic participation. Governments have the responsibility to bring these voices together.

I also want to emphasize what the bill would not do. It would not override provincial authority, and that matters. Provinces and territories have important responsibilities when it comes to training, certification and labour market regulation. These responsibilities must be protected. The strength of the bill is that it would recognize that reality but would also recognize something else, which is that the labour market does not stop at a provincial border.

• (1115)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to be back in Ottawa. These are words I never thought I would hear myself saying, and they are words I do not think anyone has actually ever said in a truthful state.

It is wonderful to be back in Parliament debating my colleague's bill, Bill C-266. The author of the bill, the member for Richmond East—Steveston, and I had the pleasure of working together on the operations committee for several years, and I quite enjoyed working with him. Although there is technically nothing wrong with his private member's bill, I question what the end value would be because it really would not do a lot.

Conservatives are here to represent Canadians and to help Canadians. We are focused on saving Canadians money. I believe the Liberals are out of touch on this issue, and the bill before us shows part of that. The bill would not actually provide any action to help Canadians, and every day without action from the Liberal government is costing Canadians money.

Bill C-266 has a lot of good points on paper, if it were to actually accomplish anything, but what would it accomplish in the end? It would accomplish a call for a national framework. It would not actually assist an electrician in Ontario to work and be recognized in Alberta. It just calls for a framework. In the end, that is what would happen, as the bill states, "The Minister must develop a national framework respecting skilled trades and labour mobility". That is wonderful, but would it actually do anything? No, it is just paperwork to "develop a national framework".

The bill also states, "the Minister must hold consultations". Well, that would be work for bureaucrats and hopefully hotels during the consultations, but in the end, after all these consultations, after all the work, debate and everything, our result would be the tabling of a framework.

The bill continues:

Within one year after the day on which this Act comes into force, the Minister must prepare a report setting out the national framework and cause it to be tabled

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That would be within a year. Maybe we could get through this in a month and then, in 2027, after another year without action, it would be tabled.

The bill also states:

Within one year after the day on which the report is tabled under subsection 4(1), and every year after that, the minister must prepare a progress report

It does not state that he has to do anything. It is just a progress report.

We have seen, with this government, lots of other frameworks and lots of other items that state it has to prepare progress reports. We have seen it in public accounts, where the Auditor General comes to say, "Yeah, for 20 years we have been doing progress reports, but nothing has changed."

The bill further states, "Within five years after the day on which this Act comes into force, a comprehensive review of the national framework must be undertaken by the committee of the Senate, of the House of Commons or of both Houses of Parliament that is designated or established". We would have one year to study this, another year for a progress report and then, within five years, another review of the framework.

It begs the question, why does the government not just get this done? Why do we need a framework? Why do we need a private member's bill to ask the government to do what its job is, and why the delays?

What should the government be doing instead? Well, it could be acting. One of the things the Liberals could act on would be to delete from their budget 2025 their intent to defund student loans for private colleges. There are 31 of these in B.C. and seven in Alberta that deliver apprenticeship training and such trade training privately, but the government is going to ban students from being able to access funding to attend them.

One of the other things the Liberals could do that would be a lot more important, which I have spoken about repeatedly in the House and in committee, would be to end the scourge of trafficked and illegal workers on government-funded infrastructure projects. We have projects that are funded partly by the feds, partly by the province and partly by the municipalities where we have illegal, trafficked workers on the sites. The contractor will win the bid with a low bid and then immediately subcontract out the entire job to a subcontractor to create a layer, a distance I guess, so they can claim, "We're innocent. It was the subcontractor who broke the law."

• (1120)

The subcontractor will then recruit from Mexico, Venezuela or Colombia to bring in workers under a visitor's, vacation or other visa, and then they put them to work. I have presented to the Treasury Board evidence of how they are recruiting the workers. Two years ago, in the House, I spoke about it, and the government has done nothing.

They will bring in these workers, abuse them, underpay them with \$10 an hour in cash, make them work overtime, and then steal the overtime. Who are these workers bumping out? They are bumping out trades workers, the very skilled trades workers that this bill

is supposed to help. The government talks about wanting workers from Ontario to be able to work in B.C., yet it turns a blind eye when workers are trafficked or smuggled into the country, which bumps out trades workers from working on government-funded infrastructure projects.

One of the items we found is that nine of these trafficked workers, and this was in Edmonton, were forced to rent their accommodation from the wife of the subcontractor. There were nine of them in a one-bedroom house, and they were paying \$3,000 for this. They were told that, if they complained, they would go back on a plane and go home.

I visited one of the work sites on the Henday, the ring road or ring highway around Edmonton, which is actually in the riding of Edmonton Riverbend. Now, if the member for Edmonton Riverbend were to show up in Edmonton once in a while, he would perhaps see this work being done. We spoke to every single worker on the site during the construction. Funnily enough, every single worker was not a worker but a subcontractor.

Now, if anyone has worked in construction, they know there is a general contractor. Perhaps they would sub out the drywall to a subcontractor who would then hire workers, but every single worker on this site was a subcontractor. Every single worker was from out of country. We spoke to the contractor. He tried to chase us off and run us down with his pickup truck, so I think we know how the contractor felt about that.

Now, workers from Local 222, the cement masons, should have gotten the work on that Henday project, the bridge, but not one of them did. The government talks a lot about wanting to help work with the unions. It is actually in this bill that the government is going to consult with the unions. I am pretty sure, if they consulted with Local 222 of the cement masons, they would be told, "Let us work. Let our legal workers work on Canadian-funded infrastructure projects instead of trafficked workers."

We heard a story of a gentleman who was one of the illegal trafficked workers. He fell and landed on his head. Luckily, he had a helmet on. He fell 25 feet and woke up in the hospital. No one from the company or worker's comp visited him. The only person who visited was the safety officer from the subcontractor, who told him that, if he told the truth to workers' comp or anyone else, he would be fired on the spot and sent home. Three months later, after he got out of the hospital, on his first day back on the job, he was given his cheque and told he was fired, to get out.

This is happening on the Edmonton LRT project; the Edmonton library, which just got built; sidewalk projects; and the Yellowhead. Again, two years ago, I had documented evidence of this. Two years ago, I placed it in the hands of the Treasury Board. I promised the Treasury Board that I would not make this public and that I would work with the government to get this done.

A year later, I approached them again. I said, “You guys have done nothing. I’m going to start speaking about it. It’s now been two years and nothing has been done.” We tabled a motion in the operations committee to look at this, to help the trade workers that Bill C-266 is supposed to help. The Liberals voted the motion down rather than study this.

It has been two years. The government talks about wanting to help trade workers. If it wanted to actually do that, instead of developing a national framework that is going to do nothing, the government should sit down, listen to the unions and crack down to end the scourge of trafficked and illegal workers being used on government-funded infrastructure sites.

● (1125)

[Translation]

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here and to see my colleagues whom I missed over the summer. However, I almost feel as though we are on a diplomatic mission to a foreign country. The topic that we are debating today is a reminder of something that happens all too often in Ottawa, and that is centralization and interference.

I do not want to impute motives to the member who introduced Bill C-266 since I am sure his intentions were good. This comes from a noble desire, that of creating better fluidity and mobility for the labour force in a context where there are challenges related to labour shortages, an issue we are aware of because our constituents come to us about it regularly. The problem is not the intention behind the bill, but the approach that it takes. Members in Ottawa have an unfortunate tendency of forgetting that they are not at Queen’s Park, the Quebec National Assembly or a provincial legislature. They forget that they are federal members of Parliament.

Indeed, Bill C-266 aims to create a national framework to harmonize credentials, establish equivalencies, and facilitate the mobility of workers and skilled trades based on standards to be established and announced by the federal government. Once again, the objective is not a bad one in itself. The issue is that, with legislation like Bill C-266, Ottawa is taking on a coordinating role and also, quite simply, the role of an arbitrator in an area that is otherwise largely administered by the provinces.

This is not the first time we have seen something like this. This was often the case with the national health strategies and frameworks, for example. The federal government wanted to introduce regulations. Once again, this may stem from good intentions. However, the federal government does not train health care staff or employ them. It does not run hospitals, and yet it still wanted to set standards. The same is true of Bill C-266. The federal government wants to claim an area of jurisdiction that does not belong to it, perhaps with good intentions, but chances are the end result will be problematic.

Just because the preamble of the bill states that provincial jurisdiction must be respected does not mean that we can expect the bill to respect provincial jurisdiction. Generally, when there is such a statement in the preamble, we see the exact opposite in the text that follows.

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Matters of labour mobility and workforce training fall exclusively under provincial jurisdiction. In fact, Quebec already has its own model, and it works. Quebec is responsible for training. Quebec is responsible for credential recognition. There are several organizations that do this including Québec Emploi, Services Québec, the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail, and the Commission de la construction du Québec, which are responsible for administering certification for various skilled trades.

The federal government has recognized the fact that Quebec is responsible for managing workforce training since 1997. The Canada-Quebec Labour Market Agreement, signed by Lucien Bouchard and Jean Chrétien, officially established that Quebec was responsible for its workforce and for training. Under this agreement, the federal government transfers funds directly to Quebec to make this possible.

Mechanisms are already in place for recognizing credentials for skilled trades, as well as for mobility. For example, there is the Red Seal designation, which is the result of genuine collaboration between the provinces, territories, and the federal government. There are mechanisms that work.

We are leery of the idea of trying to replace all of this with a regulatory framework created exclusively by the federal government. There is no need to recreate in Ottawa what can already be achieved on the ground through agreements and genuine mutual recognition.

One of the problems we foresee with the creation of a federal regulatory framework is that harmonization would not necessarily mean improvement. A difference between two provinces should not be systematically interpreted as an unnecessary barrier.

● (1130)

Part of the reason Quebec has its own training is that it has its own safety standards and professional regulations, as well as its linguistic reality, which people tend to forget when they want to go all out with pan-Canadian standards. One of the issues that may crop up when people seek to standardize current practices is that they may end up looking for a common standard that will tend toward the lowest common denominator. In some cases, that could weaken the requirements that are more stringent, and for good reason, in Quebec or other provinces. Those requirements were put in place by provinces that know the reality on the ground and that are responsible for administration, training and the awarding of certifications.

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In that kind of context, two large segments of the population could lose out. First, the public could lose trust in the recognized value of certain certifications, which have historically been awarded by bodies that can administer them properly, rather than bodies that make things up as they go, such as the federal government in matters of labour. Second, workers may find that their initial training diminishes in value because it would be considered equivalent to that of other workers in Canada, when it is not, in fact. Both workers and the public stand to lose out.

As I was saying, what we are seeing with Bill C-266 is part of an obviously broader federal drive towards standardization. We have seen this before, to some extent, and can draw a parallel with Bill C-5, which aimed to reduce interprovincial barriers to trade. It used a similar approach in that it showed a tendency to set aside crucial aspects of the economic fabric of Quebec and the provinces, particularly in cultural and linguistic matters. These barriers were not implemented on a whim, simply to throw up roadblocks or just for their own sake. There are reasons they exist, and it should be up to the provinces and the provinces alone to decide when to lift certain barriers. The bill provides for consultations, but we have often seen in the past that consulting does not imply agreement. Often, consulting means talking endlessly without ultimately taking into account what has been said, despite, as I said a little earlier, a preamble that provides for areas of jurisdiction to be respected.

By creating federal frameworks, the government is ultimately making a unilateral decision on what constitutes a legitimate standard or a barrier. This could force us into situations involving a kind of reverse onus when it comes to removing barriers to mobility. The provinces and Quebec would have to justify and explain themselves even in cases where they rightfully decide to maintain different requirements. The solution is not a national framework but an improved version of something already available: increased federal labour mobility transfers for Quebec and the provinces. Funds are not an issue: Ottawa has already set aside large amounts for training in the skilled trades. Even during the recent spring 2026 economic update, there was talk of \$2 billion over five years. Once again, even though a statutory framework was not involved, the federal government's willingness to impose standards on Quebec was unmistakable. Funds were given exclusively to the provinces willing to align their procedures with federal expectations. For some provinces, it was a carrot; for those that refused to surrender their jurisdiction to the federal government, it was a stick.

The solution that Quebec wants is perfectly simple: an unconditional transfer of funds with the right to veto federal initiatives that fail to respect Quebec's jurisdiction. Labour mobility is a positive thing. It is something that Quebec is already working on improving. However, there is no room for mobility when it comes to Quebec giving up its areas of jurisdiction or handing them over to Ottawa.

• (1135)

[English]

Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to be back in this place with my colleagues after an important summer of conversations in our communities. One of the conversations that came up quite often was from young people from different parts of the country who were in my riding of

Vancouver Granville and from some of my constituents who had been travelling across the country over the summer. The theme that kept coming up, particularly from some of the folks in the skilled trades, was that they would love to be able to work in other parts of the country.

In fact, I was speaking to a young man from Montreal who said that he would love to be able to work in British Columbia for four or five years, but his credentials are not recognized. This is something that a lot of us hear in our communities from Canadians from coast to coast to coast who want to work in different parts of the country and be able to use the skills they have obtained and the education they have.

This is what my friend from Richmond East—Steveston aims to solve through his private member's bill. This bill is really about three things. It is about modernizing, harmonizing and streamlining credential recognition across this country.

We spend incredible amounts of time training people in this country across the provinces in the skills and trades we need from coast to coast to coast, yet barriers created through regulations sometimes make it difficult for folks to take advantage of that and truly celebrate being able to work anywhere in this country. We know there is a need for qualified professionals to work where their skills are needed, and this bill would help to deliver on our commitment to break down internal trade barriers and recognize that Canada can give itself, as the Prime Minister said, "far more than anyone else can take away."

When we think about this moment for Canada, we recognize that we are being challenged by our neighbours to the south. We have opportunities presented to us through global partnerships, through increasing trade and through looking at how we develop our sectors here at home. One of the most important elements of that is ensuring that Canadian workers have the ability to work in whatever part of this country they desire, using the skills and knowledge they have and ensuring that their credentials are recognized across this country.

It seems very simple, and indeed it is. It is a concept about which any of us who are proudly Canadian would ask, “How we can make sure that skills obtained in British Columbia are transferable to Quebec, Ontario or Atlantic Canada, and vice versa?” If we are serious about economic development in this country, increasing productivity, building the infrastructure we need and competitiveness, it is private members' bills like this one and decisions like this that will help propel our economy forward.

We all know that improved labour mobility ensures that skilled labour shortages, particularly in the housing and infrastructure sectors, can be addressed. For those who have concerns, this bill is not about overreach, but rather about coordination and collaboration.

As the member for Richmond East—Steveston has said, this bill would help allow a young person trained in Ontario to be part of the national shipbuilding strategy in Vancouver, or vice versa. When we think about what we are doing, we are spending time, effort, energy and resources to ensure that we are training workers from coast to coast to coast.

We announced that we would be modernizing and boosting apprenticeship training in this country to expedite Red Seal certification, with over \$330 million in funding over five years. We are digitizing the Red Seal program, introducing online exams and digital logbooks and securing credentials to reduce certification timelines, including by creating a single national registered apprenticeship number. We are also expanding union training and innovation programs to enable union-run training centres to upgrade facilities, expand capacity and invest in modern equipment.

These are all steps that require us to work together across the federation. These are all steps that work toward building a Canada strong.

When we look at the future of this country, we know there is an imperative right now to build our east-west economy. We know there is an imperative to be able to trade across this country, to have workers move from any part of this country to another to work, and to ensure that what is getting built in one part of the country benefits the country regardless of whether it is in one province or another.

That happens by ensuring that when we are building a one Canadian economy, the workers who reside at the heart of that one Canadian economy have the mobility they need, and the time and effort that have been put in and the investments that have been made through tax dollars so these workers are well-trained are put to good use in the parts of the country that need those workers the most. That mobility must be as seamless as possible, and the flexibility of movement must be there for Canadians.

• (1140)

It should not be easier for a Canadian from British Columbia or Quebec to move to a different country. It should be easy for them to move across this country to do the work they want to do in helping to build this country and build our economy strong.

The realities workers face right now are real. Workers across this country, whether they are working in the softwood lumber industry, in manufacturing in Ontario or in smelters, are challenged. They are

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looking for ways for government to step up and make their lives easier. One of those ways, I believe, is for them to find and get work anywhere in this country and use the credentials they have without the onerous process of being certified again.

People have put in the time, effort and energy to train up. It is not their fault if through tariffs an industry or a sector is hit hard in a particular part of the country. It should not be their fault that they cannot move to another part of this country where a job is available, only to know that their credentials will not be recognized because of a system that prevents that.

This bill would enable those barriers to come down. It would enable those workers to take on more, to serve this country through their work, to be taxpaying citizens, to help boost the economy and to build the things we need in this country. This is on us. We have powers in this legislature, in this place, to make these changes and make the lives of Canadians better.

The changes that are being proposed are real. They are meaningful, and they are a process of collaboration. They are about collaboration and working together. They are not about overreach. They are not about taking power away from provinces. They are not about diminishing regions. They are not about minimizing anybody's ability to feel like their province or region matters. It is quite the opposite. They are about ensuring that the regions, provinces and territories that need workers can attract those workers, that those workers can thrive, that those workers have mobility and that they have the freedom in this country to truly participate in the economy.

That is not a lot to ask. It is not a lot for workers to ask. It is not a lot for Canadians to ask of us, and it requires us to come together. It requires us to work with labour unions. It requires us to work across jurisdictions. It requires us to hear one another through that process. What it boils down to is doing the thing that Canadians have asked of us, not just of this government, but of all parliamentarians. It's about doing the things that are required to build a strong economy, to reduce the barriers that currently prevent workers from doing the things they need to be able to do, to promote businesses' ability to hire, to enable businesses to contribute to the economy, to reduce the barriers and friction that businesses are currently feeling and, most importantly, to ensure that we are building a truly east-west economy in this country and that workers are at the heart of it.

Private Members' Business

We know that the north-south economy right now, with our partners to the south, is hard. It is difficult. Relations are strained. We all know that, but it is an opportunity for us to make sure that moving across this country east to west or west to east is easy, that we give Canadians the tools they need and that we give Canadians the types of decisions from this government and in this Parliament that allow them to move freely and work freely across this country.

That is incumbent on all of us. This is the moment to put aside the “yes but” way of thinking about things and look at the world by saying “yes and”. Yes, we can do this, and we can protect workers. Yes, we can do this, and we can protect regional economies. “Yes and” is how big things are going to get built in this country, acknowledging that not everything we have in our path forward is perfect. We will build by working together, by reducing barriers across provinces and territories and by ensuring that workers from coast to coast to coast have the ability to be mobile and use the skills and credentials they have, whether it is in British Columbia, Quebec, Atlantic Canada, the Prairies or the north, and can move freely and work freely to build the country they want to build, to build here and to have jobs that pay well to put food on the tables for their families.

This is something we can and must do, and I encourage all members of the House to support this bill.

● (1145)

Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today and speak on behalf of the good people of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

I want to remind Canadians that this session, Conservatives will be working to restore Canada's promise of an affordable, safe and independent Canada. We will work to save Canadians money, unlike the Liberals, who are costing Canadians money. We will save Canadian jobs, keep Canadians safe, fix the immigration system and put Canada first.

Today, we are talking about Bill C-266, regarding a national framework on skilled trades and labour mobility, something that we should all give serious consideration to. It is not lost on anyone in this House that Canada faces a crossroads in our relationship with our neighbours, as well as old and emerging trade partners. What cannot be forgotten, however, is the strength that lies within our own borders to meet these challenges head-on. My colleagues on both sides of this chamber must ask themselves the following. In the face of external pressures, will we leverage our immense geography, resources and skills to build a Canada that produces what it needs and controls its own destiny? Bill C-266 is central to that conversation.

Skilled trade certification and labour mobility in Canada are largely governed by the provinces and territories. It is a fragmented system that creates differences in credential recognition, standards, licensing and regulatory requirements, and it can make it difficult for trade workers to move between provinces. This legislation would require the federal government to develop a national framework to identify these barriers and explore ways to harmonize and streamline credential recognition, improve labour mobility and promote careers in the skilled trades. The framework would be devel-

oped through consultation and reported to Parliament, while respecting provincial and territorial responsibility for certification.

Importantly, Bill C-266 would not itself replace provincial certification systems or impose a single national licensing regime. Instead, the act would be designed to require the federal government to bring the provinces, regulatory bodies, industry, employers, unions, apprenticeship organizations, indigenous organizations and educational institutions to the table for months of consultation. The resulting framework would then have to include a complete list of skilled trades across Canada; compare and map equivalencies between provincial standards and credentials; and then identify measures to harmonize standards, reduce duplication and streamline the process of having credentials recognized from one province to another. It would also have to address emerging trades and new technologies and promote greater awareness of the importance of skilled trades. This is about making sure that a Canadian who has earned the skills to do a job can have those skills recognized when opportunity takes them somewhere else in their own country.

It is appropriate that this bill is the first order of business after our return to Ottawa. The events of this summer have put an even greater onus on the Prime Minister to make good on his vow to build at speeds not seen in generations, for the housing construction sector and the major infrastructure projects and the economic investments we need to put Canada first. Regrettably, however, the Liberal government has not yet made good on that vow. There has been a lot of talk and not a whole lot of action, and it is completely out of touch.

Let us examine housing, for instance. It is the central issue facing an entire generation that has effectively been locked out of the market. Housing is a skilled labour issue. We cannot build the homes Canadians need without the electricians, plumbers, carpenters, equipment operators and other skilled tradespersons needed to build them. Despite 62,000 vacant trades jobs in late 2025, over 127,000 certified tradespeople in Canada were unemployed, according to StatsCan. At the same time, the Canadian Home Builders' Association reports that 47% of builders say they or their subcontractors have had to lay off workers, rising to 65% in Ontario. That tells us something important. The challenge is not simply a shortage of skilled workers. It is also a failure to connect workers with opportunities where they are needed and where these opportunities exist.

The same problem exists when it comes to major projects. The Prime Minister promised to build at speeds not seen in generations, but we need projects to actually get built if skilled workers are going to put their skills to work. There are 500 shovel-ready projects still awaiting approval at the Major Projects Office. Canada cannot afford to train more tradespeople while qualified workers face barriers in moving between provinces and major projects are struggling to get off the ground. Bill C-266 may help address one part of that equation, that is, making it easier for qualified workers to move to where the work is.

• (1150)

While the Liberals deserve much of the blame for siphoning the full potential of our workforce, successive governments at both the federal and provincial levels have erected barriers to prevent Canadians from working and doing business freely across their own country. In the words of the Business Council of Canada, “13 different provincial credential recognition regimes” complicate our labour mobility. Not only do these roadblocks increase costs and ultimately leave Canadians paying more for essentials, but they also hold back growth when we should be firing on all cylinders.

Shockingly, the International Monetary Fund estimates that impediments to internal trade in Canada are equivalent to a 9% tariff on ourselves and that removing them could increase the size of our economy by a further 7%. There should be no further hesitation by the government in finally and fully realizing the promise of one Canadian economy. Conservatives have always believed in the free trade of goods and labour, and there is no better time than now to trade with ourselves. We need to and would embrace the broad mutual recognition of goods, services and labour across Canada, making restrictions the exception rather than the rule.

Bill C-266 is not, by itself, the end of that work, but it could provide a mechanism to identify exactly where the barriers exist and bring every jurisdiction to the table to address them. By mapping provincial credentials and identifying equivalencies, the framework could give provincial regulators the information they need to recognize qualifications more consistently, reduce duplication and make it easier for workers to move.

On this side of the House, we are optimistic but have every reason to reserve doubt. While the bill's sponsor has promoted it as one that would focus on tangible outcomes, it is fair to ask why these problems remain unresolved by the Liberal Party after more than a decade in government. That is why Conservatives will continue to examine the bill carefully. We need to determine whether its framework actually produces the results that Canadian workers and employers need.

The stakes are high. These restrictions impact businesses and the people they employ and serve. It is no wonder that Canada's business community has been sounding the alarm for years. Both the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Business Council of Canada have called for unified recognition of skilled trade credentials across Canada, warning that barriers between provinces prevent skilled workers from moving to where they are needed. The numbers are sobering. The chamber has warned that roughly 700,000 skilled trade workers are projected to retire in the next two

years, while Canada faces enormous housing and infrastructure demands.

Therefore, the chamber has called for a unified framework developed with provincial and territorial governments, industry and regulatory bodies to recognize skilled trade training and credentials across Canada. This is remarkably close to what Bill C-266 asks the federal government to begin doing, which is to bring those same stakeholders together, map out the differences between jurisdictions, identify equivalencies, reduce duplication and report publicly on the progress.

The Business Council of Canada has also pointed to Canada's patchwork of provincial credential recognition regimes as a barrier to labour mobility, while its research has found that shortages of skilled workers can have a significant impact on major projects and investments. Bill C-266 could not only address these challenges; it could create a national process for identifying and addressing some of the barriers the business community has repeatedly identified.

It is for these reasons that the Conservatives will continue to carefully examine Bill C-266, not as the solution but as an important stepping stone to a more mobile and productive Canadian workforce. We have Canadians with skills, we have employers with available jobs, and we have communities that desperately need these workers. Bill C-266 may be a good step in identifying the barriers, bringing the people responsible for removing them to the table and requiring Parliament to measure whether progress is actually being made.

Canada's skilled workers should never be held back by borders within their own country.

• (1155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Richmond East—Steveston has five minutes for his right of reply.

Parm Bains (Richmond East—Steveston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friends from Vancouver Granville and South Shore—St. Margarets and my colleagues across the way for their passionate support for the skilled trades and workers.

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It is a great honour to rise in the House after a productive recess spent working closely with constituents and stakeholders. I am particularly pleased that my bill is being debated on the first day of this new session. During the recess, I took the time to visit educational institutions and trade associations to talk with them about Bill C-266, an act to establish a national framework respecting skilled trades and labour mobility.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, in my hometown of Richmond, said this bill is a step toward national harmonization and would make it easier for qualified tradespeople to move fluidly between jurisdictions without administrative friction. By modernizing how qualifications are recognized across provincial borders, the legislation would support secondary institutions like KPU to deliver training that meets the dynamic needs of Canada's economy. Polytechnics Canada supports this bill as well, telling me, "At a time of ongoing labour shortages, improving the harmonization and recognition of skilled trades qualifications across provinces and territories will make it easier for workers to take their skills where they are most needed."

However, it does not end with educational institutions. The Canadian Construction Association welcomes Bill C-266 and the development of a national framework to modernize, streamline and harmonize skilled trade certification processes. Canada's construction industry is held back by a fragmented internal market where labour mobility restrictions create costly barriers for workers and employers alike. These inefficiencies limit economies of scale, slow innovation and suppress productivity growth at a time when the country urgently needs to build more critical infrastructure. Unlocking internal trade requires harmonizing credentials and meaningful engagement with the construction industry to develop solutions that work on the ground.

The Mechanical Contractors Association of Canada also supports Bill C-266 and its vision for a national framework on mutual recognition and labour mobility. For plumbers and electricians working across provinces, inconsistent certification and training requirements continue to create inefficiencies, unnecessary administrative burdens, cost overruns and project delays. Improving alignment and mutual recognition across jurisdictions through a coordinated national framework would support a more efficient and productive construction environment. They are encouraged by the bill's focus on collaboration across industry, labour and provincial governments and look forward to the opportunity to contribute their expertise to this framework.

Abigail Fulton, executive director of the Construction Foundation, sees first-hand the value of reducing barriers to certification and creating clearer pathways for skilled workers. Canada needs a skilled trades workforce that can move where the work is, but mobility works best when workers are supported to successfully complete their apprenticeships and achieve certification. Bill C-266 would provide an important opportunity for a national conversation about how we strengthen skilled trades mobility while building the certified workforce Canada needs to deliver housing, infrastructure and major projects.

As a former aircraft maintenance engineer, I am grateful that the executive director of the British Columbia Aviation Council is fully supportive of Bill C-266, saying that it is a positive step toward

labour mobility in Canada, and is reaching out to its two dozen counterpart associations across the country to solicit additional support.

The time has come to complete the work that started 30 years ago on the Agreement on Internal Trade, now the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. We can no longer afford to restrict skilled trade workers to guard regional interests. Governments and regulators must come together and respect the training and experience of Canadian workers. This is about unlocking the potential of the next generation of young Canadians, empowering them to pursue rewarding careers, strengthening our workforce, growing our economy and building a stronger Canada.

I look forward to seeing this bill at committee and hearing from experts on the need to harmonize credential recognition from coast to coast to coast.

● (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The question is on the motion.

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

Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 23, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMMISSIONER FOR MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.) moved that Bill C-10, an act respecting the commissioner for modern treaty implementation, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I begin by acknowledging that we are gathered today on the unceded territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin people.

We are now at third reading of Bill C-10, the commissioner for modern treaty implementation act, and that is no small achievement. I want to extend my deepest thanks to the modern treaty partners whose experience, persistence and leadership shaped this bill at every step. I also want to thank the members of this House who have helped advance the bill.

At its core, this legislation is about more than establishing the commissioner for modern treaties. It is about something much bigger. Fundamentally, it is about our commitment to advancing reconciliation through partnership and making sure that the commitments we make today lead to tangible, measurable results. It is about moving from intention to implementation so that modern treaties deliver real outcomes for indigenous communities, including strong governance, greater economic opportunity and improved quality of life.

As we look at the work that brought us to this moment and everything we have accomplished together, one lesson stands out: Real progress happens through partnership. This bill was co-developed with indigenous modern treaty partners every step of the way. Before we began drafting this bill, we worked together to develop Canada's collaborative modern treaty implementation policy in 2023. That policy, the first of its kind, set shared expectations for federal departments and created a more consistent approach to implementation across government. It set standards for shifting the culture of the federal system towards stronger relationships and accountability. Building on that foundation, we co-developed this bill with modern treaty partners. Their lived experience guided every component. They shared where current approaches were not always delivering consistent results and they shaped the commissioner's mandate, authorities and reporting structures.

By its very design, this bill is stronger and more credible. It reflects the shared ownership of a common objective to improve the modern treaty relationship and derive the full benefits of these agreements for partners, their neighbours and all Canadians. Bill C-10 reflects a recognition that collaboration with indigenous partners must be the norm. Modern treaty partners are governments and our strategic partners shaping the future of this country, and this bill reflects that truth. This is both principled and practical. All indigenous modern treaty partners spoke strongly in support of the legislation. Our government supports it and it is my hope that the opposition will support it so that it can move on to the Senate. After all, it is rare to see legislation with this level of shared support.

The commissioner for modern treaty implementation act would create an independent commissioner whose sole focus would be supporting effective, consistent and transparent implementation of Canada's modern treaty commitments. Modern treaty partners have been united in their call for stronger oversight. They have emphasized the need for a mechanism that helps everyone understand where progress is being made, where challenges remain, and what steps are needed to honour the full spirit and intent of modern treaties.

With this legislation in place, the commissioner would, one, conduct independent and expert oversight of any activity carried out by the Government of Canada that relates to the implementation of modern treaties; two, report to Parliament to hold the Government of Canada accountable for its modern treaty obligations; three, be

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independent, objective and impartial in the discharge of their mandate and have expert knowledge of modern treaties; four, have the authority to require departments to provide the information necessary to carry out its mandate.

Modern treaties partners have long called for this mechanism that can look across governments and help make treaty implementation consistent, effective and timely. This kind of independent oversight would bring clarity to the work. It would highlight where progress is happening and where more attention is needed. It would also create the space for honest dialogue, the kind of early, constructive conversation that would prevent problems from growing.

Across government, we see how independent oversight improves outcomes. Modern treaty partners deserve the same consistent oversight, given the depth, complexity and importance of their constitutionally protected agreements. The implementation of modern treaties is a matter that concerns every government, now and into the future. Current and future governments will need visibility into federal performance and a system that is equipped and compelled to follow through consistently on commitments. Bill C-10 would help deliver that.

With this commissioner in place, issues that have been difficult to surface would gain visibility, patterns that were previously hidden would be easier to identify, and both Parliament and partners would have access to clear, independent reporting. This transparency is essential to building stronger treaty relationships and a stronger Canada.

● (1205)

I also want to take this opportunity today to talk a little more about modern treaties and why they are so critical to reconciliation and to building a stronger future. Modern treaties are a distinct expression of reconciliation and a constitutionally entrenched commitment between the Crown and indigenous partners. They promote strong and sustainable indigenous communities and affirm indigenous rights over lands and resources, but as I said, modern treaties are not only instruments of reconciliation. They are engines of economic growth that create certainty for investors, the government and indigenous governments; enable major projects; and support long-term prosperity for indigenous communities and all Canadians.

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We have seen this clearly across the country. The Nisga'a nation, British Columbia's first modern treaty partner, is seeing significant economic development and is taking on an increasingly active role in major projects. The Nisga'a nation is a proponent of the Ksi Lisims LNG project, a major project that has the potential to create jobs, generate economic opportunities and deliver long-term benefits for Nisga'a citizens and the entire country. By taking an active role in projects like this, including by pursuing equity ownership, the Nisga'a are helping ensure that major developments create lasting prosperity and economic opportunities that can benefit generations to come.

At the same time, the Nisga'a are continuing to strengthen their self-government, including by holding their own elections in accordance with the Nisga'a nation's own constitution. This is a powerful example of what self-determination can look like in practice, building economic opportunity while exercising the rights and responsibilities of self-government.

In the Northwest Territories, the Tłıchǫ government has invested in an all-season highway project that would connect remote communities and open up new opportunities in mining. This infrastructure development is helping community members access health service and education and supporting local businesses.

Another example of this is the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board. This board promotes sustainable use of land and resources while preserving traditional practices. It plays a leadership role so that the fish, forests and wildlife of the Gwich'in area remain healthy and sustainable. Its mandate is to work in the public interest and represent all the parties to the modern treaty: the Gwich'in, the people of the Northwest Territories and all Canadians.

These examples remind us of what can be when modern treaties are implemented effectively. They show that treaties support well-being, stability and prosperity. They drive growth, create jobs, build up our economy and ultimately build Canada strong. Bill C-10 offers a concrete way forward. By making implementation more visible and consistent, the commissioner would oversee the system from a whole-of-government perspective and make sure we are working consistently toward effective implementation.

Progress must be visible, it must be measurable and it must make a difference in people's lives. Trust is central to every treaty relationship. It takes time to build and ongoing effort to maintain. Trust is built through action: consistently meeting commitments and demonstrating results over time. The commissioner would be an investment in these relationships; in trust, accountability, efficiency and a more just and prosperous future for all Canadians.

Strong accountability measures promote responsible governments. They support credibility and, importantly, results. Modern treaty partners would continue to play an important role in the establishment and operation of the office of the commissioner for modern treaty implementation. The appointed commissioner must have the confidence of both Parliament and modern treaty partners. That is why the appointment process includes direct consultation with modern treaty partners.

When executing their mandates, the commissioner would determine the procedures, terms and methodology to be followed for

each review or performance audit after engaging with the relevant modern treaty partners. The commissioner would also provide relevant modern treaty partners with the opportunity to review and comment on any preliminary findings and recommendations of the commissioner, with any comments published in the final report. These processes have been specifically designed to provide credibility, transparency and independence for the commissioner and their office. These requirements would also ensure that modern treaty partners remain active participants in the commissioner's work.

Modern treaties represent a concrete step on the path of reconciliation. For modern treaties to truly move us forward, we must strive to find better ways of implementing their spirit and objectives. The commissioner would help us do that in a way that reflects the importance of these relationships to all of us.

● (1210)

As we reach third reading, I want to reflect on what this bill means in the broader context of reconciliation. Since the signing of the first modern treaty in 1975, successive governments have recognized the importance of these agreements because they know that Canada's future lies with strong, respectful relationships. They have understood that when we honour our commitments and build stronger partnerships with indigenous peoples, we create a stronger, fairer and more successful country.

In these uncertain times, we need partners we can count on. Indigenous modern treaty partners are exactly those partners. Modern treaties cover more than 40% of Canada's land mass, including 80% of the north. It is clear that the only way we can move forward and build Canada strong is in partnership with indigenous modern treaty partners and in accordance with our obligations. This creates unique opportunities for collaboration between modern treaty partners, Canada and other stakeholders on shared, crosscutting priorities in sectors including energy, natural resources, defence, finance and real estate. Modern treaty partners are already leading in this space in innovation, investment and development across Canada. They are doing it within federal implementation approaches that can continue to be strengthened.

This is the time to act. It is the time to strengthen how we carry out our commitments and advance reconciliation in concrete ways. That begins with passing Bill C-10. Reconciliation must be practical, must be measurable and must deliver results that people can see and feel in their daily lives. This bill is a practical step forward, one that supports partnership and helps modern treaties deliver the results they were meant to achieve.

Once again, I want to thank modern treaty partners for their leadership, advocacy and unwavering commitment to this work. The journey we took together to co-develop this legislation shows what is possible when trust, creativity and collaboration are at the heart of the process.

• (1215)

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for her speech. I hope she had a very productive summer.

As said many times in this debate, we agree with the diagnosis that governments of all stripes over 155-plus years have fallen short on their commitments with indigenous people. What we disagree with is the prescription that the government is coming out with now. We agree with modern treaties. In fact, the Harper government signed six throughout its term from 2006 to 2015.

What we have an issue with is that during committee we heard that there would be no guarantee, other than naming and shaming departments that are falling short on their commitments, that there would be fewer court cases. Also, through multiple Auditor General reports showing failures within both departments, ISC and Crown-indigenous relations, we have found years of failure but no correction. In fact, on May 4, 2006, we see, “Overall, Indigenous Services Canada did not effectively implement, monitor, or assess the New Fiscal Relationship initiatives it committed to with First Nation.” That was signed in 2016. This is a recent example.

To the minister's word, let us go from intention to implementation. Why have we not started already?

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, it is important work. Having a commissioner for modern treaty implementation has been a call from modern treaty partners.

As to the importance of the commissioner, they would be an agent of Parliament who would submit reviews and performance audits directly to Parliament. It is really important to note that the whole-of-government approach the commissioner would be taking is an opportunity for them to make findings and recommendations regarding implementation and to really be able to work with modern treaty partners and government to improve our relationships.

It is an opportunity to have findings and recommendations, to make sure they are public and to make sure we are reporting on the progress that is made. That is a really important part. A lot of the audits may show the areas where we need to do work, but it is equally important to show the areas where we have done a lot of work. The commissioner would have that opportunity, and I encourage all members of the House to continue to support this work.

Again, this bill was co-drafted with modern treaty partners. It is a call they have been asking Parliament to take up. It is also related to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act action plan that the government has, specifically chapter 5, section 9, which states that the co-development of indigenous modern treaties is really important.

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[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see you again, as well as all my colleagues, for this new session of Parliament.

I am very happy to see everyone again and to begin the debate on Bill C-10, which I think is important and I find interesting. My colleague from Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan worked very hard on this bill. I think everyone already knows that the Bloc Québécois agrees with the spirit of the bill.

I find it interesting that the government wants to establish the position of commissioner for modern treaties, because whenever it takes too long for commitments to be implemented, it is usually because the government is dragging its feet. Government members always give very eloquent speeches and make lofty promises. They always seem impressive, but it is clear that concrete action on the ground is slow to really happen in the various communities.

I hope the government and my colleague opposite will be telling us that this also means that the government is ready to commit to finally putting into action what has already been agreed upon. First nations and their governments have been waiting for this, and I think the time has come to take action.

Does establishing this position mean that the government is finally ready to deliver on what it has promised?

• (1220)

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question, and I would also like to thank the Bloc Québécois for its support. It is important that the whole House have the commissioner's reports, so that everyone is aware of the importance of modern treaties and so that people can see the recommendations. I encourage my colleagues, when they examine the budget, to bear these considerations in mind. They will see that the funds are there to support modern treaties.

I would like to raise another point. The commissioner deals solely with the work of the federal government, and not with that of provincial or territorial governments.

[English]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back representing the good constituents of the riding of Waterloo and to be having this really important debate.

Similar legislation was introduced in a previous Parliament but unfortunately did not come to fruition. We know there are many communities looking to advance legislation such as this. It is good to hear the goodwill on the opposition side in wanting to see this legislation advance, and I hope to see that done quickly, because if we want to see implementation and action, passing this legislation is definitely an important step.

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I would ask if the minister could please tell us who was part of the co-development of this act. Were others engaged in this process? That is something that constituents in the riding of Waterloo are asking. They are also asking how the commissioner would be chosen. Any insight from the minister would be greatly appreciated.

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, the legislation was co-drafted alongside the 27 modern treaties, as well as with federal officials. However, I would note that the consultation period was broader than that. There were over 130 partners, including indigenous modern treaty partners; first nations, Métis and Inuit groups, which also participated; national indigenous organizations and provincial and territorial governments. It was a broad consultation that occurred.

As to the process of selecting the commissioner, it would be done in consultation with modern treaty partners. Following that, it would go to the Governor in Council. It would then be brought forward for feedback from the leaders of the opposition parties. Again, it is about co-development in drafting and co-development in selecting the commissioner.

Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, we have listened to the minister's responses over the past few minutes, and we still have not heard any concrete action the government has taken to correct the mistakes shown in multiple auditors general reports. We still have outstanding issues dealing with education, drinking water, governance and programs, and the list goes on. Unfortunately, there has been no correction. This is the issue we raised about Bill C-10. There were no mechanisms to have enforcement, as I said earlier, other than naming and shaming.

What actions is the government going to take to get results for indigenous people and, in this case, first nations?

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, when looking at the socio-economic conditions of modern treaty partner communities, we see there is an increase in socio-economic conditions, which shows the importance and value of modern treaties. I would highlight that it is for the commissioner to continue to strengthen our relationships. The commissioner would conduct independent and expert oversight of any activities carried out by the government, would seek to ensure timely and effective implementation and would report directly to Parliament to hold the government accountable on the relationships, objectives and obligations.

This is an important report that would be coming to Parliament so that all parliamentarians could see the work being done throughout the year. They would have the opportunity to see what is working and the areas where we need to step up and continue to make progress. The opportunity and benefit of the commissioner for modern treaties lie in continuing to grow this relationship and highlighting the work that is ongoing and still needs to be done.

• (1225)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I see the legislation as another way that, through the Prime Minister, the Government of Canada is working collaboratively, recognizing that for us to deliver in a big way for Canadians and build Canada strong, we need legislation of this nature because of

the important role that indigenous people in Canada play and must play.

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Mr. Speaker, I definitely agree with my colleague. Modern treaty partners are critical in advancing many of the projects we are seeing right now, such as the Nisga'a nation with Ksi Lisims and the Tłı̨chǫ first nation with the Arctic economic and security corridor. In Iqaluit, we have NTI, which is leading the hydroelectric project. We are seeing modern treaty partners across the country not only in equity, but also leading the charge in these major projects, and we really look forward to continuing to work with modern treaty partners to build Canada strong.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Langley Township—Fraser Heights.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Brad Redekopp: It is an honour to be back in the House after summer. Welcome back, Mr. Speaker. I trust that you had a good summer, and if you will indulge me for a moment, I would like to welcome all of my colleagues back, on both sides of the House. I hope everybody had a great summer and was able to get back to their ridings and talk to a lot of people.

I certainly had that opportunity. I heard a lot of stories from people, and unfortunately, people are still struggling. People are struggling with the cost of living and groceries and the high price of rent, gas, clothing and things like that. Safety is another thing I heard about a lot, such as crime, drug use and homelessness, and just struggling with the state of our economy in general. Youth are having such a hard time finding good-paying jobs, and raises are not keeping up with inflation. I am sure all of us heard these stories, including my Liberal colleagues on the other side.

My goal when I am here representing the people of Saskatoon West is to save them money and make their lives better. When we look at legislation like Bill C-10, the lens I use is this. Would it help people in that way? Would it save people money? Would it make their lives more affordable and easier? We have a Conservative plan to restore the promise of an affordable, safe and independent Canada that saves people money, saves jobs, keeps people safe, fixes immigration and puts Canada first. I am curious about whether this bill would actually do any of these things.

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We are now at the third reading of Bill C-10, the commissioner for modern treaty implementation act. At this stage, the question is no longer whether the subject matters; of course it does. The implementation of modern treaties matters. The honour of the Crown matters. The relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples matters. The question is whether the mechanism in this bill would actually produce better results.

Bill C-10 would create a new commissioner for modern treaty implementation and a supporting office. The commissioner would review and report on how federal institutions are implementing modern treaties. Supporters argue that an independent officer can shine a light on failures and give treaty partners another means of holding Ottawa accountable. I understand that argument, but when I spoke at second reading, I raised a basic concern that remains today, which is that identifying failure is not the same as correcting failure.

Bill C-10 went to committee and was reported back to the House without any amendments, so the core questions remain. If a federal department is behind on a treaty obligation, what changes the next morning? If a minister has failed to meet an obligation, what requires action? If the same failure appears year after year, who is responsible for fixing it? Those are not arguments against accountability. They are questions about how accountability produces action.

Bill C-10 is specifically about modern treaties. It is not a general solution to every challenge facing indigenous people in Canada, and we should not pretend that it is. I represent a riding where indigenous issues are not theoretical. According to the 2021 census, nearly 30,000 people in Saskatoon identified as indigenous, so the work we do here in Ottawa should make a real impact on the lives of people in Saskatoon.

This debate also takes place at an important time of the year. On September 30, Canadians will mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day. It is a day to honour residential school survivors, their families and their communities. It is also a time to reflect on the lasting consequences of government policy toward indigenous peoples.

For me, reconciliation has to include truth, respect and action. Truth means being honest about our history. Respect means listening seriously to indigenous people and respecting treaty commitments. Action means delivering tangible results, such as food and clothing people can afford, better housing, economic opportunities and jobs, access to education and treatment, strong local services and governments that keep their word.

That brings me to something I saw first-hand this summer. I travelled to East Hastings Street in Vancouver. I visited Green Road Park in the Halifax region. I do not have to travel across the country to see the same human suffering. I can see the effects of addiction regularly around 20th Street in my own riding of Saskatoon West. What I saw this summer was not an abstract policy debate. I saw people living outside, caught in addiction. I saw communities struggling with disorder, poverty, mental illness and illicit drugs. I saw first-hand how illicit drugs can ravage individuals and destabilize communities. It reinforced for me just how vulnerable some off-re-

serve indigenous people can be when addiction, homelessness, mental illness and poverty collide.

The evidence in my own city should concern every one of us. Saskatoon's 2025 point-in-time homelessness count identified 1,900 people experiencing homelessness, and of the people surveyed, 83% identified as indigenous. That is a staggering overrepresentation. We see similar vulnerability when we look at the toxic drug crisis in British Columbia. The First Nations Health Authority reported that although first nations people represented approximately 3.4% of British Columbia's population, they represented 16% of toxic drug poisoning deaths in 2025.

● (1230)

Those numbers do not mean that every indigenous person experiencing homelessness suffers from addiction. They do not mean that every person suffering from addiction is homeless. We should not make assumptions like that about anybody or about who is involved. They do demonstrate that indigenous people are dramatically overrepresented among some of the most vulnerable Canadians living at the intersection of these crises. When we speak about reconciliation, that reality has to matter too.

There is an important connection here to Bill C-10. Modern treaty implementation is important, but for an indigenous person sleeping outdoors in Saskatoon, Vancouver or Dartmouth, a new office in Ottawa is not a treatment bed. It is not affordable food or stable housing. It is not a counsellor or a job. It is difficult for me to see how a new bureaucracy in Ottawa would help put food on the table in Saskatoon or save an indigenous family money when they pay their rent. We must honour treaty commitments, and we must respond to the urgent human needs directly in front of us.

My approach to addiction policy is that it should ultimately be oriented toward recovery. That does not mean pretending addiction is simple, because it is not. People have unique needs, and recovery can take time. Relapse can happen, but surely the goal should be to help people regain control of their lives and, wherever possible, escape destructive addiction.

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That is why the Conservatives have put forward proposals centred on treatment and recovery. Last election, the Conservative Party proposed federal funding to create 50,000 treatment opportunities for Canadians seeking recovery from addiction. Conservative MPs have also put legislation before Parliament aimed at making treatment a more meaningful part of the justice system. We introduced Bill C-231, which would give youth justice courts additional options to connect young people with problematic substance use treatment. We introduced Bill C-240, the offender rehabilitation act. That bill proposes additional rehabilitation and addiction treatment measures within the criminal justice and corrections systems.

These proposals reflect an important distinction. We should distinguish between the person trapped in addiction and the criminal organization or trafficker who profits from that addiction. A person in the grip of addiction needs a path toward recovery. A dealer or organized criminal network deliberately trafficking fentanyl presents a different problem, requiring law enforcement and criminal accountability. Those are different situations, and government policy should be capable of recognizing the difference.

It is good to see a shift to recovery-oriented solutions. That can mean intervention, when someone is in immediate danger, or detox, treatment and long-term recovery supports. I have seen examples of that recovery-oriented thinking right at home. The Saskatoon Tribal Council implemented a program that meets people on the streets and in encampments. The program is called Sawēyihotān, which is a Cree word that means “to bless each other”. Staff provide wellness checks, food and cultural supports. They advocate for detox beds. They connect people with emergency shelters. The program provides pathways toward transitional and supportive sober housing. That is worth paying attention to. It does not write people off. It meets people where they are. Crucially, it also helps to move them somewhere better.

To me, that is compassion with a destination. That same principle should inform how we think about reconciliation. The government should not measure success by how many structures it creates, how many reports it publishes or how much process it generates. We should measure whether people are actually better off. Are treaty commitments being fulfilled? Are people finding housing? Are young people finding opportunities? Are people trapped in addiction getting access to treatment? Are communities becoming safer? Are families being reunited? Those are outcomes Canadians can understand.

The commissioner created by Bill C-10 may provide useful information. Reviews and performance audits may help Parliament identify where treaty implementation is failing, but the commissioner would not replace ministers. The commissioner would not implement treaties. The commissioner would not build housing, operate treatment centres or deliver the services that people depend on. Those responsibilities would remain with government and the institutions that already possess the authority to act. Were the commissioner to identify a problem, the responsible minister should have to answer plainly. What is the problem? Who is responsible? What is being done? When will it be fixed? That is meaningful accountability.

As September 30 approaches, we should remember that reconciliation is not something Parliament completes by passing one bill. It

is a continuing responsibility. It is found in whether treaty promises are honoured and whether governments listen. It is found in what happens on the ground, in places like 20th Street in Saskatoon West and in communities right across the country, where people are trying, every day, to build safer, healthier and more hopeful lives. That is a standard I will continue to apply to Bill C-10 and to the broader work of reconciliation.

• (1235)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am interested in knowing where the Conservative Party lies on this issue.

Having a commissioner, as an independent parliamentary officer, would be a very positive step forward. As I have listened to Conservatives speak on the legislation, they have waffled on whether having a commissioner would be a good thing or a bad thing.

My question is very specific. Given the nature and importance of the modern treaties, does the Conservative Party support having that independent commissioner?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, our position is very simple. We want action. That is the bottom line. My concern with the legislation is that it creates bureaucracy, investigations, reports and a whole lot of time spent looking into things. It does not solve problems. The Auditor General has already identified many problems that exist in Canada's system, in failures of the government and of the system we have now, and yet there has been no action by the government to actually fix those things.

Our position is very simple. We want to see action.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my Conservative colleague for his pertinent remarks on this bill.

My question is this. Over the years, we have seen this government cloak itself in virtue. Every time they speak in any location, they say they are on unceded territory, they reach out to first nations communities, they show them some love, as teenagers like to say nowadays. However, when it comes to action, it seems to me that not much is happening. It seems to me that there are urgent human needs that should have been addressed years ago. I get the feeling that this is another step that may not lead to much.

I want to know whether my colleague shares my cynicism about the government's desire to establish this commissioner position all of a sudden, although we obviously agree on the idea of this office.

I still get the feeling that things are going to drag on. I still get the feeling that we are going to continue to see extremely critical situations, situations that are unacceptable from a humanitarian perspective in indigenous communities, that will continue to go undressed.

[English]

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, what the member has highlighted is something that we see over and over again from the government, and that is a whole lot of talk and a whole lot of lack of action.

We could look at anything, including the youth jobs crisis, inflation, cost of living issues, the cost of rent and groceries, or our immigration system. There are so many different things we could look at. Time and time again we see a big fancy speech, a big promise and a big commitment to do this and this, but when we look for the action, the changes, the things that impact people on a daily basis, like boil water advisories, these kinds of things have not been dealt with by the government.

Once again, we want to see some action. That is why it is difficult for us to get excited about creating more bureaucracy, because we know that bureaucracy impedes action. We want to see action.

• (1240)

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague.

If the federal government simply upheld and met its treaty obligations, would this position be necessary at all?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, that is a brilliant way to pose the question. Of course, if the government was doing what it needed to, this commissioner would not be needed.

What my colleague's question does is highlight the importance, again, of action and of actually solving problems. Oftentimes, positions like this bureaucratic commissioner are ways for the government to avoid having to deal with an actual problem. That is what we have seen time and time again.

One hundred per cent, if the government was actually doing what it needed to do, we would not need to be going down this road. We would have solved problems for indigenous people in Canada many days ago.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in the House of Commons after a very busy summer at home in my riding of Langley Township—Fraser Heights and throughout British Columbia.

Like every member of the House, I am sure, I heard from many Canadians about their concerns about the state of Canada's economy, so I would like to start with this: Conservatives are focused on saving Canadians money. Liberals are all talk and no results. Liberals are costing Canadians more. They are out of touch, and Canadians are out of money. The Conservative plan, on the other hand, restores the promise of an affordable, safe and independent Canada. It will save people money. It will save Canadian jobs. It will keep

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people safe. It will fix immigration, and it will put Canada first, always.

As I was speaking with people throughout British Columbia, I also heard deep concerns about the economic uncertainty that has arisen under the Cowichan Tribes decision, which, for the first time in Canadian history, declared aboriginal title over fee simple lands. Somehow those two competing interests have to live with each other, and that brings me to the topic of the day: Bill C-10, an act respecting the commissioner for modern treaty implementation.

Let me start with this. Conservatives agree with the importance of modern treaties. Treaties are the way forward for Canada. Treaties create certainty. Treaties provide clarity. Treaties are better than endless litigation. Well-negotiated treaties can reconcile indigenous rights, support economic development and provide stable foundations for future generations. Canada continues to grapple with one of the unfinished chapters of Confederation, unresolved indigenous land claims, and nowhere is this more true than in British Columbia, my home province.

This summer, as chair of the Conservative Party task force on property rights, I travelled around British Columbia with colleagues, and we met with realtors, bankers, appraisers, ranchers, builders, business owners, indigenous leaders and ordinary Canadian homeowners. I wanted to hear their concerns following the British Columbia Supreme Court decision in the Cowichan Tribes case. As I said, for the first time in Canadian history, aboriginal title has now been declared over privately held lands. The judge in that court case said that the indefeasible title provisions of the British Columbia Land Title Act do not apply to aboriginal title when it is declared over private lands. This is a seismic shift in thinking about private ownership, about private lands.

This goes to the very foundation of our modern western economy. Whether one disagrees or agrees with the legal reasoning in that decision, there is no disputing that it has generated significant uncertainty across many sectors in Canada's economy. We heard concerns about mortgage lending and financing. We heard concerns about real estate valuation and investment. We heard concerns about investment decisions. We heard concerns about municipal tax bases and economic development.

One real estate property appraiser described the situation this way: He said that, historically, appraisers could rely on the indefeasibility provisions of the land title office to confirm the ownership and determine exactly what interest was being valued. However, after the Cowichan decision, appraisal firms are increasingly inserting disclaimers related to aboriginal title claims. They are putting it right into their report, saying that they assume there are no aboriginal title claims on the property. Well, that goes to the value of the property and undermines certainty. It undermines confidence in our economy.

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Certainty matters. People buying homes need certainty. Businesses making investment decisions need certainty. Indigenous communities seeking economic development and opportunities also require certainty. Municipalities planning for the future need certainty. As one business leader at one of our round table meetings put it, if we have no certainty in Canada, we have no Canada. I would agree with that. We need to know where we are, going forward.

● (1245)

One of our meetings was in Victoria, British Columbia. My colleagues and I met with leaders from the Cowichan tribes, the plaintiffs in the litigation. We had a great meeting. We certainly did not agree on everything, but we agreed on one very important point: The treaty-making process in British Columbia has not adequately resolved these questions for either indigenous or non-indigenous communities. One of the chiefs made an observation that has stayed with me. She described the treaty-making process and the settlement of land claims as the unfinished work of Canada's Confederation, and I agree with that.

When British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871, Canada promised to connect the province to the rest of the country with a transcontinental railroad. As settlement expanded westward through Ontario and the Prairies, the federal government negotiated what we call today the numbered treaties, covering most of Ontario, all of the provinces, and even the northeastern section of British Columbia. These treaties facilitated settlement, established a relationship with indigenous communities, provided for certainty as the country grew, and facilitated development and even the railroad.

However, when Canada reached the Rocky Mountains, the process largely stopped. Apart from the Douglas treaties in the southern part of Vancouver Island around Victoria and Treaty 8 in the northeast, as I already mentioned, most of British Columbia was left outside the treaty system. The result is that British Columbia remains unique in Canada. Most of the province was never covered by historic treaties. This unresolved reality has shaped decades of litigation and important court cases, all of them originating in my home province: from the Calder decision to the Delgamuukw decision, the Tsilhqot'in decision and most recently the Cowichan decision.

Today, most of British Columbia's 204 identified first nations have unresolved claims. There are similar unresolved claims in other parts of Canada as well, such as in the Ottawa Valley, in the Maritimes and in some parts of Quebec, but British Columbia stands out as having a real lack of modern treaties. That is why we say modern treaties are so important. We support them.

Negotiated treaties are better than litigation. Clear treaties are better than uncertainty. Final settlements are better than decades of court battles. In fact, many of the constituents I heard from this summer reinforce that very point. The answer to uncertainty is not more uncertainty. The answer is clearer agreements: treaties that define rights, responsibilities and expectations.

That brings me to the topic of the day, Bill C-10. Many Canadians hearing about this legislation might reasonably assume that it is designed to accelerate treaty negotiations, settle outstanding claims or help complete the unfinished work of treaty making in Canada.

Unfortunately, that is not what the bill would do. Bill C-10 would primarily create a new commissioner and a new institution to oversee the implementation of existing treaties. That work was already being done very effectively by the Office of the Auditor General, but the Liberal government simply chose to ignore those reports. How would this be different with the new treaty commissioner?

The problem is not that Canada is suffering from a shortage of commissioners. It is suffering from a shortage of action and results. The Liberals' response to many problems is to create a new office, another agency, another commissioner or another layer of bureaucracy. Permits are being held up, so they create a Major Projects Office. Housing is unaffordable, so they create another office, another bureaucracy for housing that is going to overlook the previous commissions that were not doing their job. If treaty implementation is falling behind, the Liberals say to create another commission.

I am saying that the appearance of action is not action itself. We already have the Auditor General's office for that work. The answer is to do the work. Reconciliation cannot be measured by how many commissions there are. It must be measured by outcomes. Canada needs a serious plan to complete the unfinished work of reconciliation and treaty making. Reconciliation and certainty are not competing goals; they are complementary goals. Indeed, the best treaties in history have advanced both. Unfortunately, Bill C-10 would do very little. We do not need more commissions. We need action.

● (1250)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming more clear that the Conservative Party is positioning itself once again to say no to important legislation. It is not recognizing the importance of the modern treaty and the role that a commissioner can play.

Contrary to listening to what indigenous people are saying about the need for a commissioner, the Conservatives are actually saying no. It is not only a no to the government, but also to recognizing that the need is genuine and that, at the end of the day, having modern treaties and an individual responsible for reporting is a good thing.

Why will the Conservative Party not support indigenous people and the government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Langley Township—Fraser Heights.

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely supporting the modern treaty process. We underline how important it is. We underline that treaties are better than endless litigation, which we are seeing in British Columbia. I would just add that the government has mismanaged the litigation file seriously, just as it was mismanaging the treaty implementation. The Auditor General has reported on it numerous times.

Why do the Liberals not just fill the deficiencies, roll up their sleeves and get the job done?

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the Cowichan decision. My question is this: How will that decision potentially impact other areas in Canada, and what are the economic consequences of that? Will life become more affordable for Canadians as a consequence?

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, British Columbia is unique in that most of the territory is not covered by treaties, unlike Ontario, for example. However, there are areas, including my colleague's riding, where treaties have not been negotiated, so this is a Canada-wide problem. The uncertainty arising out of the litigation around property rights is undermining Canadians' confidence in one of the pillars of our economy: private property rights. It must be resolved.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question about the bill's shortcomings. Obviously, we are here to debate. However, although the government is saying that the bill will fully address the demands of the various indigenous communities, we know that there are problems with it that could result in the demands or desires of first nations and Inuit not being taken into account, even if there is a commissioner.

[English]

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, indeed there are a lot of gaps in Bill C-10. As a matter of fact, we are saying that the commissioner is not necessary. It would just be another layer of bureaucracy. We already have the Auditor General's office, which has been reporting on government deficiencies in implementing the modern treaties, but rather than admit that it has mismanaged the file, in typical Liberal fashion the government has just made another announcement about another organization that is finally going to solve the problems. I remain unconvinced that this is going to happen.

What we need is for the government to roll up its sleeves, get the job done and get it done now.

• (1255)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we were looking at an issue in public accounts around some indigenous services, and one of the Liberal members stated that the minister is not responsible for her department. Now we see that the government wants to turn further accountability over to an outside commissioner.

I wonder if the member could comment on the government's lack of accountability.

Tako Van Popta: Mr. Speaker, indeed, that is what we see with Liberal government throughout its now 11 years of history. There is a lack of accountability, a lack of getting the job done, more an-

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nouncements, more photo ops and more of the Liberals' trying to convince Canadians that they are doing the job, but they are not. We just need them to get the job done and get the treaties negotiated.

[Translation]

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today. This is the first time that I am rising this fall, and I realized this morning that this is the 11th year that I have had the privilege and honour of coming to the House to serve the people of Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan. I want to give a shout-out to them. I met people all across my immense riding this summer, and I want to assure my constituents that I am still passionate and enthusiastic about representing them. That is what I will do during this parliamentary session, which certainly looks like it will be a very exciting and busy one, even though it may not seem that way yet. I imagine there will be some twists and turns.

I represent a huge riding where 15% of the population is indigenous. Of course, seeing as I am the critic for indigenous and northern affairs, this bill is of particular interest to me. I am therefore pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-10, an act respecting the commissioner for modern treaty implementation. The Bloc Québécois said right from the start that we support this bill. Now, at third reading, following the study in committee, we still support this bill, which I must point out is the result of a request from first nations and Inuit.

This bill reflects these communities' request for a commissioner or some structure to serve as their watchdog for modern treaty implementation. This is something they have been asking for for years—more than 20 years, in fact. Today's topic of discussion is something that has been called for for decades. If I may briefly digress, I would point out that the same can be said of practically all bills and topics brought before the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs: that they have been called for for decades. That is a really long time to wait for results. Now, having reached third reading, we are on the verge of achieving a result. I therefore urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of this bill, despite the criticism we heard in the speeches. Obviously, we are here for the same purpose: to critique the bill by analyzing its weaknesses.

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First nations and Inuit have been calling for the creation of a body to hold the federal government accountable, because some of its obligations have been objectively unmet. This has been going on for decades. It is discouraging for first nations and a waste of their resources, which is obviously something we would like to avoid. I will come back to that later. The bill to create the position of commissioner for modern treaty implementation would help reduce these delays, or at least, that is our hope, and that is the intent of the bill. It would ensure that less time, resources and energy are wasted on processes that should be conducted not necessarily quickly, but efficiently.

I think we all know that we would not be discussing this bill today if the federal government were actually fulfilling its obligations. First nations and Inuit are simply asking for what is rightfully theirs. They are being told that the government is going to work on modern treaties and sign treaties and that this work will continue for several years to come. If the government had been committed to this and had worked diligently, always in consultation with first nations, treaties would have been signed faster and there would have been no need to go to court, for example, to resolve certain issues. I would say that this bill is a step in the right direction, specifically toward delivering the accountability required of the government when signing a treaty and ensuring seamless implementation of modern treaties.

• (1300)

Obviously, even beyond this specific bill, the Bloc Québécois supports self-determination for nations. We know that this bill is the result of a commitment to reconciliation, which we also agree with. This is one measure that could improve the situation. We still hear about colonialism and assimilation today. This is something the government can do to break the cycle. Based on that principle alone, without going into the details of the bill itself, this is another reason why the Bloc Québécois supports the bill, that is, to move the government away from its paternalistic approach, which, obviously, dates back to the beginning of Canada's history and even before that.

In committee, we heard testimony about the bill from several first nations. Naturally, they are all in favour of this bill being passed, particularly given that it was co-drafted. First nations and Inuit were consulted when the bill was being drafted in order to ensure it reflects their wishes and expectations. Several organizations told us that the federal government is stepping back from implementing treaties or is only implementing them in part. That is why they want a commissioner. The government is failing to honour its own commitments to first nations and Inuit communities. They want to cast off the shackles of colonialism, but they cannot because the government that should be helping them is in fact putting obstacles in their way. I am paraphrasing, but that is what we were told in committee.

I just realized that I am only on page three out of 10, and I may not have enough time, so I will have to cut my speech short.

In short, the testimony we heard leaves the impression that the federal government is signing treaties to try to satisfy first nations or that, at the very least, it is working on drafting treaties, but the work is extremely slow. As I was saying earlier—and I will say it

again, because it is important—the issue of money often came up in committee. Communities have to pay thousands of dollars to take the federal government to court in hopes of winning their case. As I said, that takes a lot of resources, both financial and human, and it really gets the communities' hopes up.

People sometimes forget this, but these communities do not have millions of inhabitants. They are sometimes very small communities that obviously do not have the same resources as the federal government. This is really David versus Goliath. They are like dwarves going up against giants. It is very difficult for first nations or Inuit communities to see these extremely demanding legal proceedings through to the end. These communities sometimes have a fairly small population, and, as I was saying, they do not have all the necessary means. As I said, these cases can sometimes drag on for decades. It is easy to imagine the consequences that these legal costs can have on the communities. These are financial choices that they also have to make.

First nations and Inuit also pointed out in committee that the commissioner will not have any enforcement powers. The Bloc Québécois also raised that same criticism of this bill. Yes, the commissioner is there to act as a watchdog for treaty implementation. They can shine a light on shortcomings, such as departments' lack of understanding or the government's inability to act in the best interests of nations that want to be able to use their resources to help, but that is not enough. The commissioner cannot force the government to act.

• (1305)

The trouble is that, although the commissioner can draw attention to what is not working, there is not necessarily an immediate solution. In fact, this goes beyond the government's mere willingness to act, even though we agree that, without this willingness, there would be no results at all. There is work to do on understanding modern treaty implementation, as we heard at committee. Aside from the government itself, the departments are also involved. As one might expect, treaty implementation does not only involve the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Department of Indigenous Services. Multiple departments must address the issues at the same time. This is often done in silos, which means that interpretations differ from one department to the next. Since the interpretations are different, the work is not done in the same way. Obviously, their approaches should be harmonized, but that cannot happen at the end either. That also causes delays.

I mentioned the government's willingness, but it is a question of finding solutions to ensure that departments can work together. They are already working together to a certain extent, but interpreting the treaties themselves is a huge problem. I do not wish to speak on behalf of civil servants, but this means hours of extra work for them. We need to find solutions that enable dialogue and harmonization. As I said, that is exactly what needs to happen so that treaties can be implemented more quickly and efficiently. The trouble is this silo mentality.

As we can see, there is a willingness that may be symbolic, to a certain extent. As one of my colleagues mentioned earlier, there are issues or difficulties that are already on the table, but the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs is already aware of them. We will share some of the shortcomings in a report. However, there is still work to be done, whether it be to give the commissioner an enforcement role or to address the issue of harmonizing different departments' interpretations, amongst other things.

In closing, I humbly reiterate the Bloc Québécois' support for Bill C-10. I am the Bloc Québécois critic for indigenous and northern affairs. It is a special role, because it means acting as spokesperson for another nation within a government that is obviously a colonialist government. It is still a colonial government in the eyes of first nations and indigenous peoples. Being their spokesperson requires me to display humility and to be willing to set aside or suspend my biases in order to try to understand what they want. It requires me to speak on behalf of those communities, which, in this case, are asking for a commissioner who can defend their interests and expedite treaty implementation.

We support the establishment of this office. We do not support creating yet another agency with more expenses and more red tape, as some of my colleagues have incorrectly said. We just need to know what is happening. First nations and Inuit want to know. They are asking us to shed light on what is happening.

As I said earlier, if this can push the government to act more promptly and effectively, then we are certainly on board. That is what first nations and Inuit are asking for.

To conclude, I hope that all the parties will agree with the bill so that we can pass it. We have been discussing it for more than one Parliament. That shows just how long certain processes can take. There is still work to be done to establish the office itself, but I hope it will be set up in the coming years so that modern treaties can be implemented faster, with the simple goal of improving the well-being of first nations and Inuit communities.

• (1310)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome my colleagues back to Parliament.

The modern treaty implementation bill has clear support and key partners. Our government evidently wants the bill to be implemented efficiently. According to my colleague's speech, the Bloc Québécois shares that desire.

However, there seems to be more hesitation from the official opposition. I would like to ask my colleague whether her party, which is also part of the opposition, will continue to put pressure on the official opposition to ensure that no procedural delays or tactics are used to further delay the passage of this bill. I think it is time to pass it. There are clear expectations from the treaty partners. I would like to hear her thoughts on that.

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, it has been seven years since I have sat across from a majority government. I imagine it should be pretty easy for the government to pass legislation quickly. However, it is important to listen to the opposition parties.

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Even though I do not necessarily agree with everything my colleague says, the fact remains that this bill could use some improvement. I would also like to remind members that, irrespective of the bill, the government must be willing to move forward on modern treaties. It is not only the commissioner who must push this forward. If the government were willing to do so, there would be no need to even vote on this bill.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her speech. We have had the pleasure of sitting together for 11 years already. I am also very proud that the name of my riding includes an indigenous name: Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk.

I listened very carefully to the remarks of my colleague, who is always well informed and always in touch with the constituents she represents in the House. She mentioned that she agrees with the principle of first nations self-determination. I would like to hear her point of view on this in more detail. How far could this go? Would that mean a first nation could become a self-governing country?

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, this has no bearing on the bill, but yes, there are modern treaties. As a Bloc Québécois member, I leave it to the Government of Quebec to reach its own decision in this regard. Personally, I believe that no country can be developed without the first nations, even a country like Quebec. My colleague is well aware that I am a sovereigntist. The first nations have a tremendous role to play. I also believe that the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador wants that too. First nations need to be part of every discussion. As I see it, that is extremely important. We have an opportunity to rewrite history in way that is fair, equitable and mindful of culture and language.

My colleague knows that the Wendat nation is reviving its language. When a language comes back to life, it affects culture too. Obviously, I see this as a promising sign. I believe that sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples are important for both Quebecers and first nations, but there are ways to work together, maybe even to create a country together.

• (1315)

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I too have had the opportunity to work with her for 11 years, and it has been an honour.

I think there is a bit of consensus on this bill. However, unless I am mistaken, this is at least the second, if not third, version of such a bill. Since this is a government bill, I do not understand why it could not be developed, finalized or passed in previous Parliaments.

Government Orders

I am aware that it died on the Order Paper, but why did it die on the Order Paper? There was a Parliament from 2019 to 2021, and then another from 2021 to 2025. It seems to me that this bill could have been passed sooner, particularly if there is consensus. I wonder whether the government is actually serious or whether it just wants to tell indigenous people that it has introduced a bill. I want to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and congratulate him in turn on his 11 years of representing the citizens of Rivière-du-Nord so diligently and passionately.

Of course, I too am wondering why this bill keeps reappearing in a new form. The government is always the one that drafts it, and there is relative consensus, as I believe the bill will be passed. We have to wonder why it has not been passed more quickly. This always results in delays for first nations and Inuit. In this case, Bill C-10 is causing further delays, and the government is fully aware of that. I do not wish to speculate on the government's intentions, but I hope that this time will be different. It is up to the government to prioritize consideration of the bill, the debate and the vote. If it wants to, it could ensure that the bill does not die on the Order Paper at the end of the current parliamentary session.

[English]

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from the Bloc for her work on this file and at the indigenous and northern affairs committee. It has been a pleasure working with that individual on this piece of legislation.

As she would have heard in the committee process, this piece of legislation is not expected to stop the number of court cases being brought before the government right now. It is a mechanism, basically, to name and shame government departments that are not living up to their word. We agree on this side of the House that governments of all stripes over many years have not lived up to their word with indigenous peoples, but yet we do not see in this piece of legislation a mechanism that has some kind of accountability when these failures do happen. The Auditor General has outlined report after report about failures within the department, but nothing seems to change.

Would the member opposite like to see some kind of teeth in this legislation that could actually hold departments accountable?

[Translation]

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I may not always agree with my official opposition colleagues, but that is what I said in my speech. I said that the lack of teeth is what could ultimately give us an additional structure but that we do not know exactly what it might contribute, besides calling attention to the government's shortcomings.

We hope this will not be necessary and that the government will simply meet its modern treaty implementation obligations. However, we are going a step further, though it will do no good unless the government is on board. Naturally, as MPs, we can keep working in committee or in the House to ensure that these treaties are implemented effectively.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question along similar lines to the one my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord just asked. He asked why we

are on the umpteenth version of this bill. I would like to know why this bill is the oldest one still before the House. This is Bill C-10, but we have now progressed beyond Bill C-30.

There does not seem to be any filibustering, and there is a general consensus about it. Does my colleague think that the government's failure to prioritize Bill C-10 sends the wrong message? I am talking about the fact that it has taken so long to put it on our agenda. Twenty-four bills have been referred to the Senate since this Parliament began, while this bill is still before the House.

• (1320)

Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague from Saint-Jean asked me that question, as it allows me to add something I was not able to mention earlier.

As I see it, yes, this does raise some concerns because, on top of that, the government currently has a majority, so it could prioritize certain issues and pass legislation very quickly. Again, I do not want to speculate about its motives, but I have noticed that its interest in first nations seems like lip service. We are talking about this bill, but another bill, one dealing with water, was introduced in June just before the summer adjournment. We have been waiting for that bill for several Parliaments now. Once again, this same government has drafted and reintroduced the bill several times, but in the end, the bill never makes it to the floor for debate, never completes the legislative process and never gets sent to the Senate.

I think the government is showing that it has good intentions, but once again, it is not following through. The government needs to take action, but in my view, this might be just window dressing.

[English]

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back here with our colleagues of all sides. I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg Centre.

We are all treaty people. This is something we sometimes say in our communities. This is something we sometimes say in the House of Commons. This is something we say to each other in classrooms, hopefully in boardrooms, in places across Canada. The question is, what do we mean by that? How do we animate those words? Regardless of when a person or their family arrived on this land, all of us live within relationships that were shaped by treaties. We are all immigrants, except for the first peoples of this place. Treaties are living arrangements. They are a recognition that indigenous peoples were and remain self-governing nations with which Canada must maintain an ongoing relationship. Today, at this third reading, Bill C-10 asks us to strengthen those foundations.

Long before Confederation, indigenous nations entered into treaties and diplomatic relationships with European powers and later with the Crown. These agreements were often understood by everyone involved, including indigenous peoples, as commitments to share land, to coexist peacefully, and to maintain enduring nation-to-nation relationships. In fact, we use those words often in our own land acknowledgements. We refer to these treaties explicitly. We talk about what those treaties were committing to.

The treaty relationship was not meant to be temporary; it was meant to last. It was a commitment that was signed. These were oaths that were made, commitments made, and yet, as we know, the history that followed was marked more often by broken promises, unilateral decisions, exclusion from governance, and policies of displacement and assimilation.

Many treaty commitments were delayed, others ignored. Some were interpreted, incredibly narrowly, by governments. Indigenous peoples, later nations, and others spent generations advocating, organizing, litigating, cajoling and negotiating, simply to have those existing treaties which, yes, were decades or centuries old, to be honoured; agreements that were signed for generations to come.

The good news is that in this era, treaties continue to be signed. Yes, we are getting a bit better, hopefully, at recognizing those treaties or reacting to the litigation that results in the recognition of those treaties. In this era, in the modern era, modern treaties, sometimes called comprehensive land claim agreements, reflect contemporary realities while building on long-standing indigenous rights and relationships to the land, including rights that are recognized in the charter and in other pieces of legislation.

Since the 1970s, dozens of these agreements have been concluded across the country, particularly in northern Canada and British Columbia, addressing matters such as self-government, land management, resource sharing, environmental stewardship and economic development, but the challenge is, as it was, implementation. Indigenous treaty partners have repeatedly pointed out that signing an agreement is only the first step. An agreement on paper means little if governments fail to follow through consistently and transparently. That is where Bill C-10 comes in. Bill C-10 would establish an independent commissioner for modern treaty implementation and an accompanying office to support that work. The commissioner would review and audit how federal institutions are fulfilling Canada's obligations under modern treaties and would report publicly on findings.

I hear some mention on the other side about bureaucracy, about process, but this is actually about accountability. I think our forefathers and foremothers would have wanted some further accountability on the treaties that were signed. Is it not possible that those treaties that were signed decades and centuries ago would have been less honoured in the breach and more honoured in the practice if we had had a commissioner, if we had some institution that was a bit removed from government, that was answerable to Parliament, to call for accountability on the treaties that had been signed? Treaties that, yes, are decades or centuries old, but that represented real, enduring commitments that were being made by all parties, not just for themselves, not just for the people that they represent, but for the future generations that they were binding. That is what

treaties are. They are binding commitments across generations as well as peoples.

I believe this piece of legislation, and my colleague, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, has done an excellent job outlining some of its benefits, including in this era, is going to be a very important piece of accountability, a very important piece of the framework that we need to continue on this reconciliation journey, to continue to honour not only the spirit, but also the meaning, of what it means to all be treaty people.

This legislation also gives me an opportunity to speak a bit about how this issue relates to our riding of Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park. Those who are more veterans of this place know that the name of the riding used to be Parkdale—High Park and through the federal electoral boundaries commission, the decision was made and adopted to add the name Taiaiaiko'n.

• (1325)

What is Taiaiaiko'n, and where is Taiaiaiko'n? It is a settlement near what is now Baby Point, in the northwest corner of our riding, in a beautiful corner of west Toronto, just along the Humber River, and it has been a place of commerce, fishing and recreational activity for millennia. It was part of something called the Carrying Place trail, an important trading route that linked Lake Ontario to the upper Great Lakes.

Taiaiaiko'n has been settled or inhabited in some way since at least 6000 BCE. There have been millennia of continuous human settlement in this beautiful part of west Toronto. It is a former Iroquois village, but many different inhabitants, the historical record suggests, have been there over the years. The record shows the presence of the Seneca, the Haudenosaunee under the Iroquois, the Wendat peoples, the Mississaugas, the Anishinabe and, much more recently, French Canadians. It is an important commercial space, place of exchange and place of dialogue.

As I have learned from conversations with community members, historians and indigenous knowledge keepers, the story of Taiaiaiko'n is neither simple nor singular. In the English reckoning, there are different spellings of the word Taiaiaiko'n. There are also different pronunciations. Some pronounce it Taiaiaiko'n. We in the riding have chosen to pronounce it as Taiaiaiko'n, but there are multiple ways to speak about this community, this beautiful part of west Toronto that is now part of the Baby Point neighbourhood. The archaeological record continues to show a really significant presence of indigenous peoples and a variety of indigenous settlements all the way along the trail and the river, including what we believe are some burial mounds in High Park.

Government Orders

All of this is the story of the indigenous presence in west Toronto. All of this is the story of Taiaiaiko'n. All of this is the story also of reconciliation. As I mentioned, there are multiple different ways of pronouncing our riding's name. There are different stories about who was there when. A lot of good research has been done, including by the City of Toronto and by the Taiaiaiko'n Historical Preservation Society.

Just to refer to the ongoing connections of these ideas and these practices in our riding, I want to point out to constituents and people across west Toronto the opportunity to gather in our riding on Wednesday, September 30, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, when at the Dundas Roncesvalles Peace Garden, starting at 3:30 p.m., there will be the sixth annual Orange Shirt Day walk in commemoration of that very important day, and we will walk south from there. The event starts at 3:30 p.m. eastern time. The walk starts at around 4:15 p.m. eastern time.

Too often we look for a singular story, but indigenous knowledge systems frequently teach us to value multiple perspectives, multiple voices and multiple ways of understanding the same place. We continue to be enriched through events connected to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, through events related to Indigenous History Month, including through the variety of activities that continue to happen in Toronto, particularly in Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, and work by groups like the Taiaiaiko'n Historical Preservation Society, organizations such as the High Park Nature Centre, and by people such as Abby Bushby, those of the Dundas Roncesvalles Peace Garden, and young spiritual elder Philip Cote, who has enriched my understanding of these issues significantly.

This bill would create the legal underpinning of the values we all espouse, a further legal underpinning to follow from the charter, the Constitution and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which has been adopted by the House and reflected in the calls to action and recommendations. These emerged from the commissions for which indigenous peoples, along with allies, fought for tirelessly to establish and were eventually recognized in the House through really significant and important reports on missing and murdered indigenous women and on the disaster of residential schools.

This bill creates part of the legal underpinning to live our values and respond to some of that advocacy, to those stories, to what we heard in those reports, and to build on what we committed to, whether it was in 1982, in 2006-07 or decades or centuries ago, or whether it is with new treaties that are going to follow. It strengthens the nation-to-nation relationships that are essential to Canada's future.

For that reason, I am pleased to support Bill C-10 at third reading. I encourage all members of the House to do the same.

• (1330)

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives on this side of the House agree with the diagnosis that governments of all stripes have failed indigenous peoples for way too many years. Even in the member's speech, he listed a number of areas that the government is working on. For all of those areas the member outlined in his speech, the Auditor General has released report after report on the continuous failures within

various government departments when it comes to indigenous peoples.

Given this legislation, which was commented on at committee as having no teeth to actually enforce ongoing failures, what mechanisms does the government have in place to ensure accountability?

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, it is a very good question. We create these structures to drive accountability. The existence of officers of Parliament is a very important structure to create accountability.

The existence of the Department of Indigenous Services has helped in responding to some of the issues that were identified, especially those around clean drinking water, something that I recall working on when I was working in the Premier of Ontario Kathleen Wynne's office, knowing that the response was not fast enough and that we needed some pressure, yes, from the inside but also from the outside to respond. It is that combination of institutions, along with the commitments we make in Parliament when we decide to endorse a piece of legislation like this, that is part of the solution.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of my colleague. I want to amplify the fact that, by having this independent commissioner, we would really be providing more accountability and more transparency, at a time when Canadians have an expectation.

We see that in terms of the government's drive to build a stronger and healthier economy and in the importance of things such as the modern treaties. These are ways we can demonstrate clearly that, working collaboratively, we can make a difference and build a stronger Canada. When we look at Bill C-10, we see that it would be an important aspect of legislation in ensuring that there is more transparency and accountability through the establishment of a commissioner. Would the member not agree with that?

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely would agree.

As my friend so well knows, these are not commitments that are made and then forgotten. We continue to make new commitments, and we continue to attempt to honour the commitments already made, including those structures that my hon. friend has pointed out, as well as the commitments we make in this House and the commitments we make in debate by drawing attention to the treaties.

In my riding, it is the Williams Treaty and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty. There are some very specific treaties that are involved that, even centuries later, we have to be attentive to. There are new treaties, as my colleague points out, that result in real commitments and real benefits. To have a lens on that with an outside voice that is commenting on this to parliamentarians is really critical.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to let the member across the way know that the NDP absolutely supports appointing an independent treaty commissioner, but I am having trouble because the government, time and time again, has demonstrated that it actually does not respect treaties. There is the MOU signed with Alberta without treaty partners; treaties 6, 7 and 8; and Bill C-5, which in fact violated modern treaty rights holders including the Grand Council of the Crees, a bill that was supported by the member who is from that territory.

If we were to have an independent treaty commissioner, would the government actually listen to the commissioner and stop violating treaty rights?

• (1335)

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague across the way, but regarding Bill C-5, we will have to agree to disagree. There is text right there in Bill C-5, which is now the law of the land, that is explicit about the recognition of indigenous rights and treaty rights in a variety of ways. It is a sign of our commitment on this side of the House that we put that into one of the very first pieces of legislation.

On heeding the work of the commissioner, that is something we would all have to attempt to do in the most committed way possible upon the establishment of this office.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is so nice to rise today as we begin another session.

I want to start by saying that the NDP absolutely supports Bill C-10. It is something that indigenous and modern treaty partners have long been asking for, an independent oversight and accountability mechanism over the federal government on modern treaty implementation.

This is also an obligation that is outlined in UNDRIP, which includes commitments to improve modern treaty implementation. This has been Canadian law, or affirmed in Canadian law, since the passing of Bill C-15 which received royal assent on June 21, 2021. However, as we know, it is one thing to change laws; it is another thing to change colonial behaviours.

With the Liberal government, I have not seen this kind of violation of, watering down of or pushing against indigenous rights since the Harper era. It is not surprising that our Prime Minister was taking photo ops with former prime minister Harper at his CEO summit that was held in Toronto just last week.

This bill would establish many important things. It would establish an independent commissioner for modern treaty implementation and support the office to review and audit federal institutions on the implementation of modern treaties and related agreements, with reports that would have to be tabled in Parliament. It requires draft findings to be shared and many other accountability measures. We know, and in fact on occasion the whole House has acknowledged, the importance in actually achieving reconciliation of respecting our treaties, which are affirmed by aboriginal rights and title that form part of our Constitution. The government has indicated that it is committed to achieving reconciliation with first nations, Inuit and Métis people.

Government Orders

Those are noble promises, but unfortunately, as we see a Liberal member and the Deputy Speaker of the House speaking during my time, interrupting my time, in action, this has been demonstrated to be completely unimportant to the current Liberal government.

We know that modern treaties are a part of our constitutional framework. We know that modern treaties were intended to establish a mutually agreed upon and enduring framework for reconciliation and ongoing relationships between the Government of Canada and indigenous peoples. Strong treaty relationships work when respected, when people work nation to nation. As the former prime minister Right Hon. Justin Trudeau has said, there is no more important relationship than that with indigenous peoples. When we respect treaty relationships, and when treaty partners actually respect each other, we can flourish, not only as independent nations but also as a country that we now call Canada.

This was affirmed and is part of the articles in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.

It also states in the United Nations declaration that its purposes are to provide a framework for the Government of Canada's implementation of the declaration to affirm that the declaration is a universal international human rights instrument with application in Canadian law, something that we affirmed through the passing of Bill C-15.

• (1340)

We know the minimum human rights standard, the bottom floor that formed part of the declaration. What is stated in the declaration are “the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world”, and they must be implemented in Canada. As I indicated, actions speak louder than words, and unfortunately the Liberal government has demonstrated, not through its words but through its actions, that it is not dedicated to reconciliation. In fact, in the year and a half since the election of the so-called new Liberal government, our Prime Minister has made many gaffes in terms of respecting and upholding treaty rights in this country.

Government Orders

In November 2025, the federal-Alberta memorandum of understanding on energy development, which endorsed the construction of a new bitumen pipeline from Alberta to the B.C. coast, failed to include impacted indigenous nations, such as Treaty No. 6, Treaty No. 7, Treaty No. 8 and other nations, in decisions affecting their lands, territories and resources. The Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 First Nations stated, “We are disappointed the Confederacy...was not included at the decision making table prior to or during the signing of the MOU, despite the importance both governments have placed on First Nations inclusion.” This is an example that actions speak louder than words. It went on to say:

We require a seat at any table where decisions are made that impact our People. Treaty No. 6 Nations are the only Rights Holders on this Land—there would be no Alberta without Treaty. It is unacceptable that we need to request this. There can be nothing for us, without us.

Actions speak louder than words. It is a slap in the face by the Liberal government to treaty partners. It is a clear demonstration of its total disregard of treaties, which was also demonstrated in June 2026, when the government was forced by a class-action settlement to introduce clean water legislation. However, according to the Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige, “Bill C-37 was introduced without broad or meaningful input by first nations. Our letters of advocacy have been met with deafening silence”. This is another slap in the face to treaty partners.

Chiefs at the Assembly of First Nations unanimously opposed the Prime Minister's plan for projects of national interest, with AFN National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak denouncing the government's plan, stating, “The federal government can try and set up all the timelines that they want for project approvals, but they can't put a deadline on First Nations rights.”

I want to be clear. The NDP absolutely supports putting in place an independent treaty commissioner to oversee the actions of the government, but as we have seen through the actions of the government, it does not respect treaties, does not respect the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, does not respect the rule of law and does not respect our Constitution and section 35 rights. When this commissioner is put in place, will the government finally listen, follow a path of true reconciliation and respect our treaties?

• (1345)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I disagree with many of the thoughts the member just expressed on the record. I am glad and grateful that the NDP is going to be supporting the legislation. That is a very strong and positive thing. However, let me remind my friend that in Manitoba, there is OneNorth and the Arctic Gateway Group. Forty-one northern indigenous communities came together for that. On the port of Churchill expansion, what this government and Premier Wab Kinew have been emphasizing is that it is being driven by indigenous people and that it will not be possible without the indigenous leadership and indigenous people of northern Manitoba. Does the member support the government's action toward that?

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, this is about free, prior and informed consent, and the government needs to stop announcing projects of national interest that involve indigenous people after the fact. In

fact, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Linda Debassige called out the government for its “continued failure to respect our Nation's inherent rights and the treaties.” She said, “the lands and resources being targeted for development and investment are within the treaty territories of the Anishinabek First Nations around the Great Lakes region.” She went on to say, “First Nations will continue to demand justice, respect, and the fulfillment of the Crown's constitutional and treaty obligations to the original relationship.”

That was her response to the latest and greatest debacle: the slap in the face to the treaty at the CEO summit in Toronto.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Winnipeg Centre gave a passionate speech that had a lot of great points. We do not necessarily agree on everything, but I certainly appreciate everything she said today.

One of the issues I have with this bill is that we have seen a lack of accountability from the government. Report after report from the Auditor General has been ignored by the government. The government said earlier that it is not the minister who is responsible for implementing the modern treaty commitments, but this commissioner.

I wonder what my colleague thinks about the government taking accountability and responsibility away from the minister and pushing them onto the commissioner instead of taking responsibility itself.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, the government has clearly demonstrated that the only partners it cares about are big corporations, which comes on the backs of people, the environment, indigenous rights and community health and safety. If we want to talk about accountability, the government has shown that it is not accountable. It has continued to violate the minimum standards outlined in the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples time and time again over the last year and a half.

I am calling the government's bluff. If it is going to put a commissioner in place, it better listen to that commissioner.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I too support Bill C-10, but it is galling to hear the words that the government respects the rights of indigenous people, when it is forcing the Tsleil-Waututh Nation to go to court to try to stop the dredging of Burrard Inlet after years of effort and the fake commitments from the government to use stewardship and science to protect that area of the traditional territory of the Tsleil-Waututh. One of the concerns of the Semiahmoo and Chief Harley Chappell is that it is going to destroy Roberts Bank with its new giant deepwater pipeline port.

What do words mean when the actions are so very different?

• (1350)

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, as somebody who has rights holder adhesion to Treaty No. 4, I can say that the only thing the government is committed to is saying the right words. Its actions speak differently. It is time for the Liberals to stop using our brown bodies as indigenous people and stop slapping us in the face when they turn their backs on their treaty obligations time and time again. Upholding treaties means protecting our environment, building the country and keeping projects out of the courts.

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to split my time with the member for Edmonton Northwest.

At second reading, Conservatives raised a fundamental question about Bill C-10 and the government's proposal to create a new commissioner for modern treaty implementation. The question was not whether Canada must honour its treaty obligations. Of course it must; there is no question there. It is not whether the federal government should be accountable to indigenous peoples when it fails to meet the commitments it has made. Of course it should. The question is actually much simpler: Will creating another federal office actually fix the failures of the last 100-plus years?

The Conservative position throughout the consideration of this legislation has been that Canada's problem is not a shortage of reports, commissioners, bureaucracies or oversight mechanisms. It is a shortage of accountability for the people already responsible for negotiating and implementing Canada's treaties. That distinction is important. Bill C-10 would establish an independent commissioner and office to audit, review and report on federal institutions, ministerial responsibility, measurable implementation requirements, parliamentary oversight and consequences when departments fail to fulfill treaty obligations. After this bill has proceeded through Parliament, that fundamental concern is still on the table.

The Office of the Auditor General already examines treaty negotiations, modern treaty implementation, self-government agreements and treaty land entitlements. Its work in this field stretches back decades. The federal government has also created the modern treaty implementation office, the assessment of modern treaty implementation process, the performance management framework, the modern treaty management environment, the deputy minister's oversight committee and the reconciliation secretariat.

The argument Conservatives are making and have been making this whole time is not that nobody is watching. It is that too few people are being held responsible. Events outside this chamber since legislation was first debated make that question even more important. We should be looking at the actual results.

I know that government members have said a few times in their speeches that now is the time to have results. Well, I will give one example, from May 4, 2026. This is from an Auditor General's report, the first one on the page:

Overall, Indigenous Services Canada did not effectively implement, monitor, or assess the New Fiscal Relationship initiatives it committed to with First Nations. The Government of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations agreed in 2016 [which is pretty recent] to establish the initiatives to advance First Nations' right to self-determination and support efforts to close persistent socio-economic gaps between First Nations and other Canadians.

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This agreement was signed between the government and the AFN. We have had 10 years and an Auditor General's report that says nothing has been done and that they are not being held accountable.

The government is not seeing changes at its own end. We have all these departments already looking into what the government is doing wrong. We have report after report. We just have to go to the Auditor General's website to see there is a whole slew of reports going back decades noting where the government and governments before it have been failing, yet nothing is changing within the departmental structure. All that is changing is that we are adding one more department after another, with more reports and more reports. We are just piling them on, but no one is being held accountable.

It was even said at committee when we studied this bill that Bill C-10 is basically a name and shame bill. We see that in the Auditor General's reports when the Auditor General puts forward analyses on different governments, programs and departments.

Not only that, but Indigenous Services Canada, which I mentioned in the story just a few moments ago, has over 8,000 bureaucrats right now. This government department is relatively new, but its whole mandate is to put itself out of business, and it is going in the complete wrong direction. If it is going to put itself out of business, we need to see more power given to indigenous communities, less power controlled in Ottawa and less reliance on nations coming to Ottawa to seek more money for various programs. It is not supposed to work that way.

• (1355)

The government says it is working on it. The government says this is its vision. We heard that from the former prime minister. It somewhat continues today but it is just getting bigger. It is getting bigger and more bloated and we do not have any accountability from the government bureaucracies themselves. Why is that happening? That is the fundamental question. That is what we should be asking each other today, not whether we need another department to name and shame for one day. Maybe it circulates in the media for a day or two, longer if a Conservative is in power, and then we look at it and nothing really changes. That is the problem.

The Auditor General is an officer of Parliament. We are going to create another officer of Parliament to create another report. See how this goes? See what happens? It is just more circular action. Nothing actually changes. We do not actually see any measurable changes for indigenous communities. That is the whole problem. I would have loved to ask the member for Winnipeg North, who was talking about accountability, a question, if I had had the opportunity when he was talking about that.

Statements by Members

Let us use the Auditor General's report that I had just talked about a few seconds ago. Given that there has been 10 years of failure, who has been held accountable? Has anything changed within the department? Clearly, nothing has changed. They had 10 years to work on that new fiscal agreement. It was signed by the government. The government is still here. Nothing has changed. We have another report that says it has not. What is actually changing? Nothing is actually changing. This is the whole problem.

The commissioner for modern treaty implementation cannot negotiate a good treaty. That is for the government to do. The commissioner cannot substitute for the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. A commissioner cannot substitute for the Minister of Justice. A commissioner certainly cannot be a substitute for Parliament.

The question for Parliament, because nobody is being held responsible when things go wrong, and clearly there is a lot of that, is how Parliament can better hold governments to account. We cannot do that because there is no accountability within the departmental structure. That is the whole problem.

I look at the Auditor General's website. There are failures in education, in clean drinking water, in emergency response and the list goes on and on. Most of the reports that I am looking at on the Auditor General's website are just follow-ups from previous reports. There is very little action.

If we are saying that we want Ottawa, which has created the problem in the first place, to fix the problem, and if it is not doing that, we need to name and shame for a day, but nothing actually improves. Again, we are going in a circle. Nothing is changing. By creating another office with another bureaucracy, with more and more reports and staff and offices, we are not actually fixing the problem.

Conservatives, on this side of the House, agree with the diagnosis. There has been a massive problem. What we disagree with is the prescription the government has presented to us today, and that is Bill C-10, which would create yet another level of bureaucracy but little to no action.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)
[English]

JIM BRUCE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, Canada lost one of our greatest scientists. Globally respected environmental scientist and leader, Dr. Jim Bruce, died in his 89th year, as ever, with his wonderful, dear wife Ruth of 77 years at his side.

Jim led the way in water policy science in this country and globally, served with the World Meteorological Organization and was one of the founders of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

We have lost his voice, but we have not lost his words. He wrote, in June 1988, as the consensus statement of our first international

scientific conference in Toronto, “Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment whose ultimate consequences could be second only to a global nuclear war.”

In his memory, it is not too late. We must redouble our efforts. In the name of Dr. Jim Bruce and all he stood for, we must save all we can while we can.

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MEMBER FOR SOUTH SURREY—WHITE ROCK

Ernie Klassen (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Parliament resumes, I am reminded that the strength of Canada is found in our communities. During the last few months, I met with local businesses, community organizations and residents, attended community celebrations, hosted several round tables and saw young people developing valuable skills and experience through the Canada summer jobs program.

I had the privilege of participating in the Special Olympics Canada Summer Games. Watching my son compete alongside other athletes with disabilities was a powerful reminder that perseverance and teamwork are at the heart of the Canadian spirit.

In Amsterdam, I represented Canada at a human rights conference where I was reminded that our country continues to be respected around the world for the values we uphold.

As the Prime Minister says, Canada has what the world wants. That strength begins in our communities where Canadians show that when we work together, challenges can be overcome. Let us bring that same spirit of unity, pride, optimism and determination to this House. Let us work together and build an even stronger Canada.

* * *

ALEXANDRIA GARNEAU

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of a remarkable daughter of Prince George, Alexandria “Alex” Garneau, who tragically passed away on August 20.

Alex was an exceptional athlete at high school, collegiate and national levels, but Alex's impact on our community went far beyond her athletic career. Her smile, her laugh and the energy she brought to every room and every person she met was infectious. She gave back to the community as a coach and became a dedicated hockey mom supporting not only her own children but countless young athletes and families. Her family described her as the glue that held them together. Her father-in-law said, “She was the best of us”, and her husband Jordan described her as a person who made their house feel like a home.

Alex's death reminds us to cherish the ordinary moments we have together, because when someone we love is gone, sometimes it is not on the big occasions when we would give anything to have them back. It is one more morning, one more game of crib, one more drink on the deck, one more conversation when nobody is watching the clock; just one more. It is one more ordinary moment with someone we love.

To Jordan, Josie, Jackson and the entire Garneau, Miller and Le-Brun families, please know that their Prince George community stands with them.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the leaves turn and children head back to school, fall has officially arrived.

This summer, I had the privilege of connecting with families across my riding at our community barbecue and ice cream socials and on their doorsteps. As we return to Ottawa, their priorities are my driving force.

Our constituents are watching our relationship with the United States very closely. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, our government stood firm and walked away from a deal that surrendered too much. We remain ready to negotiate, but never at the expense of Canadian jobs or Canadian sovereignty. Instead, we are actively diversifying our trade to grow a resilient economy and seeking deeper partnerships with our allies.

Closer to home, we are tackling affordability head-on, building more homes people can afford, eliminating the excise tax on gas and lowering grocery prices. Together, we will build Canada strong.

* * *

• (1405)

TAX REFORM

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after spending the summer in Yellowhead, the most beautiful part of Canada, I am pleased to return to Ottawa to continue representing Alberta in the House.

Over the past several months, I have had the opportunity to speak with small businesses, farmers and community leaders. One message I consistently heard was that Canadians are working hard, but the tax system they are being asked to navigate is far too complicated. That is why tax reform is a major focus for me. As the only CPA with tax experience in the House of Commons, I take this responsibility seriously. I have met with shadow ministers, members from a range of backgrounds, fellow CPAs and tax experts. I look forward to engaging with more stakeholders.

Canada's tax code has become inefficient, and the CRA is not working as intended. Canadians deserve a simpler, fairer tax system that is understandable and predictable, and helps grow the economy.

Statements by Members

GLOBAL GOALS WEEK

Jacques Ramsay (La Prairie—Atateken, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2015 Canada committed to supporting the sustainable development goals, including improving the health and well-being of everyone around the world. As I look back on how far we have come, I am reminded of the progress Canada has supported, being most notably a long-standing leader in global health. During those years, we have committed essential funding through a 10-year commitment to global health and rights and have supported organizations like The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

This Global Goals Week serves as a crucial reminder that Canada's global health leadership is more important than ever, as we inch closer to the end of this decade and try to make this world a healthier place for all of us.

[Translation]

Now, more than ever, Canada must remain a leader in defending the right to health care. There is still work to be done.

* * *

[English]

ANTI-SEMITISM

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, a shooting took place outside a Belleville synagogue. Constable Smith, who was stationed outside the synagogue, was shot and is now hospitalized in critical condition.

This is a back-to-back statement in which I thank, and pray for, a police hero hit by gunfire in the line of duty.

What happened to our country, so Canada's Jewish community is afraid to go to temple? I asked my colleagues on the Liberal side to save their tweets. They did nothing to protect the Jewish community, get rid of the IRGC and Hamas networks in Canada, empower the RCMP to intervene locally or stop dehumanizing Jews by accusing Israel of genocide. Civilian casualties of war are not genocide. Finally, people who promote Islamist jihad do not belong in Canada. Open your eyes. Enough is enough.

On this difficult day, I wish the Jewish community *G'mar chatima tova*.

*Statements by Members***ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the deeply disturbing incident that took place on August 28 at Fleetwood Islamic Centre in Surrey. Members of the community arrived for prayers to find their mosque had been vandalized with hateful and Islamophobic graffiti, including explicit death threats, along with raw animal remains left at the site.

These acts are completely unacceptable. Places of worship must remain safe and welcoming spaces for everyone. Islamophobia and racism have no place in Canada. Every Canadian deserves to live and worship safely, freely and without fear.

* * *

[Translation]

COST OF LIVING

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament is back to work today and the people watching at home have just one question on their minds. They want to know what we are going to do for them.

Last week, Money Mentors reported that nearly one in two workers feel less financially secure than they did a year ago. Roughly the same proportion say they could get by for no more than two months if they lost their job today. These are not just figures on a spreadsheet. We are talking about young people who are just starting out, families who are trying to get established. These are people who work hard, follow the rules and do their part, but who feel as though they are paying more and more and getting less and less in return. Hard work should still be enough to put a roof over our heads and food on the table, to raise a family and build something for our children.

Canadians are doing their part. Now, they want results. Our role here, as an opposition party, is to speak on behalf of worried Canadians who want change. The promise of Canada is not broken, but we need to remind this Liberal government about it every week, because it is putting its own interests ahead of Canadians' interests.

* * *

● (1410)

CLAUDE BACHAND

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to a great man from my region, someone who made it famous far beyond its borders. Claude Bachand, the Bloc Québécois member of Parliament for Saint-Jean from 1993 to 2011, has passed away.

Everyone knew Claude, and everyone liked him. In fact, colleagues from all different parties on Parliament Hill would often ask me about him, even 15 years after he left, because they cared about him so deeply. We know that Claude cared about them too. He was a real people person.

Claude was a perfect example of a grassroots MP who had his region's best interests at heart. During his tenure, he organized plenty of meetings and extended many invitations, particularly to ambassadors and consuls, so they could get to know and love Saint-Jean just as much as he did.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I offer my deepest condolences to his family, his loved ones and the many friends whose lives he touched.

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[English]

SUMMER EVENTS IN AJAX

Jennifer McKelvie (Ajax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the residents of Ajax for a memorable summer that brought us closer together.

We started summer with the Durham region Métis council's heritage celebration at the Ajax Community Centre. We cheered for team Canada together during the World Cup in Pat Bayly Square. We recognized National Indigenous History Month with a sunrise ceremony on the shore of Lake Ontario. We celebrated our great country on Canada Day at Ajax's Legion Branch 322 and the new Ajax Fairgrounds. We showcased our talented arts community at the 15th anniversary of the Ajax Centre for the Arts. We welcomed performers from overseas to Durham Summerfest, Ontario's biggest South Asian festival.

Ajarians are vibrant, diverse and welcoming. We are proud to live on the shore of Lake Ontario and we are proud to be Canadian.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in Ottawa, where we get to bring the concerns of our communities back to Parliament. One thing is clear after hearing from all the good people of Hamilton East—Stoney Creek this summer: The Liberal government is not hearing them.

I heard from Annie, a senior who relies on CPP, OAS and food banks to get by. It is because of the cost of living crisis that she does not know if she will be able to pay her rent or bills. After 11 years of Liberal policies, this is a new reality that many Canadians face. However, there is hope. The Conservatives have identified over \$150 billion in savings, nearly \$10,000 per family, by cutting wasteful consultants, corporate welfare, foreign aid, handouts to fake asylum claimants, and massive money-losing projects like AI-to rail.

It is time that the wasteful Liberal government started listening to Canadians and started working with Conservatives to make real, lasting changes that will bring affordability back to Canada.

*Statements by Members***RECOGNITION OF LOCAL FAITH LEADERS**

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to welcome to Ottawa today the president of the Islamic Association of Western Canada, Mr. Muhammad Arjamand Tahir, and the vice-president, Mr. Syed Asif Iqbal.

In 2018, they began their journey to establish a beautiful mosque in the heart of Surrey, B.C. Today, that vision has become a reality with the establishment of Jamia Masjid Aulia Allah. I look forward to joining them later today to celebrate the birth of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, an event organized by Imam Syed Badiuddin Soharwardy, chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada.

Please join me in commending them for their dedication to faith, community service and unity.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, August job numbers delivered more challenging news for the Canadian economy. Some 42,000 jobs were lost, and there was a further increase to the youth unemployment rate. The youth unemployment rate now sits at 12.9%.

Job numbers for August are calculated for the reference week of August 9 to 15, before trade talks broke down with the United States. While tariffs and countertariffs will impose costs, Canada lost 42,000 jobs before these talks broke down. That is the result of domestic policy choices that are making it harder for all Canadians, particularly young people, to find jobs.

For a year, Conservatives have been promoting our constructive jobs plan: unleash the economy, fix immigration, fix training and build homes where the jobs are. We need an economic action plan to strengthen our country and restore jobs and opportunity for the next generation. We cannot control what happens beyond our borders, but we can reverse the policies that have been hurting jobs in our economy here at home for the last 11 years.

Let us get to work so Canadians can as well.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

SERGE MALENFANT

Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Parliament reconvenes, I wish you and all members a productive session. I also want to pay tribute to someone who made a profound impact on Sherbrooke.

Mural artist Serge Malenfant passed away on July 11. He was a happy, audacious and dedicated man whom I had the pleasure of knowing personally. He was one of Sherbrooke's most talented artists and he had a deep love for our city. He showed that love by making Sherbrooke's walls his canvas.

His trompe-l'oeil murals adorn the streets of Sherbrooke and make the downtown into a real open-air art gallery. Some of these unique works of art tell the story of our region, while others dis-

guise the doors of elevators in seniors' care facilities to prevent residents from wandering off.

This friend of the arts has left behind much more than just murals. He left a part of himself in our city. I want to express my deepest condolences to his wife, Julie, and to his family and friends. Serge Malenfant helped make Sherbrooke a city that leaves a lasting impression, and his work will continue to do just that for a long time to come.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 11 years of the Liberal government, Canadians struggle with the cost of everyday life. Nearly half of working Canadians say they are less financially secure now than they were a year ago.

The Conservatives have identified savings of more than \$150 billion, nearly \$10,000 per Canadian family. Our Conservative plan would lower housing by scrapping taxes on homebuilding and by pushing to speed up permits, free up land and cut fees. It would lower the cost of gas and groceries by removing federal taxes until at least Canada Day 2027.

We are calling on the Prime Minister to approve the 500 projects stuck in federal permitting, repeal anti-development laws, remove the industrial carbon tax, eliminate the capital gains tax on money reinvested in Canada and get government out of the way so Canadians can build mines, pipelines, LNG plants, factories and homes.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians need lower costs, good-paying jobs and an economy that creates opportunity at home.

*Oral Questions***ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, September 21, is World Alzheimer's Day. As a progressive and fatal neurodegenerative disease, Alzheimer's gradually reduces a person's ability to think and communicate clearly, remember their loved ones and perform previously routine daily tasks. Everyone in this chamber knows someone who faces this reality. However, there is hope. Advances in Alzheimer's research, as promoted by the national strategy on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and as being undertaken in places like Sunnybrook Research Institute in my riding of Don Valley West, continue to improve the quality of life of those with the disease.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada is central to these advances. Through advocacy and research initiatives, they are helping to realize a future without Alzheimer's. Next year is their 50th anniversary. I wish them well, congratulate them and celebrate their work and endeavours.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday night on Yom Kippur, the holiest night in Judaism, gunfire erupted at a synagogue in Belleville. Congregants of Sons of Jacob were forced to take cover, and a courageous constable, Jeff Smith, was injured while saving countless lives. The Jewish people deserve to live in peace and freedom as they express their faith.

Will the Prime Minister join with me in offering prayers and love for this courageous constable and support for the Jewish community and condemn all forms of violence?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I join with the Leader of the Opposition and all members of this House in offering our thoughts and prayers for officer Smith, for his family, for the Jewish community in Belleville and for the Jewish community across Canada.

We stand against all forms of violence, all forms of hate, and may this House continue to come together to support the Jewish community in Canada and all Canadians to live their full lives.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the Prime Minister back as well as the Canadians who are watching us now. The Conservatives' message to them is that we will fight on their behalf—to save them money on gas and groceries, on their mortgages and rent—because they work hard.

This Liberal Prime Minister is costing them. This Prime Minister has driven up inflation by doubling the deficit and raising certain

taxes. Does the Prime Minister still believe that affordability is the best it has been in a decade, as he said, or will he admit that Canadians are paying more than ever before?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to work tirelessly to make life more affordable for Canadians by cutting taxes for 22 million Canadians, by reducing and eventually eliminating the GST on the purchase of a new home, by extending the fuel excise tax and by providing the Canada groceries and essentials benefit.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to the Prime Minister, welcome back to Parliament. To the Canadian people, the message of Conservatives is that we will fight to save Canadians money this session of Parliament: save them money on their rent and mortgage, save them money on gas and groceries and save them money here at home at their kitchen table, where they are paying more than ever for food because the Prime Minister is costing them. He doubled the deficit and has increased industrial carbon taxes and other fuel taxes, driving up their cost of living.

The Prime Minister said in March that affordability was the best it has been in a decade. Does he believe that, or would he admit that people are paying more than ever?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a reason we have Hansard.

This government will continue to work, without fail, to improve affordability for Canadians, cutting taxes on income and cutting taxes for first-time homebuyers. The groceries and essentials benefit's next cheque is coming in October, with 12 million Canadians getting the benefit. Above all, we will be providing the essential social services that the member voted against, every single one: child care, dental care and the national school food program, with \$20,000 of savings for Canadian families.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has proven once again that he is absolutely out of touch and Canadians are absolutely out of money. All they have gotten from him is big talk around the world and big bills here at home. Lalita, for example, from Mississauga, told me this morning that she has to work two jobs now, one as a waitress and one as an insurance broker, to pay the insane grocery prices the Prime Minister promised he would reduce. She cannot eat speeches, summits or signing ceremonies.

Will the Prime Minister admit that affordability is not the best it has been in a decade and that in fact Lalita is paying more than ever before?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what this government knows is that there are three wars affecting Canadians: the tariff war from the Americans, the war against Iran and the war against Ukraine. They are pushing up fuel prices. They are pushing up grocery prices, so we are providing immediate support to Canadians. The next groceries and essentials benefit cheque is coming next month, up to \$1,900 for a family of four. Across that, we support Canadians with the school benefit and beyond.

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “and beyond”, the Prime Minister doubled the deficit, contributing to inflation. He has introduced a new fuel tax, partially offsetting the one that we forced him to put on hold. He is increasing the industrial carbon tax.

Today, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business revealed that 20% of its members say their businesses are “weak” or “critical”. Only 18% said they would recommend other people start businesses. Fifty per cent say not to start a business right now because the costs are too high. Conservatives want to save money and jobs through small business.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his inflationary policies so we can bring down the costs on our small business consumers and workers?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us walk through those in order. With the industrial carbon tax, the impact on groceries is zero. The impact of clean fuel regulations on a bushel of canola is over a dollar. For a bushel of canola in Battle River—Crowfoot, it is over a dollar. The impact on fuel prices is zero.

This government is cutting taxes for business. The head of the CFIB praised the productivity mega deduction. I look forward to the member opposite voting in favour.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own environment department's report reveals that the impact of the fuel standard is seven cents this year, rising to 17¢ per litre by the end of the decade, so he should check his own documents, or he should listen to Justin, who told me in a letter on August 11, “I cannot afford to eat properly. I skip meals and rely on cereal for breakfast. I'm incredibly frugal, but my debts are still growing faster. I constantly stress and cry over my financials. The middle class is being eliminated.”

Will the Prime Minister look Justin in the eye and tell him that affordability is the best it has been in a decade?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is working for Justin. This government is working for Justine, and the Justins and Justines across this country. We are working to create jobs, 200,000 jobs net over the course of the last year, with the fastest growth in the G7 in the last quarter. We are making this country more independent from the United States, more resilient and more prosperous. While we are doing that, we are providing Canadians like Justin with a boost today and a bridge to tomorrow.

[Translation]

CANADIAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister personally cancelled contributions of any kind by tech giants to the economy or the arts in Quebec and Canada, including through taxes or content creation, simply to appease the American President. The effort fell flat. Although I remain unconvinced, the Prime Minister claims to have walked away from the negotiation table for language and culture-related reasons.

Since the effort failed, should the Prime Minister consider reinstating the digital services tax and allowing cultural contributions by the web giants?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the member for Beloeil—Chambly, this government is deeply committed to Canadian culture, to the French language and to Quebec culture. That is why investments in the cultural sector have never been higher in Canada's history. We are going to strengthen these investments, but specific taxes that impact affordability for Canadians will not be necessary.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to add two points. First, I was in the cultural sector for 20 years in a professional capacity. I know a thing or two about it. Second, corporate contributions have no impact on the cost for users because they are investments the companies would have made anyway. They are funnelled into Quebec and Canada.

Given that the Prime Minister wants to build closer ties with Europe, which places great importance on the contribution of businesses and Internet giants to culture, should he not reconsider his policy, which is not working?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, given the frequency of attendance here, I will take this as a great sign of respect for the voters and citizens of Quebec and Canada.

In my view, the Prime Minister has failed in his strategy to appease the American President. In light of this failure, he should reconsider his decision, which we would welcome, so that the web giants, which are wealthier than some countries around the world, pay their fair share to support the vitality of culture and the arts in Canada and Quebec, especially in French.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Americans are the ones who failed. They failed in their attempts to place restrictions on the French language and on Canadian culture. We protected the French language and Canadian culture, and we will continue to promote them.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while families are cutting back on groceries, struggling to put a roof over their heads and putting off purchases, the Liberal government continues to spend recklessly. Our Conservative plan would result in savings of over \$150 billion, or \$10,000 per family, which would lower families' tax burden and give them some breathing room.

When will the Liberal government finally reduce its spending and adopt the Conservative plan to save money for all Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House is aware that affordability is a key concern for Canadians. We are talking about the cost of groceries, housing and gas.

I have good news. We have taken action in all three of those areas. First, we presented a generational plan to build more housing across the country to help Canadian families. Second, together with the Prime Minister, we introduced the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, which will help families across the country.

Another piece of good news is that, later today, I will have the opportunity to introduce a bill that will help families with the cost of gas. I hope that the Conservatives will support it.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is it worth reminding the Minister of Finance that lowering the gas tax was the Conservatives' idea? It is easy to table that today, but for families, every dollar counts. We were asking to get rid of all gas taxes for the entire year, not just one. What we are going to get this afternoon is a timetable.

Our economic plan includes concrete measures such as reducing taxes on housing construction, eliminating the GST on vehicles manufactured in Canada, and eliminating all taxes on gasoline. When will the Liberal government adopt the Conservative plan so that all Quebecers and all Canadians can save money?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that Canadians know that the Conservatives do not have a monopoly on common sense.

We understand the challenges facing Canadians across the country. That is why we were there to help Canadian families. Do my colleagues know what people are watching on TV today? They are watching a Conservative Party that has not changed. After a summer of reflection, the Conservatives are still here today asking questions instead of taking action to help us move the country forward.

We are going to build a strong country together. Canadians know it.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been very clear. What we want on this side of the House is to leave money in Canadians' pockets. The plan the Conservatives are proposing involves savings of \$150 billion. That is \$10,000 per family. How do we do that? It is by cutting down on red tape and consultants.

Given the soaring cost of living, will the Liberal government finally scrap the industrial carbon tax and adopt our Conservative economic action plan?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that we are entering this period of economic transition, as the Prime Minister explained, from a position of strength. That is precisely because we have been responsible with public finances. While being responsible, we have always been there for Canadian families, whether it came to housing, food, gas prices or a national children's program.

One thing Canadians know is that we will always be there to support them in difficult times. Let us build Canada strong together. I hope the Conservatives will join us in this major project for the country.

* * *

● (1435)

[English]

TAXATION

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are taxed at every turn. They are taxed when they earn a paycheck, when they spend money, when they own something, when they fill their tank and when they buy a drink. Even when they die, they are taxed. Every single dollar that the Liberal government spends was first earned by a hard-working Canadian, yet Conservatives have found \$150 billion in savings.

When will the Liberal government respect taxpayers, cut consultants, rein in spending, save Canadians money and adopt the Conservative economic action plan?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. The very first thing that the Prime Minister of Canada did was to cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. That is something that Canadians will remember. Not only did we do that, but we suspended the fuel excise tax at a time when Canadians needed a bridge and a boost to the future.

We are building a stronger Canada. We are helping Canadians. We are going to have the strongest economy in the G7. That is going to benefit all Canadians.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is spending more than any government in Canadian history. That is what Canadians will remember. Alto, for example, is three times the cost for 2% of the daily passengers. The Liberals want to spend \$90 billion on the Alto project, which, in 30 years, will maybe carry 66,000 passengers a year. Compare that to the last decade. Ottawa committed \$30 billion to serve millions every day. This is three times the cost and 2% of the daily users.

Will the government cancel the wasteful project, save Canadians money and adopt the Conservative economic action plan?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only Conservatives could be against a project that covers 40% of the population of Canada, will create 51,000 jobs, will remove trucks from the 401 so that we can get fluidity back on Ontario and Quebec highways, and will add significant points to our gross domestic product. Alto is a transformational project that will serve the entirety of Canada, and we look forward to building it.

SMALL BUSINESS

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one in five small businesses are in weak or critical condition. They are calling on the government to lower costs and improve small business competitiveness. Conservatives have identified over \$150 billion in savings that could lower the overall tax burden for Canadians and small businesses.

To save Canadians money, will the government consider expanding its plan to cut unnecessary consultants who do not provide value for money?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are always there for small businesses, making sure that they can be competitive. That is why many of them will be able to benefit from the new mega deduction that was announced by the Prime Minister last week, which will help many companies expense 100% of their investment in year one, particularly those in the manufacturing sector.

Meanwhile, we know that many small businesses are affected by the trade war. We have a lot of support for them. I would love to work with my colleague if that is the case in his riding. We need to make sure that we help these businesses.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me give an example. The women entrepreneurship loan fund was supposed to help women start and grow their businesses. After filing an ATIP that took 915 days to receive, I learned that the Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada met only 6% of application targets and 7% of loan targets, despite receiving millions of dollars from Canadians. Canadians expect results from their taxpayer dollars, not more spending on consultants.

Why will the government not cut taxes, help entrepreneurs and save money for Canadians and our small businesses?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first want to welcome all of my colleagues back to the House.

The Minister of Small Business and I spent the summer holding consultations with a strong focus on women entrepreneurship. What we can say is that the strategy to grow our economy cannot succeed without the full participation of women. To date, the women entrepreneurship strategy has helped 600,000 women in Canada. That strategy is working, and we will continue to build on it.

● (1440)

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Liberal government announced that it intends to privatize Canada's four major airports, including Montreal's airport in Dorval. This airport plays a key role in Quebec's economy, and in Montreal's economy in particular. This is what is known as strategic infrastructure. Ottawa is prepared to hand over this airport to the private sector and even to foreign airports.

Before making such an important decision for Quebec's economy, did the federal government consult the Government of Quebec, or does it believe that it does not need to do so?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, investing in our regional routes across Canada, including in the regions of Quebec, is essential. Investing in our airport infrastructure across the country is essential. Investing in real and virtual connections for all Canadians is essential. That is why we are moving forward with a model where we can have investments in our airports to allow the government to better serve Canadians through air transportation.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we take that to mean “no”.

Aéroports de Montréal comprises representatives of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, the Government of Quebec, and of the airlines. Essentially, they are representatives from Quebec because the airport sector plays a vital role in Quebec's economy. Somehow though, this was not important enough for anyone in the government to pick up the phone and call Quebec to consult them.

How can the Liberals justify this total lack of respect and consideration for the Government of Quebec and for Quebecers?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we take a look around the world, what do we see? Canadians' pension funds, including funds such as the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, are not only investing but they are also operating airports in Australia, Asia and across Europe.

We believe that, since Canada is lagging behind in this area, it is high time that our pension funds are brought home and invested in our airports. That way, this expertise benefits Canadians.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Oshawa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, and I hear the same message every time I meet with local auto workers and their families: "Protect our jobs."

Conservatives have proposed taking the GST off Canadian-made vehicles. We have even found \$150 billion in savings by cutting items like high-priced consultants, corporate welfare and bureaucracy.

Will the Liberal government eliminate the industrial carbon tax, cut wasteful spending and lower the cost of building homes and vehicles here at home?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rather than scare Canadians, we are helping Canadians have hope. That is why today, with the Ontario government, we announced that the Pickering refurbishment is going to move forward. That is 30,500 new jobs. That is \$26 billion of new investment in Ontario.

Maybe the Conservatives might want to help us build Canada strong.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the member meant to say, "rather than hear Canadians".

Families are struggling every day with groceries, gas and making ends meet, and small businesses are being squeezed as well. Conservatives have proposed solutions: Cut wasteful spending to lower debt and inflation, and remove all federal taxes on gas until at least Canada Day next year.

Canadians need relief today. Will the Liberal government cut consultants and corporate welfare, eliminate the industrial carbon tax and adopt the Conservative plan to save Canadians money now?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite had a scripted question that she needed to ask, so let me repeat the answer. There are 30,500 new jobs and \$26 billion invested. That is on top of thousands and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I held off as long as possible, but I really could not hear the last bit.

The minister may continue.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite was focused on her scripted question, so let me give the answer again.

Today, there are 30,500 new jobs, and \$26 billion is being invested in Ontario. That is on top of 18,000 jobs at Darlington. I could keep going.

* * *

● (1445)

HOUSING

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I hosted young Canadians to talk about planning and saving to buy their first home, but they feel they will never own a home. They are depressed. They are dejected. They are defeated. The Prime Minister promised he would build 500,000 new homes at speeds never seen, but last week, the Minister of Housing said that the government has committed to, not built, only 19,000 homes.

The Conservative plan to save Canadians money on housing will tie federal dollars to faster permits and take the taxes off new homes.

Minister, your plan is not working. Why not save Canadians money—

The Speaker: The hon. member should speak through through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Housing and Infrastructure.

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back in the House and to see my colleagues.

We are absolutely focused on getting housing built for young Canadians and making sure they are not paying GST on their first-time home purchases. This is a move that was not supported by the Conservatives across the way, unfortunately. They should be consistent, at least.

Rents are coming down across Canada. Average rents have been down for 23 straight months. Affordability is coming our way. We are focused on building more housing. Build Canada Homes is rolling it out at pace. We will continue to do so.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is not focused on new housing. The minister's own agency, CMHC, reports that fewer homes will be built this year than last year, and that housing construction is slowing down, not speeding up. That means the next generation is losing the dream of home ownership under your watch.

The Conservative plan to save—

The Speaker: This is the second time I have had to mention this to the hon. member. The first time, I could understand a slip-up, but please, members, speak through the Chair.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CMHC also weighed in on the fact that the lowering of the development charges by this government in Ontario and B.C. is actually improving the prospects for housing supply in those provinces, and we are just getting started. There is a mix of housing starts across the country. Housing starts are up in critical markets such as Montreal and Vancouver. We need to see that across the country, and we are focused on affordability.

* * *

SENIORS

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are being forced to make impossible choices to make ends meet. Mark, a 73-year-old senior in my community of Cambridge, retired at 65, but in this affordability crisis, he has been forced back into the workforce because his retirement income is no longer enough to pay today's higher cost of living. This Canadian is not asking for a handout. He is asking for the financial security he earned through a lifetime of hard work.

When will the Liberal government stand up for our retired seniors and adopt our Conservative economic plan, which saves Canadians money, so seniors such as Mark can retire with dignity?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mark will be very happy to know that we index all our benefits to inflation. In fact, I wonder if Mark knows that the member is voting against his interests every time she stands up in the House. I wonder if Mark knows that every time we strengthen our social safety nets, not just for seniors but for children and the next generation as well, she votes against those people too.

On this side, we are going to stand up for Canadians. It is what we have been doing every day, despite the Conservatives.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Tanveer Shahnawaz (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Beaches—East York for the first time. They sent me here to help bring down costs for families, protect workers and businesses, and build a more prosperous Canada for all.

Can the Minister of Industry please update the House on the work being done to attract new investment, diversify markets and build a stronger economy?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome my fantastic colleague to the House.

Oral Questions

In this rapidly changing world, investors are looking for new markets and stable partners, and last week made it clear that Canada is that place. The investment summit attracted investors from almost 30 countries, which manage more than \$100 trillion in assets. We were able to showcase to them how much Canada has to offer. The investment summit also unleashed nearly \$500 billion of new investments into Canadian businesses, workers and infrastructure.

* * *

● (1450)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Northern Cables in Brockville sells about half its production in the United States, and it employs skilled Canadian workers. Trump's unjustified 50% tariffs have already cost the company new U.S. work and put future Canadian investment at risk. If Canadian countertariffs are going to drive up costs for Canadian families, they would like to know by how much.

Our question for the government is simple: How much are these countertariffs going to cost Canadian families, and what are the Liberals going to do to bring down costs for Canadians to make up for it?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government spent many weeks this summer pursuing in good faith an agreement with the United States that would have strengthened the Canadian economy and ensured Canadian sovereignty on issues as important as cultural industries and our ability to sign free trade agreements with reliable partners. At the end of the day, the Prime Minister concluded that the agreement was not possible; it was not on the table. Canada did what Canadians expected us to do: stand up for our sovereignty, stand up for our industries and stand up for our workers.

I am surprised the hon. member is not supporting our government's effort to support Canadian workers.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians expect the government to do is two things at the same time: first and foremost, to always stand up for Canada, and second, to make sure that it is also saving money for Canadians.

The countertariffs are already creating all kinds of knock-on effects in the Canadian economy. Canadians are losing jobs, including in my riding, such as at Invista, which has already closed its operation, putting more than 100 people out of work.

Oral Questions

What we want to know is which part of the Conservative plan that we have proposed to help bring down costs for Canadian families are the Liberals willing to adopt today.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps what our colleague fails to realize is that countertariffs are also essential to protect Canadian workers and Canadian businesses that are facing, from the United States, tariffs that are unjustified, illegal and not in compliance with CUSMA.

Our colleague pretends what? Is it that we should not have taken measures to support Canadian industries and Canadian workers?

Countertariffs are part of the measures that our government is implementing, and we are also going to support businesses and workers to get through this circumstance, as any responsible government should.

Scot Davidson (York—South Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Spectra Aluminum in Bradford is facing layoffs and job losses as it deals with 100% stacking American tariffs. The Liberal government has responded by bringing in a countertariff that has raised costs for Canadians, but instead of using that as leverage to stand up for the 80,000 workers in Canadian downstream aluminum manufacturing, the Liberals are letting American firms dodge the tariff, by granting generous remissions.

Why is the Liberal government undercutting the Canadian businesses and workers it is supposed to be protecting?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe in the aluminum sector. We believe in the workers. That is why, over the course of the past few days, the colleague and I had the chance to work on specific businesses in his riding that needed support. We will continue to do that, because we need to protect jobs in his riding. We need to make sure that we protect jobs all across this country. That is why, at this point, anyone who is affected by the tariffs should please go on Canada.ca. We have support to keep their employees and operations going.

We will build Canada strong while fighting this trade war.

Scot Davidson (York—South Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they suggest more websites. This is out of touch. This is not building Canada strong. It is weakening our industries. The Liberals' 50% countertariff on aluminum has increased the cost of houses, renovation, cars, appliances and more, while Canadians pay the price. Workers at companies like Spectra are still facing layoffs, still losing orders and still watching American firms get a backdoor pass into the Canadian market.

When will the Prime Minister rise and tell Canadians what the countertariffs are going to cost them?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my colleague has any example he can give regarding backdoor issues, we should work together. Let us make sure that there is true competition in this country and, mean-

while, that we protect our workers, particularly when it comes to American firms that are affecting our industrial base at a time of a trade war. Let us work together. Let us make sure at the same time that businesses across this country know about our supports. People should go on Canada.ca. We need to get the word out. Every single member of the House should be able to reach out to workers and businesses to make sure that we fight this trade war.

• (1455)

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a Desjardins report confirms there is a double tariff shock on manufacturing businesses here in Canada. A business owner in Woodbridge was not only hit by crushing 50% tariffs on his exports to the U.S. but also recently lost a steel drum contract due to a 50% countertariff imposed by his own government.

Washington started this trade war, but how is the Prime Minister going to ensure that Canada's response does not place an undue burden on Canadian businesses and consumers?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague well and I know where he comes from. There is indeed a very important auto sector that uses our Canadian steel. We also need to make sure that sector continues to be competitive, as well as the steel sector. These two sectors have been targeted by many of the American administration's tariffs. Meanwhile, we are fighting against these tariffs because we know that at the end of the day, when we put countertariffs on the table, it helps us at the negotiating table. Canadians know that these times are tough, but we can help and work together to make sure that we fight against these unjustified tariffs.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we heard the minister keep talking about support packages. Oxford economists have been clear that they may soften the blow, but they will not solve the problem. Economist Trevor Tombe estimates that the government's countertariffs could cost Canadian consumers \$4 billion. Meanwhile, businesses in Vaughan—Woodbridge are facing increased costs to their inputs and being forced to consider relocating south of the border. We should out-compete the Americans, not out-tax them.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians how much his countertariffs will cost them?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): I hope in this session of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, we will not see this pattern re-emerge. Let us call it the “blame Canada” pattern by the hissy fit brigade.

We are in a trade war. We did not provoke this trade war. This trade war is illegal and unjustified. Canada, a sovereign country, will stand up and take the trade and other measures that are required to protect our people, our industries and our workers. We will never apologize for that.

The blame Canada brigade should sit right down.

Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's countertariffs are killing new work for Windsor manufacturers. Cavalier Tool's three plants need specialized U.S. steel and aluminum they cannot source elsewhere. On \$244,000 moulds, their 5% to 10% profit is wiped out by countertariffs. They are trying to maintain their skilled workforce. Under the conditions the Liberals have caused, this is becoming too challenging.

How many more Windsor jobs will the government sacrifice?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is a city or a town in this country that is affected by the tariffs, it is clearly Windsor. If the colleague really understood what she was asking for, which would weaken the industrial base in Windsor, she would stop asking that question.

The countertariffs are so important to make sure we fight back against the tariffs affecting the very auto workers in Windsor, the very steelworkers in the southwestern Ontario region and the aluminum workers in Quebec and B.C.

We will make sure that we fight. We do not actually take that proposition as a good one because—

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauce.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was elected on a promise to reach an agreement with the Americans. Today, that promise is in ruins. The unjustified escalation of the tariffs and retaliatory tariffs is causing our companies' operating costs to soar. Norgate Metal in Beauce is already projecting \$7 million in additional costs for its current contracts alone. Ultimately, Canadians are the ones who are going to pay the price.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how much the retaliatory tariffs will really cost businesses in Quebec and Beauce?

• (1500)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on all of these issues, what my colleagues' questions clearly show is that they really think the government's strategy should be to drop the retaliatory tariffs, admit defeat, accept a bad deal or give up. Guess what? We are never going

to give up, because these tariffs are illegal and unjustified, and they directly target the industrial base in my colleague's riding of Beauce.

We are going show up for our workers and businesses. In the meantime, we are going to fight.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are going to give him some very important information about the counter-tariffs.

The Liberal Party and Prime Minister's failed negotiations are hurting our economy. Our businesses are paying a fortune. I will give some real examples. The garage door manufacturer Garaga will be paying \$1.5 million a month. Beauce Atlas will be paying \$550,000 a week. You heard me, Mr. Speaker: \$550,000.

These costs are putting jobs here at risk, and Canadians are the ones who are going to pay the price. Why did the Minister of Finance ignore the recommendations of businesses in Beauce, Quebec, and Canada?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we worked with businesses in Quebec. We were constantly working with union representatives from Quebec, with the Government of Quebec.

We worked with business people from across the country because we wanted an agreement that is in Canada's best economic interest, to strengthen Canada's economic and cultural sovereignty.

We know that the Conservatives would have taken any old deal. Now we see that they do not want to fight for our workers, that they do not want to defend the Canadian industries that are under attack.

We do, however, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

Daniel Gobeil (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish everyone a happy first day of the fall session.

Last week, Canada welcomed the world. Investors from nearly 30 countries, managing more than \$100 trillion in assets, came to Canada because they see what the people of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord saw when they sent me here. They see Canada's economic strength and ambition, and the whole world wants to invest in it.

Can the Minister of Finance provide an update on how Canada is leveraging its tremendous advantages to unleash historic levels of investment?

Oral Questions

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague on his election and telling the people of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord that they will have a strong voice here in Ottawa.

My colleague is right. We are entering this economic period from a position of strength and confidence. Canada has what the world needs, and investors are noticing, as he said. We have the talent, we have the industries, we have the critical minerals, we have the energy, and we are the only G7 country that has a free trade agreement with every other G7 country. Let us seize this opportunity. Let us be as ambitious as the folks in these industries, and let us build a strong Canada together.

* * *

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, almost a year ago the industry minister stood in the House and proclaimed that the Stellantis plant would reopen or she would get Canadians' money back. Neither one turned out to be true, because the Liberals are all talk and no action. It is the same thing when they say they are going to double housing or that it is the most affordable in a decade. Neither one is true.

These failures, though, have real consequences. Eighteen hundred Stellantis workers have lost their jobs. Many have actually lost their homes. When will the Liberal minister move from talk to actual action to protect these jobs?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight good news on the part of GM. They were able to get to collective bargaining across this country. There is also good news for Ford, which was able to get to collective bargaining as well. Now, when it comes to Stellantis, the position of the government has always been clear: We need the Stellantis Brampton workers back on the job. We need a model back at Brampton.

I have been in contact with Unifor, Stellantis, Doug Ford and Vic Fedeli from the Ontario government. We expect the parties to continue their collective bargaining and go back to the table. We will be there to defend our auto workers all the time.

● (1505)

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are literally the same out-of-touch talking points that she used a year ago, saying, "We are going to do something."

Those 1,800 jobs are gone. Those 1,800 workers had a top-up, and then they went on EI; now they are getting nothing. There is a lady in my riding, and both she and her husband worked at Stellantis. They have now lost their home because of this.

The minister said she would get the money back or protect the jobs. She has done neither one. Why is she still minister?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will get no lessons from the Conser-

vatives, who presented an auto strategy that did not even include the auto parts across Ontario. They were letting down—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. minister may continue.

[English]

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I will not take any lessons from the Conservatives, who presented an auto strategy that did not even include the auto parts sector, who let down the Ford engine plants across the country and across Ontario, the same as for the GM St. Catharines plant. Meanwhile, we are engaged with the company, but if it does not bring a new model back to Brampton, we will get our money back, period.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Amarjeet Gill (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are raising costs on Canadian businesses and workers. In Brampton, the loss of thousands of well-paying jobs at Stellantis has highlighted the pressures families and businesses are facing.

Canadians need a clear response. Conservatives have a plan to eliminate the industrial carbon tax, cut spending on consultants and corporate subsidies, and accelerate permits for major projects to strengthen jobs and our economy.

When will the current Liberal government adopt our Conservative economic plan to get businesses moving into Canada rather than moving out of Canada?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): In this session of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party will have a lot of opportunities to demonstrate its support for Canada, its industry, its workers and, yes indeed, for regulatory reform. We very much look forward to seeing how the Conservatives feel about regulatory reform.

Braeden Caley (North Vancouver—Capilano, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this House today. I am here because we heard loud and clear what the north shore constituents had to say. It is a choice that was made for partnership over division, practical work over political theatre and the belief that our best days will not only be ahead of us but will also be built by us. The world sees this too, as evidenced by the historic levels of investment that we are seeing in the Canadian economy at a moment when we need it.

Can the Minister of Finance please update the House on how the newly announced productivity mega deduction can benefit all Canadians?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two pieces of good news today. The first is welcoming our colleague from North Vancouver—Capilano to this chamber, a hard worker who is going to be a big voice for British Columbia.

The second thing is the productivity mega deduction. This is the most comprehensive tax change in 50 years in this country. This is going to be a game-changer for businesses across this country. This is going to put Canada on top, with the lowest level of taxation for new investments in the G7. We are going to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout question period, we have heard it: the costs of managed decline and out-of-touch Liberals. Prices are rising and tariffs are crushing industries, driving investment away and threatening our livelihoods.

Whether it is Washington, Brussels or Beijing, we must build here at home through our projects, our resources and our people. We must save Canadians money. Confronted by war, we should turn to ambition and unleash our economy.

Will the Liberals dispense with middle-power thinking and massive spending, and instead fight for our families and our economic action plan and fight for our country?

• (1510)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why do we not talk about shovels in the ground? In Pickering, there are 30,500 new jobs; Darlington, 18,000 new jobs; Nouveau Monde Graphite, 1,000 new jobs; the Port of Montreal, 8,000 new jobs. Let me keep going. At BHP Jansen, there are 6,000 new jobs. I can keep going. Rather than rag on Canada, why do the Conservatives not actually try to build Canada?

* * *

LABOUR

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the real nature of the current government is starting to appear: Shovel money at corporations and attack the rights of workers. Today, the Liberals will introduce legislation that would undermine collective bargaining in Canada. They want to eliminate workers' constitutional right to strike. The New Democrats know that to truly build Canada strong, we need a healthy and respected working class. It is workers who build this country and keep it moving. Why are Liberals intervening for wealthy investors, instead of standing with workers, who want fair and safe workplaces?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has said time and again that we will always respect a worker's constitutional right to strike. If the member wants to be helpful, they will support this government as we invest in the skilled trades, many of them with unionized members, to build Canada strong.

We are investing in the trades and training. We are investing in unions. We are investing in workers. We are investing in compa-

nies. We are building Canada strong with the workers who power our country.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and in accordance with the transparency requirements set out in the amended policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I am pleased to notify the House of Commons of the government's intent to initiate negotiations for a free trade agreement between Canada and Turkey.

[English]

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

* * *

• (1515)

[Translation]

CANADIAN FUEL AFFORDABILITY ACT

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-38, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (extension of the federal fuel excise tax relief).

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

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BUILDING CANADA STRONG ACT

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-39, An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy.

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

Routine Proceedings

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Science and Research, entitled “Impact of the Criteria for Awarding Federal Funding on Research Excellence in Canada”.

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

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide some brief remarks on the dissenting opinion put forward by the Conservative Party of Canada, as His Majesty's loyal opposition, on this important study conducted by the science and research committee.

First, I want to acknowledge that this report contains contradicting opinions and recommendations, and our dissenting opinion not only points this out, but also provides the Conservative position on several of the recommendations. In short, our position emphasizes the need for the Government of Canada, its federal research agencies and our academic institutions to return to merit-based research funding and hiring practices. Simply put, merit matters, and decisions based on merit and on the quality of the research topic and the individual researcher doing the work should be paramount.

The report also highlights the decline in viewpoint diversity, as well as the rise and concern of anti-Semitism being spread and fostered in Canadian universities. This report contains and captures excellent witness testimony, and I encourage everyone to review the expressions that were shared with the committee.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS CALENDAR

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and if you seek it, you will find that there is unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding Standing Order 28 or any other usual practice of the House, the following proposed calendar for the year 2027, referred to as Option H, be tabled and that the House adopt this calendar.

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)

* * *

● (1520)

PETITIONS

MILITARY HOUSING

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by over 500

members of military families across the country who have raised a great concern regarding access to safe, affordable and well-maintained housing.

As we know, the well-being of Canadian Armed Forces members depends on them having comfortable places where they can live and raise their families. It is important that they have fair and equal access to that, that there is a proper assessment being done and that there is an increase in housing stock. We know that all this continues to fall way short of the needs of the over 6,700 military families waiting to have a home on base.

The petitioners are asking for a full review of the Canadian Forces Housing Agency. They do not trust its governance, its performance or its accountability. They are asking that the Canadian Armed Forces and/or the Department of National Defence takes over the administration of the current housing stock while building new housing stock, and ensures that houses are repaired and maintained in a timely manner to ensure a safe place where military members, their spouses and families can stay.

RED BRIDGE

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

The first petition I wish to table is one that is very close to my heart. It is on the federal funding for the rebuilding and fast-tracking of the Red Bridge, a cultural and iconic landmark in Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola that was destroyed by arson. It connects the Kamloops mainland with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc territory.

This is the first time I rise on this issue and I hope to rise many more times.

GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Diane Czyzewski and Celeste Fumerton, who have gotten behind the tin cup movement in Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

Some 597 people have signed this petition asking for a livable pension above the poverty line of \$25,252 a year. They sent me a lengthy document that I cannot read as I have limited time here, but I hope to incorporate it into a speech.

I thank Diane and Celeste for their devotion, and I stand with the seniors of Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition calling on the government to assist Canadians who are detained abroad and who rely on the government not only for documentation, but for meaningful, timely protection when their life, health and dignity are at risk.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to establish an independent public inquiry or commissioner-style investigation, with findings formally reported to Parliament, looking into how Canada responds when detained Canadians face sustained medical or humanitarian emergencies abroad. They also call on the government to strengthen parliamentary oversight and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability and public confidence in consular decision-making.

TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY

Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am bringing forward a petition from northern Ontario about designating Trans-Canada Highway 11 as a project of national interest.

People in my riding often ask me, “Why should we sign the petition? What is the purpose of signing the petition?” I tell them that they are reminding the government of how important highway safety is and how important their lives are.

Let me tell them that their message has been received in Ottawa. According to CTV News, the Prime Minister acknowledged the highway's importance, stating, “I know it's a priority for your representatives in the federal government because they bring it up with me.” The federal government has said it is willing to pay 50% of the cost to modernize the highway. We must keep signing this petition.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting an e-petition with over 800 signatures on a very serious subject, which is cases involving high-risk federal offenders convicted of intimate partner violence. The petitioners ask that they would have to wear an active GPS electronic monitoring system, including either geofencing or exclusion zone enforcement where appropriate, which would provide a more effective means of supervising compliance with release conditions and enhancing victim safety.

I have heard about this over and over again from my constituents, and I know everyone sitting here today also has. I hope this will bring notice to the fact that people need to feel safe. They should not have to sign a petition like this, but it is extremely necessary, and I am proud to present this today.

• (1525)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition brought forth by Emilie Grenier and Efficiency Canada, which was signed by over 2,400 Canadians, that calls upon our government to designate energy efficiency as a nation-building priority.

First, the petitioners would like to bring to the attention of the House their desire to double the pace of Canada's energy productivity. Second, they also wish to bring to the attention of the House the importance of eliminating energy poverty in Canada while progressing toward net zero. The timing of this petition coincides with national energy efficiency day, which we celebrate on October 1.

Routine Proceedings

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition concerning striking security workers represented by PSAC Local 71250 at the Bank of Canada.

The petitioners note that these workers have been on strike since June 23 and that the Canada Industrial Relations Board has twice found that the Bank of Canada has violated the Canada Labour Code through the use of replacement workers. They are calling on the government to ensure compliance with the board's decisions, to strengthen the enforcement of federal anti-scab protections, to ensure Crown corporations respect workers' rights under the Canada Labour Code and to call on the Bank of Canada to cease the unlawful use of replacement workers and bargain in good faith toward a fair collective agreement.

Workers' rights under federal law must be respected, enforced and upheld.

[Translation]

LOBSTER FISHING

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour of rising to present a petition.

[English]

The petitioners asked that I present this petition on behalf of residents of Newfoundland and Labrador who are seeking one simple thing from the Minister of Fisheries, which is a new classification for a lobster fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador for personal consumption for local residents. They point to the fact that there is a sustainable population of lobster in the region, that this is a traditional cultural part of the life of people in Newfoundland and Labrador and that, if the Minister of Fisheries so chooses, they could create a conservation-focused lobster food fishery for traditional food resources to be utilized within Newfoundland and Labrador.

AGRICULTURE

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back here and to rise on behalf of the residents of Brandon—Souris to present a petition regarding an announcement from the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, which confirmed in April that it will be cutting six research positions at the Brandon agricultural research station.

Speaker's Ruling

This is a very important facility, not just for my constituency but also, indeed, for Canada's and North America's agricultural sectors. Much of the research that has been done at this facility has gone on to produce some of the most biosecure, resistant crops, which have dominated North America's agricultural industry and market. It is a shame that the government has decided to cut leading-edge research positions at this facility. The petitioners and my constituents are calling on the government to reverse its decision.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1192, 1193, 1194, 1195, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1199, 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203, 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1217, 1218, 1219, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1228, 1229, 1230, 1231, 1232, 1233, 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238, 1239, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1244, 1245, 1246, 1247, 1248, 1249, 1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1259, 1260, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1264, 1265, 1266, 1267, 1268, 1269, 1270, 1271, 1272, 1273, 1274, 1275, 1276, 1277, 1278, 1279, 1280, 1281, 1282, 1283, 1284, 1285, 1286, 1287, 1288, 1289, 1290, 1291, 1292, 1293, 1294, 1295, 1297, 1298, 1299, 1300, 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304, 1305, 1306, 1307, 1308, 1309, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1316, 1317, 1318, 1319, 1320, 1321, 1322, 1323, 1324, 1325, 1326, 1327, 1328, 1329, 1330, 1331, 1332, 1333, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337, 1338, 1339, 1340, 1341, 1342, 1343, 1344, 1345, 1346, 1347, 1348, 1349, 1350, 1351, 1352, 1353, 1354, 1355, 1356, 1357, 1358, 1359, 1360, 1361, 1362, 1363, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1370, 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1380, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387, 1388, 1389, 1390, 1391, 1392, 1393, 1394, 1395, 1396, 1397, 1398, 1399, 1400, 1401, 1402, 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, 1408 and 1409 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

* * *

● (1530)

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE**AIR TRANSPORTATION**

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received notice of a request for an emergency debate. I invite the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona to rise and make a brief intervention.

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have requested an emergency debate because the government has announced a fundamental change to some of Canada's most important public infrastructure. Parliament needs to debate it now before decisions are locked in.

Last week, the Prime Minister and his cabinet announced that the operations and long-term value of four of Canada's largest airports would be open to private investment, potentially including foreign investors. Let us be very clear about what we are talking about. This is not a private company operating a coffee shop or a clothing store inside an airport. This is about opening the major operations and long-term value of four of Canada's largest airports, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Montreal, to private investors, potentially including U.S. or other foreign investors, for decades to come.

The selling off of these operations has serious security and sovereignty implications and could compromise the safety of Canadians in travel. These airports are currently operated by not-for-profit airport authorities. They serve millions of Canadians and support hundreds of thousands of Canadian workers.

Make no mistake about it, private business wants a piece of our airports to make money. The Canadian Labour Congress put it plainly: "Private investors don't put billions into airports unless they expect to make billions back." There are no magic profits. That money has to come from somewhere, and that is going to mean higher fees and higher costs for Canadians, Canadian workers losing their jobs, reduced services, and fewer safety precautions.

The result is that Canadians will pay more for less safe and worse airport experiences. Canadian workers will lose their jobs while private investors extract profits from infrastructure that Canadians built and rely upon. These airports already generate enormous public value. Airport rents alone return roughly \$525 million a year to the federal government. That is why this is urgent.

I am asking the Speaker to consider this urgent request. The government has announced the plan. The process is moving forward. Parliament has a narrow window to examine the consequences before long-term consequences are enacted.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona for her intervention. However, I am not satisfied that this request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMMISSIONER FOR MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act respecting the Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation, be read the third time and passed.

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the majority of what I have to say was said before question period, but I would be remiss if I did not point out that there were a number of important indigenous organizations that did a lot of work on the treaty commission suggestion to the government and its work on Bill C-10. The Land Claims Agreement Coalition is one. There were many, many more.

We understand that the treaty partners have waited years for governments to fulfill the obligations that Canada freely undertook. We understand that a signed treaty cannot become a document that governments celebrate with ceremony and then neglect afterward. Canada must keep its word.

The disagreement, again, is therefore not over whether accountability is necessary. We want to see accountability. We do not believe this piece of legislation lives up to that. We do not believe that there will be a meaningful response from the government to any information that comes out of the treaty commissioner. We have seen no action on the Auditor General's reports, for report after report.

We want to see action. We support the minister's word when she says they want intention rather than implementation. Let us see that. Let us give the bill some teeth. Let us have the government finish up its work.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it would appear as if the Conservative Party is not actually listening to what indigenous people of Canada are saying about the commission. On the one hand, the Conservatives like to talk about the government not doing enough, but then on the other hand, when we have a substantial piece of legislation in Bill C-10, the creation of an independent office of Parliament, they are not supporting it. That is the bottom line, even though indigenous leadership is saying they would like to see it passed.

Does the member have any concerns about the way the Conservative Party is voting on this legislation?

● (1535)

Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, it is interesting because we get the frustration indigenous peoples have with government in general, and in this case, the government opposite. We actually acknowledge that governments of all stripes over decades have failed to live up to their word, and that is the issue.

The member opposite knows that the Auditor General is an officer of Parliament. She, at this point, reports to Parliament. On May 4, 2026, the Auditor General produced yet another report showing that Indigenous Services Canada is not living up to its word to implement, monitor and assess a new fiscal relationship with indigenous peoples. This was signed in 2016 and is only 10 years old, but

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the Liberals have not done anything. If they are not going to live up to their word after they have signed on the dotted line, when are we going to see some accountability?

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be back for this session.

First off, it is important for me to say that today, we welcomed representatives from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers to Parliament Hill. There is a great deal of talk about jobs and what might happen at airports. Canada Post is facing a serious situation. Since September 25, 2025, it has been waiting to find out what will happen with the reform, and it is asking for a comprehensive public review of the corporation. We hope to get answers to these questions this fall.

Here is the question I would like to put to my colleague. We are not seeking to undermine the purpose of reconciliation efforts. However, what is the point of this proposal if the commissioner will lack the teeth to take action and enforce compliance? What will we do when recommendations are made and the government refuses to listen?

[English]

Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I hope the member opposite had a restful summer. It is always good to see our Bloc friends back in the House holding the government to account.

I do agree that this piece of legislation does not have the teeth necessary to see changes within the way government deals with such things as modern treaties. We have pointed it out time and time again. In fact, in the committee process, it came out that this piece of legislation would produce a report that would name and shame a government department not living up to its word.

The Auditor General already does that, but after that, there is still that lingering question of what actually happens. Does a government department get restructured? Does anyone lose their job? Are we seeing consequences in any meaningful form? The answer is no.

What we found out at committee is that this might actually cause more court cases, and that is the opposite of what the government should be doing. That is not reconciliation.

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was a treaty chairman for eight years for my band. In all those years I was there, and even after my time being an MLA, these issues kept coming up in B.C. Given the chaos in B.C. for the last 10 years or 15 years, Canada has blown an opportunity to have a true partnership with the first nations that signed treaties.

From what we understand, the government is going to create another bureaucratic body that is going to cost tens of millions of dollars, with no obligation to follow up on any of the reports coming out of this new office. Am I correct?

● (1540)

Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, yes, the member is correct.

Government Orders

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to be back in Ottawa to represent the good people of Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

As mentioned earlier, I was a first nations leader. I was a councillor for eight years and a chief councillor for six years, and then I moved on to be an MLA. I am very proud to say that I am representing Skeena—Bulkley Valley in the House today. During those eight years, I was the treaty chairman, which means that I was in charge of day-to-day negotiations for my band. We were at stage four, by the way. We were nowhere close to signing a treaty. In fact, we pulled ourselves out of treaty negotiations because economic development agreements were actually outpacing treaty negotiations at the time.

However, all the issues we talked about in terms of treaty implementation are still there today. During the discussion we had at the summit in Vancouver, we talked about Canada's failure to show up to the table to implement modern day treaties.

When I became an MLA, I was surprised to hear that all the reports over the last 15 to 20 years, all the letters, all the lobbying, had made their way to Ottawa but nothing was done. I was surprised to hear that an independent body such as the Auditor General actually reported to the House annually on the failure of the government to implement modern day treaties. As my work as an MP has unfolded, it has come out that those reports had no teeth to them. They had no backbone. There was no reason for the government to follow the Auditor General's report to follow up on implementing what should be a priority in B.C., if not in Canada.

We are looking at the chaos in B.C. right now. We have heard the debate in the B.C. legislature. We have heard the debate in the House of Commons in Ottawa, talking about the need for certainty. We need the economy to be back on track. After 10 years of stifling the economy, the priority now is to get the economy moving, but for that we need first nations participation, as cited in the Haida court case of 2004 that laid out the framework on how to reconcile aboriginal rights and title with Crown statutory decision-making.

It was working. From 2004 to 2017, it was working on a few points. Number one is that we had to resolve rights and title interests. On specific projects, that was working out okay. It was not in all cases, of course, but in most cases, especially if we are talking about the LNG development in Kitimat and especially if we are talking about the pipeline from Alberta to Vancouver, the Trans Mountain pipeline, and countless mining agreements.

The majority of these agreements were done with first nations that had asserted aboriginal rights and title, not defined title such as we are talking about here today. By defined title, I mean there is a first nation that sat down and said, "We want to put down for the record our rights and title, and we want to coexist in the economy of Canada today and the society of today. We're going to reconcile our interests under the laws of Canada and B.C., under the regulations of Canada and B.C." That is essentially what a treaty is.

When we talk about Bill C-10, through which the government wants to create a commissioner for modern day treaty implementation, again it is just another announcement. It would be millions of dollars or more going towards a title, an office, not only to compile

the list of complaints over the last 20 years but also to possibly amend those complaints with the complaints of today, which are basically the same complaints as the last 20 years. The last time I got up to speak to this, I told the House that everything is already there for the government to co-operate and partner with treaty first nations.

Read the treaty. It talks about the Crown's obligations, department by department, on how to implement the treaty. More than ever before, the reason for that is what we talk about here every day, whether we are talking about tariffs, the economy or the cost of living. It is there. The government just needs to read the treaty and enforce it.

● (1545)

The accountability is not only for the government, but every ministry under the government has an obligation to look at that treaty and find out exactly what their duties are to breathe life into it. The first nations are there. They want co-operation. They want to help build Canada. The complaint is that Canada just does not want to implement it.

If the government does not want to read the treaty and understand its own obligations under the treaty, then it should look to its own website. There is a comprehensive set of guidelines and principles on the government website that talk about how to implement modern day treaties. It is already there. The government wrote it and amended it over the years.

Just one publication is the "Guide for Federal Implementers of Comprehensive Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements". It is on the Canadian government website. It has an executive summary and eight different clauses talking about treaty implementation. It gives the background of how we came to these treaties in the first place, coming from comprehensive land claims agreements and self-government agreements to modern day treaties in B.C. It talks about how to implement the treaties, the phases of implementation, how to plan for implementation, the committees that are set up for implementation, the implementing bodies and the obligations of all the parties.

It also includes funding obligations, which we all know continue from Ottawa after a first nation signs a treaty. It is there. It talks about the roles and responsibilities of federal implementers. It talks about the principles of federal collaboration. The government does not need a new treaty commissioner to tell it its own principles of collaborating with first nations treaties. This is already written in its own document.

If the Auditor General already told government annually, in their reports, how the government is failing at implementation, what good would a multi-million-dollar new office and budget do? There are also federal structures and processes, coordination, decision-making, information sharing, monitoring and reporting. There are annexes supporting these principles under treaty.

It is a shame if government is just buying more time so more reports and more summaries can be presented to the House and shelved. The plan is there. The treaty is there. The government has its own guides to follow. It has the recommendations of the Auditor General. I assume the government's lead bureaucrats are telling it about the failures and how to fix them.

More than ever, we need action, not another office, not another title and not more money being spent. The treaty first nations are there. They want to assist in building Canada. They want to do everything they can to make this economy stronger. The only one missing is the federal government. If the government does truly believe that we can build Canada strong, then it should get back to some of the fundamental partners that can help it, the first nations that have signed modern day treaties.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the member provide his thoughts in regard to the feedback we have had from many modern treaty partners that have ultimately looked at the legislation and have seen it to be of great value? It would seem to me that there are many within the indigenous leadership who want Bill C-10.

Where does the member stand in regard to that issue, where a significant percentage of a community is saying that this is something that is necessary?

• (1550)

Ellis Ross: Madam Speaker, I would say to the member that I would love to get up in front of these communities and give them the exact same speech I just gave right now. There are too many processes being put in place right now that have been in place for 20 years and talk about the same exact thing. The only people who are failing to implement it are the members of the federal government.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, there is something important to bear in mind about the current situation. In the course of our work as parliamentarians, I was tasked, as a member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, with creating an advisory committee, a body that tells us what questions to ask, where to look and where the government is going wrong. That is very useful.

Let us look at what the bill proposes. We need to keep in mind that the bill was a collaborative effort that included the Land Claims Agreements Coalition. The process was a long-term undertaking. The funds to be invested in it are modest compared to the savings it could generate, especially in terms of government efficiency. As parliamentarians, we could use this office to get some accountability.

Government Orders

Is accountability important to the member? If so, why not support passing the bill quickly?

[English]

Ellis Ross: Madam Speaker, there are so many processes put in place already to achieve the exact same goal. I think first nations should be made well aware of the time wasted talking about this, when really the simple answer is that the government should have actually fulfilled its obligations when it signed the treaties five years, 10 years or 15 years ago. That was the number one promise made by the government.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for all the work he has done over the years supporting reconciliation and economic development for indigenous peoples.

There is a certain irony in the approach of the government, because we have a Prime Minister who has not shown much respect for Parliament. He ignored our calls to reconvene Parliament to discuss the crisis involving Canada-U.S. relations. He has not been forthcoming with Parliament about various issues. However, we have a bill where he is proposing an additional separate bureaucracy that would oversee the government's action in the context of modern treaties.

It strikes me that the government could and should respect the accountability mechanisms we already have in place. It could be more engaged with the work of Parliament. It could be more present in Parliament and more willing to provide information to Parliament about what it is doing as it relates to modern treaties and also about a broad range of other domains.

I wonder what my colleague thinks about this: instead of the government's creating an additional separate bureaucracy, its actually being more engaged with and more forthcoming with the mechanisms and institutions we already have that are designed to promote accountability.

Ellis Ross: Madam Speaker, that is exactly it. Everybody is failing to talk about the outcomes. Do we really need another report after 20 years of reports saying the exact same thing? If there is no accountability and no follow-up, then what are we getting in return?

It is crucial now that Canada start building. Everybody agrees with that, but the partners on the ground are actually begging and screaming for something. I think those first nations should come here to see the other side of this and see how this place works, because the announcements are really not doing anybody any good, whether we are talking about first nations or non-first nations. I think this is a great time for government to actually fulfill its obligations and authority, and to fulfill the promises of the treaty.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague said that this bill has no teeth and no enforcement measures to compel the government to uphold modern treaties.

Could he give us some examples of processes that would produce better results?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ellis Ross: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. In fact, I think we should start with all the Auditor General's recommendations, put them back on the floor, ask for accountability and measures, and show the Canadian public how the government is failing.

The problem with the bill is that it is just an announcement. It has no substance, so let us start back 20 years when the complaint—

• (1555)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill C-10. I really believe that the Conservatives have missed the mark on this. I am pleased to see and hear that the Bloc is going to be supporting the legislation. I had a tough time listening to the member for Winnipeg Centre, and I will provide some comments on that as to why. However, having said that, I appreciate and am somewhat grateful that the NDP has also indicated support for Bill C-10. I believe the leader of the Green Party has also indicated support for Bill C-10.

The only political entity inside the House today that does not recognize the value of passing Bill C-10 is actually the Conservative Party of Canada. I often make reference to that far right element, which continues to grow. In fact, a number of them have been promoted to come a little closer to the front. At the end of the day, I am disappointed in the Conservative Party for not recognizing the true value of Bill C-10. We have had a Prime Minister, in one way, who has emphasized how important it is that we build a stronger and healthier Canada. We have talked about that now since the last federal election just over a year ago, when Canadians elected a new government.

In order for Canada to succeed to the degree the Prime Minister of Canada or any member of the House wants to see it succeed and prosper into the future, indigenous leadership and indigenous people have to be at the forefront. When I take a look at Bill C-10 and what it actually does, I do not understand why the Conservatives have chosen to vote against the legislation. I am going to suggest to them that they might want to reconsider their positioning on the legislation, because at the core, the heart of the legislation is to ensure more accountability, more transparency. This is in essence what the bill would do, yet the Conservative Party has determined that it does not want to support this legislation because of a belief that it would not be necessary if the government just did more on the file.

I have been around since 2010 as a federal member of Parliament, and I spent just under 20 years as an MLA in Manitoba. I can tell the House that when we take a look at independent agencies of Parliament, whether at the national level or the provincial level, they play a critical role in the issue of accountability and transparency on a wide variety of different issues. If we want to get a good sense of it, let us take a look at the Auditor General. It does not mean we have to agree with every detail that comes back out of a report, but it is important to recognize the report and that the re-

port raises the profile of critically important issues that have been determined by a thorough investigation.

This is what we are actually looking at with the creation of a commissioner to deal with modern treaties. Why would they not support that? At the different levels of government, we see mechanisms that are put into place to ensure that this does take place, that there is a higher sense of accountability, that there is a thorough look into a number of different issues that are important to the nation and our best collective interest.

• (1600)

This is why, first and foremost, setting up a commissioner through the legislation and an office that is there to support the commissioner, in the legislation necessary to give the commissioner the authority and power to call into question the modern treaties and some things that are or are not taking place, and raising them in the form of a report to the appropriate federal minister, ultimately does a great service. This is especially so if we want to follow through on what the government has been talking about for the past 18 months or so, since the last federal election.

I would ask the Conservative Party to reconsider their position and to work collaboratively with the government on this particular issue. I believe that not only would the communities we represent support it but also that a good part of our indigenous leadership would like to see this put into law.

In fact, if we listen to the minister and her explanation in introducing the legislation, or in bringing it up again for third reading, we will find that there was a great deal of consultation done with modern treaty partners, other indigenous leaders, provinces and other stakeholders, in order to ensure that we got it right. That is the way it was introduced, and the minister has been very open on the file. I would like to think that if members put it in the same category as other independent agents of Parliament, they would see the true benefits of allowing this bill to pass.

Now, it is not an issue of whether the bill will pass. The bill will pass. One of the Conservative members says, "We will see." The bill will pass, as we are working in collaboration with other opposition leaders and parties. Only the Conservatives do not support it. The only thing the Conservatives can do is put up obstacles in order to prevent its passage in a timely fashion. That is the reason I am spending the first part of my comments appealing to the Conservatives. I believe the Conservatives understand that there is a lot of political support for the passage of the legislation. It has already been before the House. People have had the opportunity for months to take a look at the legislation and to provide both direct and indirect feedback to the minister. It is time that we actually see this legislation pass.

Today, two other major pieces of legislation were introduced. These bills are going to have a profound positive impact on our nation. Given the limited amount of time that we have to debate on the floor of the House of Commons, I would suggest that passing this legislation earlier as opposed to later would provide more time for us to talk about legislation that is on the horizon, including legislation tabled today.

This is not to disregard the opposition's comments. Where the opposition seems to be unified is in an area which, again, I do not necessarily agree with. I will go to the comments from the member for Winnipeg Centre right away, on the issue of the government doing more. In short, we can always do more. We can always try to do better. There is no doubt about that.

• (1605)

As a government, in terms of priorities, I believe we are making progress. We are taking steps forward, and Bill C-10 is one of those steps. I will give members a sense of why it is an important piece of legislation.

The member for Winnipeg Centre was talking about how the federal government and the Prime Minister are doing things by expanding the economy, bringing in huge amounts of investment, and how that is a bad thing because of the lack of involvement from indigenous peoples. Ultimately, I would argue that, to a certain degree, is maybe a little bit misleading. The government has worked in the past and continues to work on that critical relationship between levels of government, which includes indigenous peoples.

When we talk about those major projects, I will talk about the province of Manitoba. In Manitoba, the big project we continue to talk about, promote and encourage is the port of Churchill, which is connected by the Hudson Bay Railway. That is a major project for Manitoba. The Prime Minister has acknowledged that, our budget reflects that and the commitment reflects that. The premier of Manitoba has recognized it, supports it, wants to see it move forward, and has actually committed significant tax breaks for companies to invest. Indigenous people are the ones who are leading the file.

OneNorth, for example, is made up of 41 northern indigenous communities that came together, and they operate together in terms of the best interests of indigenous people, the north, and of course, of our nation. They are the owner of Arctic Gateway Group, which is responsible for the port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay Railway. Relatively recently, we finally had another ship leave the port of Churchill full of grain. There are many in the prairies who see the true value and want to see the port of Churchill realized. I believe it is wrong to try to give a false impression that, as a government, we are trying to do things without working with indigenous people.

The minister herself made some comments referencing that the modern treaties' partners are critical to advancing many of the projects we are seeing right now. She said, "such as the Nisga'a nation with Ksi Lisims and the Tł̨ch̨q first nation with the Arctic economic and security corridor." In Iqaluit, we have the NTI, which is leading a hydroelectric project. We are seeing modern treaty partners across the country, not only in equity, but also leading the charge in these major projects. This is what the minister indicated earlier.

• (1610)

These modern treaties make a huge difference in managing and moving forward on our environment, our economy and overall growth in Canada. Whether it is the Prime Minister, the government in general or, as I would like to think, all members of the chamber, we should be encouraging and recognizing indigenous in-

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volvement, because it is real and tangible and is making a difference in the lives of all Canadians. That is the reason I say, when the member for Winnipeg Centre and others indirectly allude to it, that at the end of the day, there are all sorts of opportunities for all of us. The modern treaties and what this legislation would do to reinforce the strength of the modern treaties are things we should all be recognizing.

That is why when the minister spoke, I asked her a question in regard to the impact that modern treaties have on Bill C-10 and the types of actions the government has been taking over the last year plus, since the last election. She concurred with my remarks, and she is not alone. Many of the people I represent, virtually the entirety of the Liberal caucus and many members opposite see the benefit of having a commissioner, an independent agent of Parliament, hold more accountability and transparency on the issue of modern treaties, and see how modern treaties can contribute to the agenda that is not owned by any individual but should be the Canadian agenda, with a team Canada approach. That is to build a stronger, healthier Canada in every region of this nation. That was the point I was making with the minister earlier when she brought in the bill, because it is substantive.

In terms of the commissioner, these are some of the things that the commissioner would be able to do: review and audit the federal implementation of modern treaties. When we think of modern treaties, the first one was the James Bay modern treaty, back in 1975. It dealt with things such as land ownership, financial compensation and the issue of self-governance. Modern treaties today enable a higher sense of collaboration among the different levels of government. The more we take that team approach and work collaboratively, the bigger we are going to be able to grow as a nation as a whole.

Bill C-10 is legislation that fits into a much larger picture. Any time we can reflect positively on the floor of the House of Commons in regard to modern treaties, we should take advantage of it and do just that. We should support modern-day treaties because they do make a difference. Governments change; they come and go. Maybe that will happen in 10 or 15 years. However long it might be, at the end of the day, they do change, and having an independent agent of Parliament is good for all of Canada.

• (1615)

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are already accountability measures and mechanisms within this House. The Auditor General, for example, puts out multiple reports. In 2021, there was a report on the shortcomings and missed promises when it came to water legislation. Only years later, on something so fundamental to human life, as everybody needs water, are the Liberals acting on legislation they promised a long time ago. They are still fighting in courts on this issue too.

What would be different with a new commissioner's office in comparison to how the Liberals have failed to live up to reports the Auditor General cites against the government?

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Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, Bill C-10 recognizes the value that modern treaties play in Canadian society. It would enable a better, stronger relationship between the federal government and indigenous people. Having a commissioner that reports back to the House on where the government needs to improve would be a positive thing. I am not alone, as many indigenous leaders have actually been advocating for that. I could be wrong on this, but I understand that even with modern treaties that were brought into place, the topic of having a commissioner was discussed.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you again, and the member for Winnipeg North as well.

Bill C-10 is important to me. In my capacity as critic for indigenous relations, I met with people from the Land Claims Agreements Coalition. I remember meeting Jim Aldridge, who has unfortunately passed away, and seeing how much he contributed for the groups. In committee, I interviewed Chief John Jack, who also appreciates this heritage. It is important to remember that this bill was co-developed, which means that we, as parliamentarians, must also be sensitive to the outcomes of this bill.

Why are we here? We are here because the government has failed, year after year, decade after decade, to uphold its commitments to indigenous signatories to modern treaties and ensure the implementation of those modern treaties. Of course, program funding is an important issue. The Auditor General has produced many reports and follow-up reports on the government's inaction.

What will creating a commissioner position achieve? It will allow us, as parliamentarians, to take note of any red flags, so we know what to ask questions about. Personally, I see that as a good thing. Does the member for Winnipeg North see it as a sign of the government's failure to keep its word to indigenous signatories to modern treaties?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am grateful and appreciate that the Bloc has recognized the value of Bill C-10 and is working with the government to see its ultimate passage. It is really encouraging that less than 18 months ago, Canadians elected a new government, a new Prime Minister and 70-plus new Liberal MPs.

At the end of the day, this has been established as a high priority for the Prime Minister. That is the reason we are debating the bill today at third reading. That is the reason I spent as much time as I did at the very beginning of my comments asking for the Conservatives to reconsider their positioning and at the very least let us pass the legislation. I can assure members that the Prime Minister wants to see it passed. That is why we prioritized it. Hopefully it will pass relatively soon.

• (1620)

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciated my colleague's speech. He made a very important point that I am going to ask him to elaborate on now, which is that this bill has the prospect of not only improving our treaty relationships and improving the likelihood of really good adherence to treaties, but also creating

more economic certainty. If we have adherence to treaties that have an economic dimension, that means an accountability function through Parliament allows more potential certainty with respect to the underlying economic relations of the treaty. I am wondering if my colleague could elaborate on that.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question because it allows me to amplify that modern-day treaties can have such a huge, positive impact, not only from a social perspective, but also from an economic perspective.

When we take a look at Bill C-10 and put it into the larger picture of what we have been trying to accomplish over the 18 months since the last election in building a stronger and healthier Canadian economy, Bill C-10 plays an important role. This is because it would ensure not only that we would be meeting an obligation to the different stakeholders, but that this government and future governments would be held to account and have more transparency and would live up to modern-day treaties. In my opinion, it is a win-win situation. We just need the legislation to pass.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I hardly agree with the parliamentary secretary about this being good from an economic perspective, but I guess it is good from the economic perspective of bureaucrats and bloated government. I wonder if he is aware of the six separate entities specifically designed to monitor, support and ensure treaty implementation. He can nod if he knows these ones: the modern treaty implementation office, the assessment of modern treaty implications office, the performance management framework, the modern treaty management environment, the deputy ministers' oversight committee and the reconciliation secretariat.

I am wondering if the member could elaborate on these other aspects that are about doing the same job.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, let us follow the same logic and principle and apply it to the Auditor General of Canada. Much of the work done by the Auditor General of Canada is done in different ways by different departments. Would the member be advocating that we get rid of the Auditor General of Canada because it is a huge bureaucracy? I suspect not, or at least I would hope not.

At the end of the day, the difference is that this would be an independent agent of Parliament. That is the significant difference. I would ask the member opposite whether he believes that independent agents of Parliament provide a worthwhile service to the House of Commons and to Parliament. I would argue they do.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, there are two quick points I wish to make to the hon. member for Winnipeg North. This bill was originally tabled as Bill C-77. It was introduced long ago in the previous Parliament and died on the Order Paper when the previous prime minister, Justin Trudeau, prorogued.

I wrote the Prime Minister on March 9, after he became Prime Minister in 2025, and said that a lot of bills died on the Order Paper and that we should get them back. The government waited a long time to introduce this one.

My colleague from Winnipeg Centre is not here, but when she speaks of ignoring treaty rights and when government members keep telling us that Ksi Lisims is an indigenous project, please know, as the member for Winnipeg North must know, that it is a project being promoted by a Texas-owned company. It is the primary proponent and will make the money out of the project. We respect that there is an agreement with the Nisga'a nation, but it is a Texas project called Ksi Lisims.

• (1625)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am going to allude to an answer I provided a little earlier regarding Bill C-10, because the leader of the Green Party is right that it was a part of the agenda in a previous government. In minority situations, it can be even more of a challenge trying to get legislation through the House, as she would know. Given that there is a majority government, I can tell the leader of the Green Party that we have a Prime Minister who still wants to see collaboration in the House. That is why in my opening comments I talked about it being encouraging to see, whether it is the leader of the Green Party, the New Democrats or the Bloc, a recognition of the value of this particular piece of legislation. It is the Prime Minister's will to see it pass.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): 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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Government Accountability; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, The Environment; the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, Labour.

[English]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Northwest.

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will share my time with my colleague from Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

I rise today to speak on Bill C-10 and the important question of how Canada honours its modern treaties and self-government agreements with indigenous peoples.

Let me begin by making something very clear. Conservatives support modern treaties and self-government agreements. We believe these agreements can provide certainty, establish clear legal relationships, recognize indigenous jurisdiction and create stronger foundations for economic development and self-determination.

For generations, the relationship between first nations and the federal government has been shaped by the Indian Act. It has created dependency, bureaucracy and a system in which too many decisions affecting indigenous communities remain concentrated in Ottawa.

Modern treaties and self-government agreements offer a different path. They can establish defined rights and responsibilities between

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indigenous governments and the Crown. They can provide greater certainty for communities, governments, investors and Canadians. They can support indigenous nations in exercising greater control over their own affairs. From our perspective, that is the direction we should be working toward: less dependency on federal bureaucracy, greater Indigenous self-government and legally defined relationships that deliver results. The question before us is whether Bill C-10, as designed, would meaningfully advance those objectives, or would it create another federal office, another reporting structure and another process that does not adequately address the root causes of the problems?

In my opinion, this legislation does nothing more than create more ineffective processes posed as solutions in Ottawa, away from the communities that have been waiting for the government to fulfill the spirit and intent of treaty-making.

The government has told us that the legislation is intended to create a credible, effective, sustainable and independent oversight mechanism. This is an important objective, but Parliament has a responsibility to ask whether the proposed powers will be sufficient to achieve it.

The bill would give the commissioner the discretion to conduct reviews and performance audits, establish priorities and prepare reports. The commissioner would have to submit final reports to the Speakers of both Houses, and those reports would be referred to a parliamentary committee.

As a first-time MP, I have now witnessed multiple Auditor General reports on the shortcomings of indigenous relations with government. The government response is the same: minuscule and meaningless. That raises a serious question. Will this office have the power to drive results, or will it primarily document failures and report them to Parliament? Reporting is important, and transparency matters, but reporting alone does not guarantee that a treaty obligation will be fulfilled. The historic treaties that are over 150 years old can attest to this.

We have seen this challenge in other areas of indigenous services. Consider the Auditor General's work on access to safe drinking water in first nations communities. In 2021, the Auditor General reported that Indigenous Services Canada was not on track to eliminate all long-term drinking water advisories by March 2021, which is another failed Liberal promise. The audit identified concerns involving support to communities; funding for infrastructure, operations and maintenance; and the non-existence of an appropriate regulatory framework. Only five years later, after striking out on Bill C-61 because they called an election, are the Liberals addressing these concerns with legislation that is "watered down," according to chiefs. These are clearly not the actions of a government that takes accountability reports seriously.

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In 2025, the Auditor General's follow-up examined the implementation of recommendations from six earlier audits covering programs including primary health care, emergency management and safe drinking water. The follow-up found that Indigenous Services Canada made poor progress on many recommendations, even getting worse on some measurements. These reports demonstrate why Parliament must distinguish between accountability processes and the achievement of outcomes. The lesson is not that audits have no value but that audits must lead to action. When a government department receives recommendations, Canadian and indigenous communities deserve to know what will change, who is responsible and when the work will be completed.

The same principle should apply to modern treaty implementation. If the commissioner identifies a recurring failure, what happens next? Will the responsible department be required to produce a corrective action plan? Will the minister be expected to explain delays? Will Parliament be able to follow up on unresolved findings? These are not abstract questions. They go directly to the credibility of the proposed institution.

This raises more questions on how this legislation lacks real teeth. How would this legislation and the commissioner's office deal with the diversity and complexity of modern treaties? I seriously fear that the legislation would set up a parliamentary institution to fail because it lacks the foresight and legitimacy to deal with the root issues.

• (1630)

The government has indicated that the co-development process involved all 30 indigenous modern treaty partners. That is good, but that demonstrates the breadth of the relationships that the proposed office would need to understand. Modern treaties are not identical documents. They reflect different histories, negotiations, geographical circumstances, governance structures and arrangements between indigenous governments and the Crown. Some contain detailed provisions regarding lands and resources. Others include self-government arrangements and distinct institutional responsibilities.

The bill gives the commissioner discretion to establish their own priorities and determine the number and frequency of reviews, performance audits and briefings conducted annually. This would create a practical challenge. How could one commissioner meaningfully determine the priorities across such a wide range of treaty obligations and indigenous governments? Which treaty partner would receive attention first? How would competing concerns be evaluated? What would happen when a matter is urgent to one indigenous government but is not identified as a priority by the commissioner? What would happen when overlapping interests in land between indigenous communities comes into conflict? Would the commissioner's office be able to intervene on such things? Modern treaties operate on the principle of cross-ministry implementation. How can one ill-defined commissioner's office meaningfully navigate a 345,000-member public service system across dozens of ministries and hundreds of departments? That is a recipe for failure.

The legislation would do little to ensure that this discretion does not undermine treaty-specific arrangements or leave important implementation problems without timely attention. A strong oversight framework needs transparent criteria for establishing priori-

ties. It should also provide meaningful opportunities for treaty partners to identify concerns and request reviews.

Conservatives believe in a strong future for first nations and indigenous peoples. We believe in self-government. We believe in modern treaties. We believe that clear legal relationships between indigenous governments and the Crown can provide certainty, support economic development and strengthen self-determination. We believe that the Indian Act should not be the permanent foundation of Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples. The goal should be to support indigenous nations in exercising greater control over their own affairs with legally defined relationships and practical mechanisms for resolving disputes and fulfilling obligations. Bill C-10 should be evaluated against those objectives.

If Parliament is going to establish an oversight office, it should ensure that the office has a clear and effective mandate. That includes transparent criteria for selecting review priorities, meaningful involvement of modern treaty partners, public reporting on unresolved implementation problems, clear expectations for the government's responsive and corrective action, and regular review of the office's effectiveness and costs. These are measures that could help strengthen accountability while respecting the distinct legal arrangements established by modern treaties.

Let me conclude by returning to the principle that should guide this debate. Modern treaties are about relationships, rights, responsibilities and the future of indigenous nations and Canada. They are not simply administrative agreements to be reviewed by federal officials. They are legal commitments that require serious implementation. Support for modern treaties must also mean demanding that the federal government honour its obligations. Bill C-10 provides insufficient accountability on whether its proposed commissioner could effectively address the diversity of modern treaties and whether the office would produce meaningful results for treaty partners.

Let us in this House continue to work toward a relationship between indigenous nations and Canada built on respect, certainty, responsibility and self-government, not one based on, arguably, the bare minimum in legislation that actually takes time and energy away from doing the work of building up the implementation of treaties. We cannot measure success simply by the number of audits completed or reports tabled. We must measure success by whether the treaty commitments are fulfilled by the government and treaty negotiators themselves.

• (1635)

Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for acknowledging how listening to our treaty partners is essential for reconciliation. This legislation was developed with the help of over 30 modern treaty partners.

How can the member say that the legislation would not be useful in helping to resolve problems with modern treaties when so many modern treaty partners helped develop this bill?

Billy Morin: Certainly, Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the years of work from those nations that have gone into this. However, I think that after 11 years of Liberal government, they have been beaten down so much that the bare minimum actually sounds great to a lot of people.

We can look at the water legislation. It has come back to the table, as was indicated earlier, and their latest complaint is that the legislation has completely ignored first nations' consultation over the last year. For this one, just to get it over the finish line, I get where the nations are coming from, but it could go further. It could go to a lot less meaningless bureaucracy at the end of the day.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back and a pleasure to see you in the chair. I wonder if my colleague from Edmonton would mind giving his perspective. The member for Winnipeg West just spoke about the lack of consultation with treaty partners. I thought the question was a little bizarre coming from the member for Winnipeg West, given the member from Edmonton's history as a proud chief of his first nation and his relationship with the federal government and the Crown over the course of his service in that role.

I wonder if the member for Edmonton Northwest could give a little bit more clarity for the member from Winnipeg on this topic.

Billy Morin: Madam Speaker, today's discussion primarily revolves around modern treaties, but I actually come from the historic treaties. It is Treaty 6's 150th anniversary this year. In fact, in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, they have treaty commissioners. I understand there was some minimal engagement with the design of those offices, but today those offices do nothing themselves to serve the treaty obligations in terms of meaningful impact. We are seeing historic record numbers of land claims, historic record numbers of lawsuits against the government, because of a lack of actual substance in these commissioners' offices. I do not see anything different with this one, despite a lot of the work that has gone into it.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, from what I understand from my colleague's remarks, he is afraid that the legislation will result in reports but no concrete action and thinks that it lacks sufficient teeth or enforcement mechanisms to ensure that results are achieved.

Could he give me an example of something that could really strengthen the bill?

[English]

Billy Morin: Madam Speaker, the government's principal direction with this legislation is a little misguided, or a lot misguided. There are commissioners negotiating and treaty negotiators within

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the departments themselves. I just visited a nation this summer that said it was insulted by the government sending a young, first-time public servant, and I feel sorry for that public servant, but it was an insult to those nations. I think the government should be concentrating on the department negotiators themselves, rather than a mechanism it knows is set up for failure to ultimately hold it accountable, which is going to go nowhere.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talked about meeting and honouring obligations. I wonder if the member can explain to me how Bill C-10 would prevent that from happening. I see it as a strong positive to have an independent agent of Parliament who is tracking those obligations and then reporting them, as an independent. I would think that would be a positive.

• (1640)

Billy Morin: Well, Madam Speaker, I would pose a question back. How would it actually lead to obligation in the action of the government to implement those treaties? Again, Auditor General reports and other reports have not led to that obligation, that action. We have record numbers of land claims and lawsuits against the government because of its lack of action, so I would flip the question back to the member.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, which is seconded by the leader of the official opposition:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-38, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (extension of the federal fuel excise tax relief), be disposed of as follows:

(a) the bill be ordered for consideration at the second reading stage on Tuesday, September 22, 2026;

(b) on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, the House shall continue to sit until midnight for the purpose of considering this bill, provided that, after 7 p.m., no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair, and when no member wishes to speak or at midnight, whichever is earlier, the bill shall be deemed read a second time on division and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance;

(c) the Minister of Finance and National Revenue be ordered to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to the bill for one hour, no later than Tuesday, October 6, 2026, followed by an additional hour to gather evidence from witnesses, and immediately after, the committee proceed to clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

(d) the motion for third reading of the bill may be made in the same sitting during which the said bill has been concurred in at report stage;

(e) at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day the bill is considered at the third reading stage, or when no member wishes to speak, whichever is earlier, the bill shall be deemed read a third time and passed on division.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

Hearing none, it is agreed.

[English]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COMMISSIONER FOR MODERN TREATY IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act respecting the Commissioner for Modern Treaty Implementation, be read the third time and passed.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been an honour to serve the residents of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge and now Mission for going on seven years. I appreciate this role and take my responsibilities seriously.

Today is the first day of a fall session. I was a teacher for many years prior to being elected, and September is the start of a new school year, not only in elementary and high schools but also on campuses, with new sports programs, dance classes and many other activities. There is a sense of excitement among many students at the beginning of something new and getting involved. I want to wish students and teachers a successful and fulfilling year.

I have a confession to make. As we enter this fall session, I do not have the same excitement. As a matter of fact, I have a bit of a heavy heart over what has been happening in our beautiful country of Canada for the past years under the Liberal government and, I would also add, in my province of British Columbia under the NDP government. Millions of Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. They are feeling the cost of living squeeze at the grocery stores and gas pumps. Small business owners tell me they feel that the government is, in many respects, warring against them to make them unprofitable and increase regulatory and tax burdens. Canada has dropped like a rock in our ranking in per capita income compared to the rest of the world. I will not talk about crime in our communities or drugs on the streets.

However, I must give credit to the Liberals where credit is due. They are master illusionists. Has anyone ever seen a magician saw an attractive assistant in two, only for the assistant to appear whole, with the wave of a wand and the swoosh of a cape? How do magicians do it? It is a little easier now with AI to find out their secrets. The Liberals are masters of illusion. They give the appearance of doing things, tricking our eyes and minds, but it is an illusion. One and a half years ago, the Prime Minister talked about moving Canada forward at unimaginable speed on major infrastructure and economic projects and about the need to rapidly diversify. Things have been pretty stagnant on that front. They may be able to point to one or two different projects, but it has been very sluggish. They said lots of good-sounding words and talked about doubling housing that is going the wrong direction.

I asked my parliamentary assistant how many new bureaucracies and offices the Liberals have they formed since they have been in government, and he sent me a list. It came to almost 50. There are 48 announced to be funded and formed, layers and layers of bureaucracies weighing down taxpayers with more debt, more regulations, more paper shuffling and more delays. Therefore, when the Liberal government tells me that Bill C-10 will fix its relationship with indigenous peoples by adding a new bureaucracy, I have to ask a simple question: With what? When we open the box, there is nothing inside. We have tried this before.

As I asked in my question to the parliamentary secretary moments ago, between 2015 and 2017, the government created the modern treaty implementation office, the assessment of modern treaty implementation office, the performance management framework, the modern treaty management environment, the deputy minister's oversight committee and the reconciliation secretariat, six separate entities specifically designed to monitor, support and ensure treaty implementation. At this rate, I have to ask: How many government offices does it take to change a light bulb? Apparently, it is six, or I guess seven now. After six offices and committees and layers of bureaucracy, the light bulb is still out.

● (1645)

It is a bureaucracy and a government that have run amok. In 2024, the Auditor General again reported that the federal system remains fragmented, bureaucratic and unaccountable. Responsibility is scattered across Indigenous Services Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations, Justice Canada and the Treasury Board.

When commitments go unfulfilled, no one is accountable, not politically, not financially, not morally. It is like it is their fault. Adding a commissioner does not change culture or performance. Only enforcement, accountability and clear expectations can. The government's response is what we have in the bill, to create yet another agency to monitor implementation.

Success should not be measured in bureaucratic reports. It should be measured in results on the ground, homes, water, policing, infrastructure, governance and economic opportunities. A commissioner will not build a house. A commissioner will not hire a police officer. A commissioner will not deliver clean water.

The Liberal philosophy is that Ottawa always knows best, that Ottawa must monitor, that Ottawa must supervise. The Liberals want to teach from above instead of supporting from beside. Bill C-10 is the purest expression of that instinct. Indigenous communities do not need a commissioner. The government needs a mirror. Its record is damning. The government has had 11 years to act. In that time, how many new modern treaties has it delivered? The answer is zero. That is a fact.

In contrast, the Conservative government, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, without all these extra bureaucracies, produced five modern treaties in six years. This is not a question of capacity or goodwill. It can be done and it has to be done. The government knows it has failed indigenous people, and it knows that the Auditor General has told it so, not once, not twice, but repeatedly. There is the 2005 report on treaty land entitlements, the 2006 report on the B.C. treaty process, the 2013 audit of modern treaty implementation, the 2016 report on the Labrador and Inuit Land Claims Agreement. There have been more than 14 reports since 2015, covering housing, clean water and treaty implementation, more than two decades of road maps.

Instead of following the map, the government got lost in its own maze of offices, titles and press conferences. While it wandered in the wilderness, communities have suffered. Treaty rights have not been honoured. Fiscal transfers have been delayed. Infrastructure has crumbled. Policing was underfunded and housing has been inadequate.

In 2023, the government even proposed a collaborative modern treaty implementation policy. That sounded like progress, especially with 70 treaty negotiations bogged down. Two years later, nothing has been implemented. We do not need another report telling us that the government has failed. We already know that.

I ask the House how a future commissioner of modern treaty implementation would magically motivate the government to finish the work. It would not. The problem has never been a lack of oversight. The problem is a lack of execution, a lack of political will and a lack of ministerial accountability. There are some alternatives. I will maybe get to that in my responses to some questions. I will say that we already have the courts. We have the Auditor General. We already have parliamentary committees, deputy ministers, performance frameworks and internal audits. The government does not need another reminder that it is failing to do its job.

Over 100,000 public servants have been added since 2015, with \$20 billion a year spent on external consultants. We have a public service that is larger than ever, a public service more ineffective in every respect. Faced with that failure, the Liberal answer is always the same, one more office, just one more commissioner and just one more structure. Actually, it is not just one more. The Liberals are going a dime a dozen. It is the illusion of action.

• (1650)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is no surprise. I disagree with the member. At the end of the day, he does not recognize the fact that it would be an independent agent. He listed off some other things that are out there. When he asked me the question, I made the comment that if

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he used the same principles for his arguments, then there would be no need for an Auditor General of Canada and how silly that would be. I suspect he sees the value in that independent agent.

Here, given the importance of modern treaties to our nation, recognizing the importance of having a commissioner who is an independent agent of Parliament is a good thing. Every other political entity in the House recognizes that, sees that and supports that, except for the Conservative Party of Canada. Is it quite possible that the Conservatives are once again offside on a very important issue? I would appeal to them to reconsider and ultimately support Bill C-10 because it would ensure more accountability and more transparency and it would reinforce the importance of modern treaties.

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, certainly we support auditors general and different agencies, but we do not need half a dozen or a dozen agents doing the same exact work or with a slight modification. A key aspect is just to hold ministers accountable. Every minister should report to Parliament on treaty implementation. If an obligation is unfulfilled, this is not a bureaucratic problem. It is a leadership failure and there must be consequences. We need to reduce government. We need to reduce bureaucracy instead of expanding it.

[Translation]

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

Does he not think that having a commissioner or an office to monitor progress and the government's compliance with modern treaties might be a good thing, or does he believe that there should be absolutely no mechanism in place to monitor compliance with modern treaties?

• (1655)

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, I thank the Bloc member.

I agree with him. I say yes to an office, a commissioner, but no to six different ways of doing the same thing. I think that is important.

I fully agree that the government has a responsibility to fulfill its duty and do its job.

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[English]

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, the comments from the member for Winnipeg North are really interesting because the member from Edmonton earlier admitted that there is a treaty commissioner that some provinces have, to deal with the failure of government to follow through with the commitments of the historic numbered treaties. I think everybody finds that to be very reasonable. However, this bill would create a modern treaty commissioner. With numerous modern treaties it is actively pursuing, some of which are before this House for debate, the government is admitting that it is already preparing for the fact that it is not going to follow through with the commitments that it has written into those treaties. The government needs to create another independent office at the same time as it is passing these treaties, to make sure it actually keeps the commitments that it is making to the first nations people in this country.

That is a bit outrageous, and I wonder if my colleague from British Columbia would agree.

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, yes, working together with the different levels of government and not duplicating is key, just to become effective. Conservatives believe in prosperity for all Canadians, indigenous and non-indigenous, and so we need to get things moving and not just paper shuffling, which is what the Liberals are great at doing.

Ginette Lavack (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague has rightly pointed out that there are already mechanisms dealing directly with treaty implementation, yet our modern treaty partners have continued to identify gaps in the implementation of these treaties. They themselves at committee have been telling us, and asking us for independent oversight. Does that not suggest that the issue is not simply the number of bodies that exist, but whether there is independent accountability when governments need to act and fail to act?

Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, the member reinforces our point that there are tremendous gaps that the Liberals are responsible for, and they need to get the job done.

Ginette Lavack (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Québec Centre today.

It is with gratitude and respect that I rise at the third reading of Bill C-10, the commissioner for modern treaty implementation act. This bill represents a meaningful opportunity to respond to indigenous advocacy, honour constitutional obligations and advance reconciliation in a way that is practical, measurable and grounded in partnership with modern treaty governments.

Modern treaties form part of Canada's constitutional architecture. They define rights, establish shared decision-making and set out how indigenous, federal, provincial and territorial governments will work together. Modern treaties create co-management boards, regulatory pathways and clear authorities over land, water, wildlife and resources. They provide predictability for major projects. They strengthen sovereignty in the Arctic and open the door to economic opportunities for modern treaty communities and for Canada as a

whole. This is what reconciliation looks like when it is lived and not only discussed.

Modern treaty partners have been clear and consistent: The most important step Canada can take right now is to strengthen accountability for implementation. That is exactly what this legislation would do. The commissioner for modern treaty implementation would be an independent agent of Parliament, someone with the mandate, the expertise and the authority to keep sustained attention on this important work.

Agents of Parliament provide important accountability mechanisms. When agents of Parliament issue reports, whether moderately critical or sharply consequential, departments respond, awareness increases, priorities shift and problems get fixed. That is how accountability takes root.

The commissioner would bring that same dynamic to modern treaty implementation. With access to information powers comparable to those of the Auditor General, the commissioner would be able to conduct performance audits, do reviews and examine key challenges in treaty implementation. They would be able to look at individual treaties and crosscutting issues across the entire modern treaty landscape. They would be able to identify opportunities for systemic improvements, highlight best practices and recommend ways to overcome challenges.

One witness at the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs offered a powerful cultural image: the traditional practice of raising a totem pole to call attention to someone who has not upheld their responsibilities. The point was visibility, ensuring that commitments are honoured. The commissioner would play a similar role by bringing clarity to where obligations are being met and where they are not, reinforcing the seriousness of Canada's commitment to modern treaty communities. This is how modern treaty implementation can improve: through clarity and accountability.

Another theme that emerged clearly during the examination of the bill at INAN was the need for consistency across successive governments and federal departments and agencies. Modern treaties are long-term agreements that must endure beyond election cycles and shifting political priorities. Modern treaties are complex. They require public servants who have a strong awareness and understanding of modern treaty commitments and obligations, as well as the spirit and intent of those agreements, and the practical realities of working in partnership with indigenous governments as equals.

During INAN's study of Bill C-10, Nicole Rempel from K'ómoks First Nation; Grand Chief Paul John Murdoch, Cree Nation Government; and Brianne Paulin, legal counsel, Nisga'a Lisims Government noted that inconsistent interpretations across departments remain one of the biggest barriers to effective implementation. An independent commissioner with expert knowledge could help ensure that the understanding of the spirit, intent and legal obligations of modern treaties remain consistent, even as governments change. As Canada increases its focus on issues like major projects and Arctic security, government institutions will need a deeper understanding of modern treaty rights and jurisdictions.

Within the broader modern treaty landscape, the commissioner could serve as a tool to help drive greater consistency in how departments understand and act on their modern treaty obligations, including those not traditionally involved in indigenous relations. Troy Sam, the chief councillor for Kitsumkalum Band Council, noted at INAN that public reporting to Parliament changes the accountability dynamic, making implementation visible, measurable and subject to scrutiny.

● (1700)

In this way, the commissioner would support better governance on all sides, clarifying expectations, reinforcing standards and encouraging federal departments to approach treaty obligations with a more coordinated, whole-of-government approach. This is how culture change takes hold. It is through consistent attention on key issues, education and public reporting to help guide the government's response. By providing independent analysis through views and performance audits, by reminding governments of their obligations and by ensuring that unilateral or cross-governmental actions do not undermine the treaty relationship, the commissioner would strengthen the stability and predictability that modern treaties were designed to provide.

Reconciliation requires us to look honestly at the past, act responsibly in the present and build a future grounded in respect and partnership. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission reminds us that to build for the future, we must learn from the past. That includes acknowledging the harm caused by federal policies designed to suppress indigenous cultures and assimilate indigenous peoples. It also includes recognizing the intergenerational trauma that those policies created and understanding that reconciliation is not a single act but a multi-generational journey.

Modern treaties have been one of the most effective tools for moving that journey forward. They support self-determination, they reduce reliance on colonial legislation like the Indian Act, they create real opportunities for indigenous participation in the broader economy, they help build generational wealth and they strengthen the nation-to-nation, government-to-government and Inuit-Crown relationships that are essential to Canada's future. The commissioner could help ensure that these agreements are implemented in a way that reflects their spirit and purpose. That is reconciliation in action.

Some have asked why this work cannot simply be done by existing institutions. The answer is clear: Modern treaties are unique. They are constitutional agreements with complex, crosscutting obligations that span dozens of departments. They require specialized

knowledge, sustained attention and a mandate focused solely on implementation. The Auditor General plays a vital role, but their mandate is broad. They cannot provide the continuous, treaty-specific oversight that partners themselves have asked for. The commissioner would fill those gaps. As Eva Clayton, president of the Nisga'a Lisims Government, said at INAN, the commissioner is the missing piece. It is the mechanism that ensures the ecosystem of tools Canada has created actually leads to cultural change inside government.

By supporting the implementation of modern treaties, this legislation would help create the conditions for success. It would reflect a true co-developed approach to developing solutions made in partnership with indigenous peoples. It would strengthen trust, it would strengthen transparency and it would be another step toward strengthening the relationship that underpins economic opportunities across the country.

I want to close by acknowledging the leadership of the indigenous governments that have guided this work. Their clarity, their patience and their determination have shaped this legislation. They have shown us what partnership looks like, and they have shown us what it means to build a relationship that lasts.

Passing this legislation would help make sure that Canada lives up to its modern treaty obligations, its objectives and, most importantly, its relationships. It would help us be a better treaty partner, and it would help us build a future grounded in respect, in partnership and in the full implementation of the agreements that bind us together.

I urge all members of the House to support this bill.

● (1705)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am looking at a government document. It is titled "Implementation of Modern Treaties and Self-Government Agreements". It is a provisional annual report. It states that the implementation of modern treaty commitments is the responsibility of the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. Earlier this morning, at the beginning of the debate, we heard the minister state that it was not the minister's responsibility. It would be part of the new commissioner's role.

Who is going to be responsible for it? Will it be the minister, as the government's own document states, or the commissioner, as the minister stated?

Ginette Lavack: Madam Speaker, the commissioner's role is to be an independent body with oversight over treaties. They are there to do the reporting and provide recommendations, but also to ensure that any recommendations are implemented by the various departments. Many of these treaties will cross a multitude of departments, which will have responsibilities to ensure the proper implementation of them.

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The role of the commissioner is oversight and reporting, and the role of the various ministries and departments is to implement changes and ensure the proper fulfillment of obligations.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Boniface—Saint-Vital for her speech. Having served with her on the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, I find her presence reassuring. She is all about conciliation and listening, which are so important in the relationship with first nations. However, the reason this bill exists today is that, for decades, governments failed to carry out the follow-up required by modern treaties and expected by the first nations who signed agreements with the government. That is how we have gotten to this point decades later. I want to commend the Land Claims Agreement Coalition for its leadership. It championed these claims and helped to co-develop this bill. Ultimately, this bill exists is because the follow-up measures were not carried out.

As a member of the government, will my colleague ensure that action is taken on the recommendations that the commissioner will submit? How can we ensure that the government and the ministers responsible will take the data and recommendations set out in these reports seriously, as it does the recommendations of the Auditor General or the Parliamentary Budget Officer? What responsibility does she intend to take internally to ensure that the government complies with these recommendations?

• (1710)

Ginette Lavack: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and welcome him back to the House. I really appreciated the opportunity to work with him on the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

To answer his question, I would say that, although other institutions do exist to ensure the implementation of treaties, we heard very clearly from first nations members that there was a lack of implementation because there was a lack of ongoing oversight. Although we have the Auditor General, their mandate is too broad. We need somebody who can provide support and exert pressure on all the departments involved in this issue. We need to ensure that there is follow up. Only by being consistent, over and over again, will we be able to ensure that there is movement and that we make progress. I would say that it is really by focusing on treaties through an independent commissioner that we will be able to make progress on this file.

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Saint-Boniface—Saint-Vital for her commitment to indigenous issues. I know she spent the summer conducting consultations, including in Quebec.

I would like my colleague to tell us how this initiative is being received and how much interest it is generating amongst indigenous groups. There is a sense that some opposition parties may not want this bill to quickly move forward. What would be the consequences of delaying this bill?

Ginette Lavack: Madam Speaker, first nations have been calling for this kind of service, if I can call it that, for over 20 years. We have been told that they lack the necessary and sustained resources and mechanisms to ensure that treaties are fully implemented. If

this bill is not passed, it means we will continue to find ourselves embroiled in litigation and other similar legal proceedings. With the ongoing work of a commissioner—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Québec Centre.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very grateful for the opportunity to rise today to speak to Bill C-10, an act respecting the commissioner for modern treaty implementation.

This bill seeks to create a new, independent officer of Parliament. It is a way to hold current and future governments accountable for the commitments made under modern treaties with indigenous peoples across the country.

It is because of the need for a more consistent approach to modern treaty implementation that we strongly encourage the swift passage of Bill C-10.

I would like to reiterate that modern treaties are legally binding agreements that recognize the rights, priorities and aspirations of indigenous peoples. They aim to support indigenous self-government, establish better frameworks for economic development and environmental management and protection, and promote cultural vitality.

Modern treaty implementation is crucial. While significant progress is being made, there are still opportunities to strengthen this implementation. Modern treaty partners have made it clear that Canada could become an even stronger partner and do more to honour agreements and commitments protected under the Constitution.

For many years, indigenous partners have driven home the vital importance of proactive federal action in addressing modern treaty challenges. They are not alone. The Auditor General's 2003, 2007 and 2015 reports identified similar areas for improvement in the Canadian government's implementation efforts. One such area of improvement concerns independent oversight and accountability. That is why the bill before us today is so important.

The commissioner for modern treaty implementation would be able to help resolve long-standing issues through targeted reports and audits. He or she could also look at specific issues concerning one or more treaties and choose the best path forward. In doing so, the commissioner would highlight opportunities for Canada to strengthen the role of the Canadian government as a treaty partner, which should lead to more sustained federal implementation efforts and improved relationships all around.

David Wright, an associate professor at the faculty of law at the University of Calgary, used a very clear analogy before the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs on March 12. The Auditor General is more like a family doctor, a generalist, while the commissioner will be a specialist whose mission will be precisely to diagnose and address the specific effects of modern treaty implementation. That is a powerful analogy.

The commissioner will draw on their specific expertise in modern treaties to ensure that reviews and audits are based on a solid understanding of the spirit and intent of those treaties.

The commissioner will have their own office, just like the Auditor General and the Privacy Commissioner. They will not be accountable to any specific department or to the Prime Minister, but will report directly to Parliament.

This bill will also provide access to analyses and recommendations from independent experts.

Furthermore, over the years, in response to feedback from modern treaty partners, successive governments have worked to strengthen the implementation of modern treaties.

In 2015, the Government of Canada adopted the cabinet directive on the federal approach to modern treaty implementation. This measure marked the beginning of an important step toward greater transparency and accountability to help overcome systemic barriers in this regard.

In 2023, the Canadian government also adopted Canada's collaborative modern treaty implementation policy.

In May 2024, the government announced its intention to create a new officer of Parliament, which I strongly support today.

Bill C-10 is a vital means of supporting our relationships with modern treaty partners.

We have a duty to uphold our treaty obligations.

• (1715)

Bill C-10 responds to more than 20 years of calls for independent oversight and for Canada to act as a stronger partner. This bill is the result of a co-development process and a genuine partnership between our government and modern treaty partners.

Modern treaties have the power to strengthen the social, cultural and economic foundations of indigenous communities, thereby fostering more robust local economies, job creation, better infrastructure for everyone and support for clean energy. Currently, 27 modern treaties are in effect with 30 indigenous partners. These agreements cover more than 40% of Canada's territory, 80% of which is in the northern part of the country.

In conclusion, we have come a long way, but there is still more we can do to increase transparency and accountability, and to fully honour our commitments to modern treaty partners. That is why we have drafted this bill and why we are calling for its swift passage. That is why it is so important.

This bill demonstrates Canada's commitment and dedication and represents a step toward a better future for our important modern

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treaty partners. It is time for the House to show unity. The implementation of modern treaties is a national imperative.

Finally, like others have done, I would like to thank all the strong indigenous voices who paved the way for this bill to be introduced in the House. Their leadership inspires us to keep our promises.

• (1720)

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Québec Centre for his speech and his awareness. It is clear that he has done his research. In the current context, I want to ask him a question. I think we see the need for a commissioner position and what it can bring, but what comes next for indigenous nations?

We can all agree that there are benefits that come with a modern treaty. We see how the Cree people of Quebec, who were the first to benefit from a modern treaty, were able to ensure significant economic and social development. I visited Chisasibi this summer, and I saw the prosperity that self-governance and modern treaties can bring. Still, what comes next?

Could the Wendat or Anishinabe also have access to a modern treaty and a decentralization of powers from Ottawa, as well as recognition of their autonomy? What are the next steps?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, I would like to emphasize the importance and insightfulness of this question, which relates specifically to Quebec and the Quebec City region. I would like to emphasize how important my colleague's support is, as well as how important his voice is here in the House. He regularly reminds our colleagues in the Conservative Party that this bill will benefit Canada as a whole.

In Quebec, for example, people are talking about the extremely important work that will take place in connection with Churchill Falls. One of our colleagues pointed out that signing a modern treaty with the Cree Nation was a game-changer in Quebec, enabling progress on the construction of vital energy and economic infrastructure. I predict, as he probably does, that this sort of example will also help us work effectively with the indigenous peoples who will be partners in the Churchill Falls project.

[English]

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada has certain obligations in relation to the treaties it signs. It is the responsibility of the prime minister, the ministers and all our institutions to act in a way that responds to those obligations. This legislation would create an additional commissioner office with staff, without binding powers over government action. It seems to me that the core of accountability is the decisions of government in response to these obligations.

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What prevents the government from simply fulfilling its obligations, from listening to indigenous nations directly, from using the existing institutions we have and from putting these resources into things that actually concretely and positively impact the lives of indigenous people?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, our colleague is quite right to mention listening. Listening is key to this bill. Over the last 20 years, many indigenous peoples have asked the Canadian government to create this commissioner role. We must listen to what indigenous peoples are asking us to do if we are to work with them in a spirit of respect.

I urge my colleague to encourage his fellow Conservative Party members to move forward. People have been waiting for this office for 20 years. We must now take the next step.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could my colleague and friend provide his thoughts on the importance of recognizing that Bill C-10 would establish an independent agent of Parliament? By doing so, it would, I believe, not only for the current government but also for future governments, provide an excellent opportunity to have more transparency and more accountability on what is a critically important file for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, the member used some deeply meaningful words: transparency, responsibility, accountability, listening and collaboration. All of these are very important if we want to make progress on some of the major projects that the Canadian government is trying to implement.

All of these major projects are going to transform our economy, create more, better jobs for our children, young people and others, and lead to a cleaner economy and environment. None of this is possible unless we work respectfully with indigenous peoples and respect their rights specifically.

As my colleague mentioned several times today, the purpose of the office of the commissioner for modern treaty implementation is to ensure that the Canadian government has all the tools, including oversight tools, to ensure that its relations with indigenous peoples support other federal initiatives.

• (1725)

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be back in the House with my colleagues and to have the opportunity to discuss the major global issues and serious challenges that our country is currently facing.

Today, we are here to discuss Bill C-10. Bill C-10 proposes to create a new officer of Parliament, a commissioner for modern treaty implementation. Their role would be to assess whether the terms of modern treaties are being met and to report their findings to Parliament. By conducting audits and reporting their findings to Parliament, the new commissioner would be able to highlight areas

where the federal government can improve its performance in modern treaty implementation.

There is common ground when it comes to the core principle that treaty rights must be respected and that the process of reconciliation must move forward.

The Conservatives support treaty rights and the process of reconciliation with Canada's first nations, Inuit and Métis people. They also recognize that much work remains to be done to advance those rights, including self-determination and self-government.

What the Conservatives disagree with is the mechanism proposed in Bill C-10. The Conservative Party believes that, rather than creating more bureaucracy, the ministers and departments responsible for negotiating and implementing treaties should do their jobs. The Office of the Auditor General already conducts regular audits of modern treaty negotiations, self-government agreements, implementation and treaty land entitlement. The Conservatives firmly believe that the ministers and departments responsible for treaty negotiations and implementation should simply fulfill their responsibilities rather than creating a new position. The projected cost for the office of the commissioner for modern treaty implementation is \$10.6 million over four years, with approximately 15 full-time employees.

The debate on Bill C-10 is about how to ensure the implementation of modern treaties and hold the federal government accountable. The importance of this accountability is clear: All commitments made under modern treaties must be honoured.

The Conservatives support treaty rights and the process of reconciliation with Canada's first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The disagreement is not about the goal, but rather how to achieve it.

In conclusion, the Conservatives believe that the solution is not to create a new body or add a new bureaucratic structure. The Office of the Auditor General already conducts audits on modern treaties and their implementation, and several federal initiatives and offices already exist in this area. Rather, the responsibility lies with the ministers and departments already in charge of negotiating and implementing the treaties. They need to step up and do their job. That is why the Conservative position is to oppose Bill C-10.

I hope that was clear. My French is a bit rusty, so I will continue a bit in English.

• (1730)

[English]

That was not the conclusion of my speech; it was just the conclusion of the French part. I am sorry to get members' hopes up.

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It is good to be back in the House, the people's House, during what is certainly a tumultuous time for our country and for the world. We are discussing Bill C-10, which deals with modern treaties but which also speaks to the kind of architecture we use as a country to hold the government accountable and to challenge or constrain government decision-making. I think this is an important conversation to be having now in the context of broader debates about the nature of our institutions and how we use them.

Of course, we are having this debate in the context of an escalating trade war between Canada and the United States. It was in the context of the further escalation of that trade war that Conservatives called for the early reconvening of Parliament so that we could come together and work through, debate and discuss the issues that were before the House and that are before the country. We would have brought what was clearly the business of the nation before the House. Unfortunately, the Liberals chose not to do that, but that underlined, I think, a difference in philosophy about the role of Parliament in response to these events.

In the context of threats to our country, there are obviously the fundamentals on which all of us agree. I guess we do have, respectfully, some separatists in the House, but most of us are here out of a devotion to the strength and unity of Canada. We are here because we love Canada. We disagree about the mechanisms, the processes and the policies that are in the national interest, but most of us are here because we deeply love this country.

As I think about the idea of love and of loving one's country, I am drawn to that famous line from *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoevsky reminds us that "love in [reality] is a harsh and dreadful thing compared with love in dreams." There are many different things he means by that, but centrally I think he means that our love for our country requires sacrifice from us. It requires hard things. It also requires us to challenge decisions out of a desire to strengthen and to prod our country in a positive direction.

The engagement of parliamentary institutions, the use of parliamentary institutions, is the tool by which we are able to draw on the ideas and experiences not just of members of Parliament but, through them, of all of their constituents. We spend time in our ridings hearing from Canadians about their priorities, their concerns and how they would like to see us respond to the issues of the day. Then we come together here in the central chamber of Canadian democracy to propose constructive ideas, to challenge each other and to hold each other accountable, especially to hold the government accountable, for the decisions we make, all with the goal of positively prodding our country in a constructive direction.

Socrates used to describe himself as the gadfly of Athenian democracy. Canadian democracy needs its share of gadflies to—

An hon. member: Let's go for the hemlock.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, some members across the way say they would like me to meet an end similar to that which Socrates met, but I know that is meant in good humour. He saw himself as a gadfly at the hindquarters of Athenian democracy, which meant he was biting away, annoying the great beast that was Athenian democracy, in hopes of prodding it in a constructive direction.

Sometimes during times of national crisis the role of the opposition is challenged. People ask why it does not just agree with everything the government says, but it is out of love for this country and out of loyalty to this country that those who have been directed by the voters into this role of opposition challenge the government in a positive, constructive direction, at least as they see it. Of course, there are going to be different views about what that positive, constructive direction is, but we deeply revere in our tradition this idea of a loyal opposition.

This is why I think it would have been the right decision for Parliament to come back early, to identify the many areas that we agree on in terms of Canada's national interest and also to ask the government questions about its strategy, about its priorities and about the choices and trade-offs it is considering.

● (1735)

It is also why we have asked for more information about the nature of negotiations, about the things that were on the table and about the costs associated with countertariffs. When more parliamentarians have that information, when the public has that information, it allows for constructive deliberations about the choices and trade-offs that are involved. It is not because we do not share an ultimate objective. Of course, in many respects we do share an ultimate objective. However, this institution exists so that we can challenge each other based on our shared love for this country. In the face of these challenges, I would encourage the government to recognize the importance of Parliament, to share information with Parliament and to bring these issues to Parliament for a thorough discussion and debate, because this is how and where the best decisions get made.

I say this because I think there is some evidence to suggest that the Prime Minister would prefer a kind of corporate governance model to a parliamentary democratic model for shaping the direction of the country. He would prefer to tell parliamentarians in his own caucus, as well as in other parties, to just trust him about the decisions he is making because, as chairman of the board, he is going to make those decisions and why not let him do it.

Our parliamentary democracy exists for a reason. It exists because the prodding, directing, encouraging, challenging and accountability are part of the process of getting to good decisions. Parliamentarians are not just individuals putting our own ideas forward. We are reflections of the values, objectives and ideas of our constituents. That is why Parliament matters. That is why it is important. That is why we should resist efforts by the Prime Minister to shift us from a parliamentary democracy model to a model of corporate governance.

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I would remind the House that parliamentary democracy is also essential during times of crisis. We have a record of many of Winston Churchill's great interventions in the House of Commons. He felt the importance of coming to the House, even during Britain's darkest hour. In the face of these challenges, again, this institution is important.

Members across the way are eager to hear about how these points relate to Bill C-10. Bill C-10 is actually another example of the government trying to alter the structure and directions of our institutions in ways that move us away from the focus on parliamentary and ministerial accountability. It wants to see this proliferation of external new bodies that do not really have any powers. They would have the power to criticize or commend the actions of the government in relation to modern treaties, but this obscures the fact that the responsibility for implementing these treaties, for acting in accordance with the treaties, is the responsibility of the government and of the ministers charged with implementing them.

The House of Commons, as well as its committees, is the place where members of Parliament can and should challenge the government on its actions with respect to our adherence to those treaty obligations. Therefore, the best thing for accountability and for ensuring that action is taken in accordance with these treaties is not the proliferation of external bureaucracy with, frankly, limited tools and a limited capacity to hold the ministers accountable, but for the government to actually take Parliament more seriously, for ministers to provide substantive responses to substantive questions, for ministers to make themselves more available at committee, and for the Prime Minister to address the Canadian House of Commons as soon as possible after a breakdown in negotiations with the United States, not to address the European Parliament before addressing the Canadian Parliament.

I think it is great for the Prime Minister to be engaging internationally, but the fact that he addressed these issues at a foreign parliament before addressing them at the Canadian Parliament demonstrates why it would have been so much better if the Canadian Parliament had been convened—

• (1740)

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member. I have a point of order from the member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Ben Carr: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. The colleague across the way and I had the wonderful privilege of being classmates together at Carleton University a number of years ago and debated quite often.

If I am not mistaken, I do believe the debate before us is on Bill C-10, and although I am enjoying some of the observations the member is making, I have not heard the word “treaty”, the word “commissioner” or the bill referenced in the last 10 minutes. I wonder if maybe there is a point to be made on that front.

The Deputy Speaker: I understand it is the first day back from the summer break and the member is making a point of order about the germaneness of the debate.

The member has been referring to governance models going back and forth and giving examples. It is germane to the debate. I

will let the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan continue.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the member is a new member in the House. He is not as new as he once was. I do welcome him back.

On a serious point to that member, I heard from some of his constituents about a private member's bill that I put forward in the House. It is Bill C-290, on the theft of religious items, because I know there have been some thefts of mezuzahs. There has been real concern in the Winnipeg Jewish community about that, so I have been meaning to call him about it. I would recommend he have a look at Bill C-290. I hope that the bill, which seeks to address the issue of theft of religious items, is something that could be an area of cross-party co-operation. That definitely is not related to Bill C-10.

What I am underlining in this speech is simply that, in the midst of challenging times for our country, in a context where it is important for us to come together and agree on the fundamentals of defending the Canadian national interest, the robust debate that happens in Parliament, the requests for information and the process of holding government ministers accountable are important processes of helping us collectively make better decisions. To love this country is also about loving and working through its existing institutions and recognizing the value of the heritage we have in the establishment of these institutions.

As it relates to Bill C-10, it is about saying that the core of accountability is not external to Parliament; it is right here in Parliament. It is the obligation of ministers to uphold our obligations under modern treaties and other treaties. It is to come before the House to defend their actions, to respond to questions from opposition members about them, to do so here within the House and to do so before its committees. We need to have a strong Parliament, a strong Parliament for a strong Canada and a united Canada in the face of various challenges.

I was thinking about these challenges just today, looking at the news and comments from the American administration about buying potash from Belarus. This was really striking to me because Belarus is systematically involved in the theft of children from Ukraine. It has been well established by human rights groups that Russia and Belarus are involved in stealing children from Ukraine. This is actually an issue that the first lady of the United States has been quite active in and vocal on, trying to get children who have been stolen from Ukrainian families returned to their families.

How in the world did we get to this point where the American administration is talking about buying potash from Belarus instead of trying to restore the relationship with Canada? This is a baffling point to be at. It underlines the need for us to bring the case directly to the American people, to say that we need to have partnerships among like-minded democracies. This ridiculous economic attack on our country makes no sense from a strategic perspective for the United States. Why would we want to buy potash from a regime that is intentionally and systematically stealing children?

These are the challenges we face. These are the kinds of challenges that need to be addressed in our Parliament through debate, through discussion, through collaboration and also through disagreements, but to defend the interests of Canada.

● (1745)

[Translation]

Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging the quality of my colleague's French. He has nothing to worry about. His French was very good. I would also like to reassure him that our Prime Minister listens to his caucus. I think that is very important.

I am going to stick to Bill C-10.

The government wants to move things forward. I know my colleague is doing his job, but it is important to note that some Conservative members have, in the past, delayed the passage of legislation affecting indigenous peoples. What assurances can the Conservatives give us that this time their party will work to pass the bill quickly and without unnecessary delay to help modern treaty partners in their ridings?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

I think this makes it clear that we generally all share the same goal when it comes to advancing indigenous rights. However, we disagree on this bill. Conservatives do not believe that this is the ideal mechanism for advancing and defending the rights of indigenous peoples.

Instead, we should be focusing on existing mechanisms, namely accountability within the parliamentary context.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague as well. I see that it is much easier for our interpreters to interpret from French to English, because my colleague speaks English very quickly. I also want to wish everyone, including my colleague, a good start to the session.

My question is this: Considering that no such commissioner position existed and that all of our commissioners tell us at our meetings that they lack sufficient enforcement powers and can do nothing but make recommendations, why not take this opportunity to create a commissioner position ourselves, and lead by example by introducing more coercive measures?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is true that the commissioner would not have the power to ensure that the government's actions are consistent with its obligations. Other mechanisms already exist, such as the courts, for example, where indigenous peoples can demand that the government comply with the agreements.

In my view, this is a fundamental problem with Bill C-10. How can the government justify a commissioner position? He will not have the powers needed to guarantee results.

What, then, is the purpose of creating this post?

[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my colleague's excellent speech, he covered a lot of important information regarding Parliament and the way we act. One of the foundations of our parliamentary system, of course, is ministerial respon-

sibility, whereby a minister is accountable to Parliament for the administration of their department and the decisions it makes.

We heard the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations this morning in her opening speech on this bill state that the implementation of modern treaty commitments would not be done through her department; rather, it would be passed on to the commissioner instead. I wonder if my colleague would like to opine on the decision of the Liberal government to say that ministers would not be responsible anymore and unelected commissioners would be.

● (1750)

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, that is another excellent point from my colleague. This is precisely the issue. Through this bill, which sounds nice on the face of it, "Oh, we are creating this new commissioner," the structure of the new position is to try to reduce the accountability, the pressure and the demands on the shoulders of the minister, while not really giving the commissioner the power to address the issues that are brought before him or her.

It is kind of a diffusion and a weakening of the accountability structures that are supposed to exist within our system. Sometimes with this kind of legislation, when there is a nice-sounding top line, we have to look underneath it and ask, "What is this bill actually doing? What are the effects of it going to be?"

As my colleague illustrates, this reflects a kind of preferred corporate governance-oriented model that the Prime Minister wants to apply to this country that in fact weakens the structures of our parliamentary democracy as they are supposed to exist.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member gave the government credit for actually bringing forward this legislation, well, not really credit, but he attributed it to them. I would not go that far.

This legislation is a result of pressure from modern-day treaty nations that have called for this, because of the government's failure to implement treaties and dragging its feet. That is what this is about, and it includes the Maa-nulth first nations in my riding. I also think about nations in my riding that have signed agreements with the government that are not modern-day treaties, like Tla-o-qui-aht. The government is dragging its feet on promises it has made.

We hear the government constantly talking about nation-building. Does my colleague agree that nation-building is signing modern-day treaties, signing agreements with indigenous peoples, and that fast-tracking that should be a priority for the government? That is good for the economy. That is good for nation-building.

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Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, objectively, Conservatives have a much stronger record when it comes to signing modern treaties in government than the Liberal government does. The numbers are very clear on that.

The failure of the government on many fronts has led to pressure for other accountability mechanisms and has led to the government trying to diffuse accountability mechanisms. Again, our view is that the response to these failures of the government should be holding ministers accountable for their decisions and for their failure to make decisions in certain cases, and that the government has a responsibility to expose itself to debate in Parliament and to questions at committee, so that we can work through these crucial issues of the national interest, of nation-building and reconciliation, so that we can do that as the leaders who are responsible here in Parliament for making the decisions that shape the future of our country.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if we could go right to the point of Bill C-10 and what the member seems to be focused on, in terms of parliamentary accountability. Bill C-10 sets into place an independent agent of Parliament on a critically important issue, in terms of modern-day treaty agreements.

At the end of the day, I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts in regard to how it takes away from accountability when there is an independent agent of Parliament providing reports on what the government is or is not doing? How does that take away from accountability?

• (1755)

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot there. Oftentimes what we see with the government is efforts to defer things that it is responsible for to external bodies when the authority and the ability to act is in the hands of ministers.

Again, I would say the issue here is whether the government has fulfilled its obligations. There is a lot of consensus that the government has failed in this regard. Rather than fix the fundamental problems, the government is offering to create another commissioner, who is not actually going to have the power to solve these problems but who is going to do studies. It is this constant sort of Liberal industry of wanting to fund external activism or external review rather than actually fixing the core problems that the government has the power and responsibility to fix. That is the issue.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request that it be carried on division.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 6:30 p.m. so we can get into the adjournment debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the jobs numbers that have just come out reveal 42,000 jobs lost in August. Of course, in the context of the escalating trade conflict, we are expecting to see challenges as a result of tariffs and countertariffs, but the important thing we need to understand about these latest job numbers is that they come from the reference week of August 9 to 15. The job numbers are based on a reference week. That reference week was prior to the breakdown in negotiations, a time when positive public signals were being sent by both the Canadian and American sides. These 42,000 jobs lost in August are from before the escalation we have seen.

It underlines that we are seeing job losses in this country, and we are seeing an increase in youth unemployment as a result of domestic policy decisions and a failure of action on the part of government to respond to these challenges. Again, it is simply clear from the timing of these job losses. The increase in the youth unemployment rate to 12.9% was before the latest escalations.

Conservatives have taken a very constructive approach on the jobs issue. We presented the government with our Conservative jobs plan last fall, with specific concrete proposals that would address the unemployment crisis, especially that which is acutely facing Canadian young people. Our priorities and proposals were in the areas of unleashing the economy, fixing immigration, fixing training and building homes where the jobs are.

With regard to unleashing the economy, there is a lot of discussion about major projects today, and I think major projects are extremely important. This is why Conservatives have long called for, for instance, the repeal of Bill C-48 and Bill C-69. We do not need a piecemeal approach that allows the government to pick a few favoured projects, but a general approach that fixes the systematic problems in the impact assessment process.

Moreover, it is not just about the big projects. It is also about the ability of small businesses to exist in an environment with low taxes, low red tape and much shorter permitting timelines, where someone with a big idea can make a go of it without being gummed up by the pressures associated with high taxes and high red tape. We propose specific, concrete proposals around unleashing the economy, such as, for instance, not paying capital gains tax on dollars immediately reinvested in this country.

We need to be unleashing the economy, fixing immigration, addressing the misalignment between our immigration system and the needs of our economy, training Canadian young people for the jobs that exist here in Canada, offering relatively more generous grants to students pursuing opportunities in areas where there is labour demand and aligning training with the needs of the labour market. Liberals have gone in the opposite direction by cutting off many colleges' and non-university vocational institutions' students from being able to get those dollars. We also need to be building homes where the jobs are, making it easier for people to relocate to areas where the jobs are.

This is the constructive content Conservatives have been putting into the discussion, which Liberals have failed to implement, and that is why we continue to see challenges. When will they take our constructive ideas to help young people get back to work?

● (1800)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really interesting to compare reality to what the Conservatives are trying to give the false impression of. Let me give a tangible example about jobs. Our Prime Minister, who was elected just under 18 months ago, has had a net gain of tens of thousands of jobs. That is the reality. The member is picking and choosing, but it is important that we put this in the context of what is taking place around the world.

I can assure the member across the way that our Prime Minister and every member of the government caucus is focused on building a stronger, healthier Canadian economy. Working closely with our constituents, we are bringing ideas and thoughts to the floor of the House of Commons, which is also assisting in the important policy decisions not only being made today, but that have been talked about since the last federal election.

On the word “collaboration”, we have been working with different levels of government, indigenous people, many different stakeholders, and individuals of all political stripes. Building a stronger and healthier economy has been priority number one for every Liberal member of the House of Commons. We continue to push for collaboration. We have a strong desire for that, and we are starting to see very tangible results.

We have a Prime Minister who noted at an economic summit, the first of its kind, close to half a trillion dollars in potential commitments coming to Canada. We have seen billions of dollars being committed to major projects. We have seen the provinces, along with indigenous communities, working hand in hand developing major projects that are going to realize thousands of good-quality jobs. We have seen budgets presented by this government with things such as the Red Seal program enhancement, which is going to help young people and ensure they are getting good-quality jobs.

We have a Prime Minister and a suite of ministers who have been travelling around the world bringing in and attracting businesses and opportunities for additional exports abroad, creating thousands of jobs. Even in the context of what is taking place between Canada and the United States, the government and the Prime Minister have been focused on issues such as affordability, something we are gen-

uinely concerned about. There is a great deal we can be working on and that we continue to work on.

I look across the way to members of the Conservative Party of Canada and ask them to start looking at ways in which they too can assist in positive policy development that will be healthy for our economy. I can assure the member that the constituents I represent and the Prime Minister of Canada want collaboration. We want to see people working together in order to deliver on important issues, whether it is the suite of crime legislation we brought in just a number of months ago, which is the most progressive and aggressive crime legislation we have seen, or economic measures. We care about what is taking place in our communities, so whether it is about affordability or trade, we are on top of it, and we will continue to work with Canadians and stakeholders.

● (1805)

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, my friend across the way spoke with great gusto and passion about his good intentions. He said, “We in the government want good things. That is what we want.” I did not come here to debate their intentions, actually. I came here to debate the results. Good intentions are not going to feed or clothe anyone in this country, and the government will be judged by the results. It will be judged by the concrete outcomes.

I spoke about jobs and the 42,000 jobs lost, and the member tried to refer to global events. Again, I made this very clear. The government will always try to play with the timelines, but this was before the escalation in the trade conflict. We had lost 42,000 jobs beforehand.

The government will be judged by the results. The Prime Minister has said that affordability has never been better. Canadians are experiencing it differently, and it is the results that are going to matter for the government.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, let me address head-on the member's saying that there has not been action. Nothing could be further from the truth. The only action the Conservatives have taken is in opposition to what the government initiatives have been. I will give an example of some of those initiatives.

We have given tax breaks to 22 million people. One of the very first actions by the Prime Minister was to get rid of the carbon tax. We can talk about the national food program, which has been feeding literally hundreds of thousands of children. These are the types of initiatives that the Conservative Party is not only opposing but also, when it comes to the food program, is calling garbage. They do not even believe it is happening; it is tinfoil hats and all on that particular issue.

I can tell members that, at the end of the day, there are a lot of good things happening. We are committed to continuing to work for Canadians.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on April 17, I asked the Minister of Energy a very simple question: What would it take for the government to protect Canadians, to respect indigenous rights and to actually enforce our environmental laws?

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The minister told me that Canada has strict standards, independent regulations and a strong safety record, but we have heard this before. None of this matters if the government refuses to enforce the legislation, refuses to enforce the laws that are in place in Canada to protect Canadians, to protect our environment and to ensure that indigenous rights are respected. If we do not enforce that legislation, it does not matter, and the government has shown time and time again that it will not use the tools at its disposal to protect the environment in northern Alberta.

In April, Imperial Oil's pipeline north of Cold Lake released 843,000 litres of bitumen and salt water that contained hydrocarbons, heavy metals, sulphur and other contaminants. That came after the Kearl disaster, when approximately 5.3 million litres of contaminated waste water spilled beyond the mine lease. When Parliament investigated Kearl, Imperial Oil acknowledged that seepage from its tailing system occurs and that the company's approach is to manage that. It is not to fix it, not to protect communities downstream, not to ensure that the water people are swimming in and drinking and that the animals and wildlife are using is clean, but to contain and manage it.

The Athabasca watershed contains enormous volumes of oil sands tailings, and indigenous nations have been raising concerns about contamination and the protection of their water for years. I think about the incredible work that Chief Adam, Chief Tuccaro and Grand Chief Mercredi have done. They have called out the environmental disaster that is happening on their land, yet the government fails to protect the environment in northern Alberta.

It is not just limited to the oil sands. I think of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Those are the headwaters that provide drinking water to millions of Albertans, yet Albertans have had to repeatedly fight proposals for coal mining in these watersheds. Corb Lund's "water not coal" campaign helped mobilize hundreds of thousands of Albertans around a single message that our water is more important than corporate profits and more important than coal mining by an Australian company.

We are still waiting for the federal government to bring in selenium regulations. We are still waiting for the federal government to use the tools it has at its disposal to protect our water. The government can use the Species at Risk Act, it can use the Impact Assessment Act and it can use the Fisheries Act, yet it chooses time and time again to fail to protect the water and the land in northern Alberta and in our cherished Rocky Mountains.

Once again I ask the government this: Why, when Albertans so desperately need the federal government to step up and use the tools at its disposal to protect Albertans, does the government continue to sit on its hands?

• (1810)

Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my first time rising in the House since we have come back, and I am very excited to be back.

Issues related to oil sands management are taken seriously. The importance of clean waterways, healthy ecosystems and the well-being of surrounding communities continues to guide federal action

in this area, alongside consideration of indigenous rights and interests. Environment and Climate Change Canada is advancing its work on oil sands mining effluent through ongoing structured engagement with indigenous rights holders and organizations, the Government of Alberta, the Government of Northwest Territories, industry representatives, environmental non-governmental organizations and other federal departments. This collaborative approach is intended to ensure that multiple perspectives and expertise inform policy development.

A key component of this work is the Crown-indigenous working group, through which ECCC, or Environment and Climate Change Canada, and indigenous partners are working together to examine options related to the management of oil sands mining process water. The outcome of this work will inform recommendations provided to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Should a regulation authorizing discharge to water be deemed necessary, it would apply only to mine water that has been treated to strict standards, designed to protect the environment, human health and the well-being of indigenous people. Under no circumstances would the releasing of tailings or untreated mine water be permitted. Engagement with partners and stakeholders will continue as considerations advance, if applicable, through the development of any regulatory measures.

In addition, Environment and Climate Change Canada, on behalf of the federal government, jointly leads the oil sands monitoring program with the Government of Alberta, in partnership with indigenous communities and industry. This program aims to improve understanding of the environmental effects of oil sands development through comprehensive ambient monitoring within the region. Monitoring results and reports are made publicly accessible through the oil sands monitoring program portal.

In August 2024, the Government of Canada announced that it would make available nearly \$12 million over 10 years to support a Fort Chipewyan health study examining the potential impacts of oil sands activities on community health. Nations have begun this work.

Canada is dedicated to supporting a community-led, transparent and science-based approach to assessing health risks, with indigenous nations leading decision-making on issues that affect their well-being. Safeguarding the health of communities and the integrity of Canada's waters and ecosystems is a fundamental responsibility of this government now and into the future. Addressing the risks associated with tailings management requires sustained effort, collaboration and solutions grounded in sound science. This work is ongoing, and the government will continue to consider and be guided by the recommendations that emerge from all of these collaborative processes.

• (1815)

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, to be perfectly honest, I am so frustrated listening to that response. It has been decades since the alarm was raised about the health impacts on people living in the Fort Chip area. Every year, Chief Adam and Grand Chief Mercredi come to Ottawa and ask the government to take action. What we get from the government is consultation after consultation and no meaningful action, no meaningful enforcement and no meaningful commitment to making sure that the water in northern Alberta is protected and that the indigenous landowners in that area are being respected.

Wade Grant: Mr. Speaker, the incident referenced is deeply concerning, and it reinforces the importance of strong oversight and accountability. Federal officials remain engaged with provincial regulators and indigenous communities to ensure that appropriate response measures are taken and that impacts are fully assessed. Where federal laws apply, they will be enforced. At the same time, this situation underscores the need to strengthen how tailings are managed across the sector. That is why the government is advancing the work, in partnership with indigenous peoples, with a focus on transparency, rigorous science and the protection of waters and communities.

LABOUR

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year on International Workers' Day, I asked the Liberal government why it continued refusing to support my bill, NDP Bill C-247, to repeal section 107 and stop violations against workers' right to strike. This bill is supported by workers and unions across Canada. In response, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs deflected her government's failures and advised that consultations were ongoing concerning changes to the Labour Code.

Today, the cat is out of the bag. We learned that the Liberal government has done these consultations and is putting forward an omnibus bill, Bill C-39, trying to turn back the clock on workers' fundamental rights by expanding the minister's ability to shut down a strike and violate workers' rights whenever the Liberals and their CEO buddies deem it inconvenient, as we saw with port workers, flight attendants and rail workers. Of course, they did consult with the CEOs who will benefit. It is not only a historic insult to workers, but also an immense threat to workers' constitutional rights.

We know that right now there are countless families, communities and individuals being devastated by Trump's tariffs. Nobody is arguing with that. Nobody is arguing that we are not in a cost of living crisis. Instead of addressing this, the government is siding with CEOs, and instead of giving workers the relief they need to lift up their rights as workers, the Liberals have caved into the wish lists of corporations across this country by pushing forward Bill C-39 and violating their constitutional obligations to uphold the rights of workers, the rights of indigenous peoples and important environmental laws, even after a summer of disastrous wildfires during which we saw communities and homes literally burn to the ground. This past summer, the Liberal government saw what was going on, and once again it has doubled down in favour of its corporate buddies.

I want to be clear that workers do not want to strike. Who wants to go on strike to get a reduction in pay, be out of work and be more

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financially worse off than they are when they are working and being ripped off by the Liberals' corporate friends? Workers have rights, and these rights are protected in international law. The right of workers to walk off the job in solidarity is the only collective means to push back against powerful corporations and CEOs as the Liberal government lines its pockets. This so-called Canada strong plan is being built off the backs of people, workers, indigenous people, our environment and a livable planet.

The NDP is very firm in its belief that we must protect the rights of workers. We must protect workers' rights, and that includes the right to strike and free and collective bargaining.

• (1820)

[Translation]

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for her commitment to Canadian workers.

[English]

We are firmly committed to protecting workers' rights and ensuring a free and fair collective bargaining process. Workers must have real bargaining power. The right to strike is protected in Canada because it is an essential element of free and balanced negotiations. Our government has taken concrete measures to protect that right. Bill C-58 was a major milestone in the fight for fairness at the bargaining table.

Prohibiting the use of replacement workers protects a meaningful right to strike and makes employers and unions work together and find solutions. Collective bargaining works. Over the last five years, 95% of disputes that the federal mediation and conciliation service supported were resolved without work stoppages. This shows the system works well when the right support tools are available.

However, negotiation is not a simple process, and we are at a pivotal moment. Trade rules are rapidly changing, and our economy faces unprecedented attacks. This is having damaging consequences. At the same time, Canada is working to build major infrastructure, strengthen trade corridors and supply chains, and create good jobs across the country through measures such as Bill C-39.

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Some labour disputes can therefore have serious economic repercussions, but we cannot build a strong economy without respecting the workers who keep it running every day. That is why Bill C-39 proposes measures to modernize the federal labour framework, strengthen protections for workers in federally regulated industries and help parties address issues earlier, while fully protecting the right to strike.

We all have a stake in ensuring an economy can withstand shocks and remain competitive. In some situations, the economic and social impacts are substantive. There can be extraordinary times where the government must retain the ability to intervene, but there should be a clear framework in place to explain that decision to Canadians transparently.

I want to be very clear: Our government believes that extraordinary interventions in a labour dispute should always be a last resort. Canadians appreciate this. They know that prolonged disputes can have a massive impact on Canadian families, Canadian jobs and our entire economy.

Canadians understand that we must do two things at once: We must protect workers and strengthen economic resilience. They know that when there are strong, supported relationships between employers and workers, where workers are fairly paid and their concerns are addressed, that is the best way to create stability, and that stability drives investment and economic growth, which Canada needs today more than ever.

The members opposite need to remember that Canadians chose a government that they knew would keep the state of labour relations strong.

[*Translation*]

Our approach must be pragmatic. We continue to work together with unions and employers to maintain trust in the system and ensure fairness in the workplace.

[*English*]

Our collective objective is clear. It is to strengthen good-faith bargaining, protect workers' rights and ensure a strong labour relations framework that helps achieve better outcomes for workers, for employers and for Canadians.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, that was a good story time. I am going to quote my good friend, President Mark Hancock, from the Canadian Union of Public Employees. He said, “[W]e will not win this trade war or make Canada stronger by stripping away the Charter rights of our own people.” He also said, “Gutting hard-won rights and protections for Canada’s workers will not help this government deliver certainty – it will do the opposite.”

We know the Liberals have used section 107 forcefully to shut down the right to strike eight times in just 18 months. Every time they have shut down a strike, the Liberals in this House have made new excuses for violating workers' constitutionally protected bargaining rights.

We know that, at the CEO summit, the government was selling off Canadian public assets like airports, which is getting push-back already from Unifor, and that the government is not on the side of workers. It is smashing down rights. It is shameful.

• (1825)

Leslie Church: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 has many objectives. At its heart, it would strengthen collective bargaining by helping parties address issues earlier, reach negotiated agreements and resolve disputes while fully protecting the right to strike. I hope the member opposite takes this to heart. By acknowledging Canada's economic realities and promoting free and fair bargaining, we enable Canada to remain strong, stable and competitive. Ultimately, that protects workers.

However, I would hope that all parties in this House agree over the coming days as we debate this important legislation that workers know and should know that their rights are protected and respected. Employers need to know that there is a clear, fair and effective process for resolving disputes. When negotiations go well, everyone wins, and that is the best way for us to create a strong, stable and growing economy for all Canadians.

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

(The House adjourned at 6:26 p.m.)

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