



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

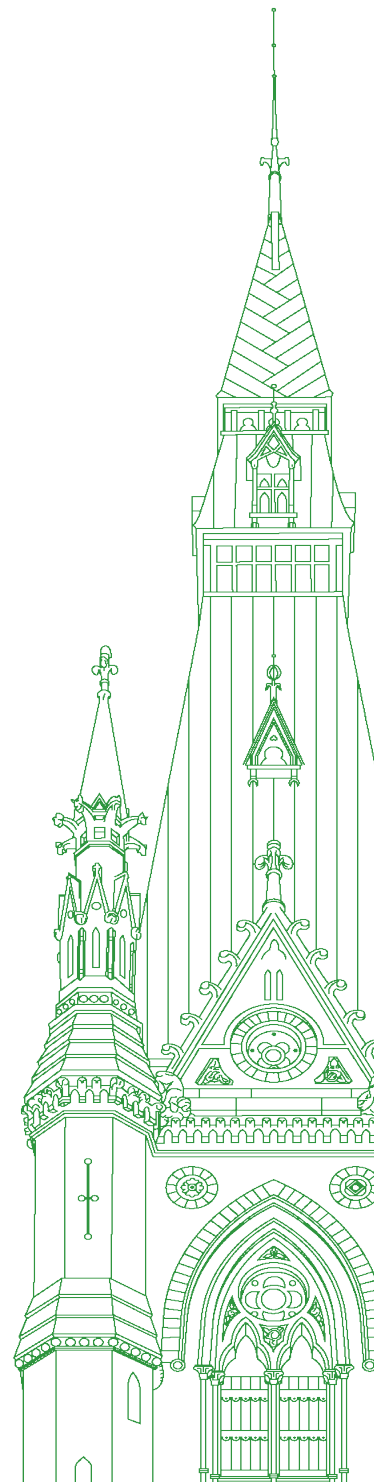
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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[English]

The Speaker: The member for Niagara West will be leading us in the singing of the national anthem today.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ANGUS CAMPBELL

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we honour the life and extraordinary service of respected elder Angus Campbell of the Ahousaht First Nation, who passed away on September 10 at the age of 72.

For more than 50 years, Angus served his nation as chief councillor and council member, dedicating himself to strengthening Ahousaht and improving the lives of its people. Through personal tragedy, change and challenge, he persevered with dignity and resolve. He brought wisdom, continuity and a deep commitment to his people throughout his years of leadership. Angus was also a devoted father to five children and three adopted children, and a source of love, guidance and strength to his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His legacy endures in the people he served and in the progress he helped achieve.

Klecko klecko to Angus Campbell. May he rest in peace. May his service to Ahousaht be remembered for generations to come.

* * *

[Translation]

HÉBERGEMENT LA PASSERELLE

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 30th anniversary of an organization in the community of Vaudreuil that is particularly important to me. Since 1996, Hébergement La Passerelle has been providing confidential and anonymous support to women and children experiencing domestic violence, while working tirelessly to prevent it. The outstanding

team led by Véronique Girard plays an essential role in our community, making a difference for so many families.

[English]

The safe place that La Passerelle provides for women and their children escaping conjugal violence in my community of Vaudreuil serves not only as an immediate refuge, but as a space to breathe, plan next steps and find a more permanent, safer place to call home.

[Translation]

On behalf of our community of Vaudreuil, I want to thank the entire team at Hébergement La Passerelle for their three decades of service. Their work is invaluable, and we are deeply grateful to them.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mario from Vaughan reached out to me about his 92-year-old father. After a lifetime of working hard, paying taxes and saving for retirement, his father is now watching every dollar just to make ends meet. His father did everything right. He worked hard to help build this country, and now in his retirement, he feels punished for it.

While seniors count every dollar, the Liberal government continues to spend billions on bureaucracies, consultants, foreign aid and corporate welfare. Canadians are out of money while the Liberal government is out of touch.

Our Conservative plan is to save Canadians money. We have identified over \$150 billion in savings, nearly \$10,000 per family, to lower debt, taxes and inflation. Mario and his father did their part. It is time the Liberals did the same by adopting the Conservative economic action plan.

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● (1405)

CANADA-MEXICO RELATIONS

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *feliz día de la independencia de México*.

Statements by Members

For 216 years, Mexico has charted its own path with courage and pride, and for 82 years, Canada has stood beside it as a friend and partner. Today, as global trade shifts beneath our feet, that partnership has never mattered more. Canada is diversifying and strengthening trade with reliable partners, and Mexico is among the most important.

This year, one of the largest team Canada trade missions ever travelled to Mexico, and more than 250 Mexican businesses came to Canada to invest and grow. Together, we are building North America into the most competitive, dynamic and resilient economic region in the world. As a proud Mexican Canadian, I say to our community *gracias*. Their hard work, talent and spirit make Canada stronger every day.

The best chapters of our shared story are still ahead. *Viva México y viva Canada*.

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THE ECONOMY

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I spent the summer travelling the communities of Moose Jaw, Lanigan, Watrous and Outlook and everywhere in between, listening to the people I am honoured to represent. In those conversations, I heard the same thing over and over again: Canadians are tired of watching Liberals spend on insiders and pet projects while families struggle to make ends meet.

Farmers are struggling just to break even. I am back in the House, ready to fight for the communities of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan. That means standing up for the agriculture sector, which feeds this country. It means demanding that the Liberals focus on what matters to Canada, and it means defending the institutions that are important to Canadians, like the iconic Snowbirds, grounded by the Liberals, who are spending on everything but our nation's priorities.

I will keep fighting for the best interests of my people and their communities and demanding better for our country.

* * *

[Translation]

TERREBONNE

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I travelled across Terrebonne to meet with the people who are the backbone of our community. I visited businesses, discussed their issues and learned about their teams' area of expertise. I also attended a number of local events and met with organizations whose work is making a real difference in people's lives.

I dedicated a large part of my travels to the Canada summer jobs program. In Terrebonne, 477 young people were able to get a job this summer. I met young people working in various fields like history, day camps, employability, youth services, education and even animal therapy.

I want to congratulate them for their energy and commitment. I also want to thank everyone who opened their doors to me this summer and who are contributing to making Terrebonne a growing and vibrant city every day.

[English]

GAS PRICES

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when Canadians are skipping meals because the cost of food has become too high, the last thing they need is a government making it even more expensive to get food from the farm to the grocery store.

Diesel prices have hit an all-time high. Canada's trucking industry is warning that higher diesel costs will mean higher prices for Canadians. The Liberals are costing Canadians even more. When diesel costs rise, so does the cost of moving food, building homes, farming, delivering goods and running businesses. These costs are passed on to Canadian families. That is why Canada has the second-highest food inflation in all of the G7.

After months of Conservative pressure, the government finally backed down and delayed its proposed gas tax hike, but that is not enough. We call on the government to remove all federal taxes on gas and diesel. Canadians need real relief to bring lower prices, not another Liberal half measure.

* * *

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back in the House with colleagues from across the country. We are here to build Canada strong.

This summer, I visited organizations across my riding that were supported through Canada summer jobs. Our government invested \$1.4 million in Pierrefonds—Dollard. That helped create 271 youth jobs in 72 community organizations.

[Translation]

Many organizations, including community pools, youth centres like À-Ma-Baie, food banks like On Rock, the Cloverdale family centre and Éco-quartier, all gave young people the chance to develop their skills. When young people succeed, Canada does too.

Congratulations to all the young people who worked hard at their jobs. I wish them a great school year.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

*[English]***HOUSING**

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, come October, Trevor, from my hometown of Carstairs, will be out of a job. Trevor has worked for Kaytec for 26 years. He was recently given a layoff notice because this siding company is closing shop. Slow housing starts and tariffs mean that the work simply is not there, and Trevor is not alone. I am hearing from Canadians from coast to coast who are worried about how they will pay their bills, put food on the table and fill up their tanks.

Our economy is struggling, our construction sector is hurting and Canadians are paying the price. The Liberals are out of touch, and after more than a decade of promises to build homes, Canadians are still facing housing shortages while builders are facing mounting Liberal red tape.

The Liberals must stop making excuses and start acting. When will the Liberals step aside, adopt our Conservative plan and give Canadians the relief they need?

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*[Translation]***NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I rise to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

As we all know, reconciliation means bringing together what was divided. However, in a colonial context, that unifying bond never existed. To build that bond, we need to truly connect with one another as trusted equals. That is the key to ensuring the vitality and sustainability of this relationship.

For this trust to exist, it must be deeply rooted in the truth. It is only by learning about and acknowledging our history, as painful as it might be, that we can dispel mistrust.

Truth and reconciliation: These two words need to actually mean something. They need to lead to change and show our resolve. We cannot champion truth and reconciliation on one hand, while advancing a bill such as Bill C-39 on the other.

In closing, I hope that this day will remind us not only of our duty to indigenous people and humanity but also to life itself.

Tshinashkumitin.

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*[English]***MILESTONES IN PONTIAC—KITIGAN ZIBI**

Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our rural communities are built on strong values: helping each other, working hard and coming together when times are difficult. These values are passed down from generation to generation.

This year, we are proud to celebrate two milestones in Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi: the 150th anniversary of Otter Lake and the 175th anniversary of Litchfield.

[Translation]

Since the early days of their existence, these two wonderful communities have grown thanks to the families, entrepreneurs, workers and community leaders who have dedicated themselves to making our beautiful community a great place to live.

Today we are celebrating their history, but above all, we are celebrating the people who have built those communities and who continue to shape their history every single day.

* * *

*[English]***SENIORS**

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the seniors in Essex, who, after a lifetime of hard work, paying taxes and supporting both older and younger generations, are now struggling to make ends meet. One senior wrote to me, “With the rising cost of living in all aspects of our economy: food, gas, utilities, insurance, taxes, we are finding it increasingly difficult to afford even the basic items of necessity and comfort, let alone luxuries.”

Across Essex and throughout Canada, seniors are being forced to make impossible choices. They deserve better. The Liberals are out of touch while Canadians are out of money. Conservatives have a plan to bring spending under control by cutting wasteful bureaucracy and foreign aid and to deliver relief to hard-working Canadians so seniors can keep more of their hard-earned money and enjoy the retirement that they have earned.

* * *

CO-OPERATIVES

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canada faces growing uncertainty from a trade war that we did not start, our economic security and sovereignty can no longer be taken for granted. That raises a fundamental question: Who owns our economy and the businesses that comprise it?

Sovereignty is not just about what we produce. It is about who controls our businesses, where decisions are made and who benefits from the wealth we create together. That is why co-operatives matter. By putting ownership in the hands of members, workers, farmers and consumers, co-operatives keep capital and decision-making rooted in communities here at home while building resilience for the future.

Statements by Members

This Thursday morning, which is tomorrow, I invite all members to join me for breakfast with Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada to explore how these models can strengthen our local economies. Remember that more collective ownership means a stronger, more sovereign Canada. I hope to see many of my colleagues there.

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● (1415)

THE ECONOMY

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I got a letter from Harjeet. He wrote, “I’ve been doing two jobs for the last six years. My wife works too. Even after working that much, it is a stretch.” Think about what six years of two jobs looks like: leaving before the neighbourhood even wakes up, working all day and then heading to job number two while everyone else goes home for dinner. He gets home late. The kitchen is dark. Dinner is in the fridge because his wife has already left for her shift. Then they do it again tomorrow.

People like Harjeet are not afraid of hard work. They are exhausted from working harder and falling further behind. That is why our Conservative economic action plan will save Canadian families \$10,000. We have identified \$150 billion in savings by cutting Ottawa’s waste, bureaucracy, consultants and corporate welfare. Harjeet has done his part while the Liberals are costing him more. Our plan will save Harjeet money; theirs will not.

* * *

TRAGEDY IN MONTREAL

Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just days after the House rose for the summer, an evil man crossed the country seeking to kill people in Montreal. While brave police officers limited casualties, two wonderful men were killed.

[Translation]

Constable Mohamed Lamine Benredouane worked at one of our neighbourhood police stations. He was only 34 years old and was a devoted husband and father of a young son. He and his wife were expecting their second child. I remember him as a man who was always smiling and committed to serving the community he grew up in.

[English]

Michel Moshe Mizrahi was my neighbour in Côte Saint-Luc. He was generous to a fault. A father and grandfather, Michel was deeply loved. In the midst of the shooting, he warned others of the danger and helped them find safety.

Today, we remember two men, one Muslim and one Jewish, who, when faced with danger, thought of others. People are alive today because of them. May their courage never be forgotten and may their memories be a blessing.

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PAROLE ELIGIBILITY

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Todd Baylis, a Toronto police constable, was tragically shot and killed in the line of duty, and now Mr. Baylis’s family has to attend

multiple parole hearings for his killer. Victims’ families should not be forced to relive their most traumatic moments just to keep these vile criminals behind bars where they belong.

Conservative Bill C-243 would have extended the time between parole hearings, something the Liberals promised the Toronto Police Association they would do. They broke that promise and voted down Bill C-243 last March. Even more alarming is that in January of next year, one of Canada’s most vicious and disgusting criminals, Paul Bernardo, is up for parole. The victims’ families should not have to relive that.

The Liberals chose the rights of criminals. Conservatives will always side with the rights of victims.

* * *

TRAGEDY IN BELLEVILLE

Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my city of Belleville is hurting. The good people of my riding, Bay of Quinte, are angry, confused, hurt and looking for answers in the near tragedy that unfolded Sunday at the Sons of Jacob Synagogue, two blocks from my home.

Belleville police Constable Jeff Smith was wounded after an interaction with the gunman. My thoughts are with the Smith family and all members of the Belleville Police Service who were involved and affected by this horrific act of violence.

I wish this heroic officer, Constable Smith, a complete recovery. I want to thank my colleague, the MP for Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, for our commitment to stand together to support our Jewish and broader Quinte community in this painful time.

Finally, the Jewish families across the Bay of Quinte and the members of the congregation of Sons of Jacob deserve to gather, worship and live openly without fear. There is no place for hatred or anti-Semitism in Belleville or across Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the assurances, the endless commitments and the half measures from Liberal Ottawa, Canada's affordability crisis is bad and is getting worse. The National Payroll Institute just revealed that half of employed Canadians now spend all or more of their net pay, with no savings and more debt. Meanwhile, the OECD is cutting Canada's growth forecast while raising forecasts for almost all of our G7 partners because of the uncertainty and stalled productivity.

Despite all the MOUs, the speeches and the photo ops, Canada's economy is still stuck and affordability has been forgotten by them, so when will the Liberals adopt our Conservative plan to get our country growing, moving and working again?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that affordability is top of mind for Canadians. That is why we acted on three fronts. First was with respect to affordable housing. I want to thank my colleague, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, for a generational plan to provide more affordable housing and more safe housing for Canadians. The second thing is that we introduced the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, helping 12 million families across the country. Lastly, we extended the suspension of the excise fuel tax, which is going to help Canadians across the country. This is how we build a strong Canada.

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if any of those plans worked, we would not hear story after story of struggling Canadians. The numbers are the numbers, and no amount of Liberal promises without results is going to change that.

However, it is not just about the numbers. It is about real people, and that is why one in four employed Canadians is now living paycheck to paycheck in this country. That is why I hear from people like Alan in my community, who works full-time and helps his mom with gas and groceries. There is nothing left in his bank account at the end of the month. There are so many people like him across the country.

When will the Liberals realize that there are real costs to their failed policies?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me talk about real people. The Canada child benefit, which the Conservatives voted against, is helping six million Canadians. The national school food program, which is helping 400,000 kids in this country, they voted against. Let me talk about the Canada disability benefit. It is helping 465,000 Canadians; they voted against. Let me talk about the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. It is helping 12 million Canadians; they voted against. Let me talk about early learning and child care. It is helping 900,000 kids in this country; they voted against. At every step of the way, when they had the choice to help Canadians, they voted against.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the world is moving forward, but Canada is getting stuck. The

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OECD has cut Canada's growth forecast by 25%. Only Canada and France were downgraded, while the rest of the G7 went up, and Canadians feel that failure. A lady in my community lives in her car and goes to the gym only to take a shower. The Liberals are all talk and no results.

The Liberal government announces with urgency but delivers at a crawl. When will the Liberals adopt our Conservative economic action plan so Canadians can afford to live again?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is shocking to be sitting in the House and hearing the Conservatives talking the economy down at a time when Canadians are united to fight for Canada and to build support in this country.

Canada will have the second-fastest growth in the G7 in 2027. We have created more than 200,000 jobs in the last year. We have the lowest net debt to GDP in the G7 and one of the lowest deficits to GDP in the G7. We are building Canada strong. I hope the Conservatives get it, because Canadians are behind us, and we are going to build with them.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Liberals are driving the economy down. The Prime Minister himself said that we are in a trade war, but the projects we need to fight it are years, if not decades, away. The port of Churchill has no firm completion date. Gull Island hydro is 2037. Major LNG projects are into the 2030s. The Vancouver port expansion is years away. We cannot fight a trade war with business-as-usual timelines.

The Liberal government is all talk and no results. When will it stop the announcements and start delivering?

• (1425)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me invite the member opposite on a little tour. How about Mersey River, where we are building today: 200 jobs? How about the intertie between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick: 600 jobs? How about Darlington: 18,000 jobs? How about Pickering: 30,000 jobs? Maybe instead of doing little clips on Twitter, the Conservatives should come and help us get some jobs done.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after a year and a half of the Prime Minister's lofty liberal rhetoric, there is very little to show for it.

Oral Questions

He promised the strongest economy in the G7. The figures speak for themselves. According to the National Payroll Institute, half of workers are now spending all of their take-home pay or going into debt just to make ends meet.

While MPs on the other side of the House are laughing, I would remind them that 28% of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque. For more than half of them, the weekly grocery run is a leading source of financial stress. Liberal rhetoric does not help pay for groceries.

When will they adopt our Conservative action plan to save Canadians money?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very much aware that the cost of living and affordability are high-priority issues for Canadians across the country. That is why we have already taken action.

First, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure has launched a generational plan to create more affordable and safe housing across the country.

Next, we announced the Canada groceries and essentials benefit to help 12 million Canadians. In every riding represented in this House, there are people receiving this benefit, which is designed to help families.

Finally, we have extended the federal gas tax break. These are concrete measures—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of programs and a lot of words for very little in the way of results.

Jessy from Centre-du-Québec is desperate. Her weekly grocery budget has gone from \$120 to \$170. She says it is clear that our dear Prime Minister has never had to pinch his pennies to buy groceries. Jessy is stretching every dollar to make ends meet.

We want to help Jessy save money by axing all fuel taxes, not just suspending them briefly until next year.

When will the Liberal government adopt our Conservative plan and give families a bit of breathing room?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could my colleague explain to Jessy why he voted against the Canada child benefit? In his own riding, that benefit helps 24,000 children, who receive \$100 million every year, which is roughly \$4,600 per child. He voted against that.

Could he explain to Jessy why he voted against dental care for 39,000 people in his own riding?

Could he explain why he voted against the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, against a tax cut for 22 million Canadians and against the national school food program, which helps 100,000 children in Quebec by providing roughly \$800 per family?

It boggles the mind.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 has nothing to do with making Canada strong. It is a bill for making democracy weak. It is 250 pages of measures that take an axe to almost every federal law, undermining our rights and harming our environment. In one of these measures, Ottawa is giving itself the power to designate any part of Quebec as a region of national interest and place it under federal control.

Did the Prime Minister consult Quebec before seizing power over Quebec soil?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing the Bloc Québécois has not yet understood is that we are going to work tirelessly and never give up on our efforts to promote Quebec's development and provide jobs, opportunities and investments across the province. If the member wants an example, she need only look at the Churchill Falls agreement, signed with Quebec and Newfoundland, in which the Prime Minister was personally and directly involved. This project will create 23,000 jobs and supply electricity for generations of Quebecers. That is what it means to build, and we will continue building.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will take that as a no. Quebec was not consulted on regions of national interest. That is not all. After announcing, without consulting Quebec, that it planned to privatize airports, the government is now using Bill C-39 to privatize ports. Quebec's ports are obviously essential infrastructure for our economy, but the federal government is opening the door for them to be run by foreign investors.

Did the Prime Minister once again forget to consult Quebec before introducing legislation to privatize its ports?

• (1430)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the member forgot to consult the sponsor of this bill, meaning me. We are not privatizing ports, period.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is completely cutting Quebec out of decisions that affect it. It happened with Bill C-39, and it happened again this morning with the tax cut for businesses. Christine Fréchette says that she was never consulted about this tax cut that will blow a \$1-billion hole in Quebec's public finances every year. In the middle of an election, all the parties are finding out that they will have to prepare a budget on October 6 with \$1 billion less to work with.

The Prime Minister's stubborn insistence on flying solo is plainly detrimental to the governance of Quebec. Is he going to keep on behaving as though the Government of Quebec does not exist?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is the paradox facing the Bloc Québécois in Ottawa.

Our announcement comes as a breath of fresh air for Quebec businesses. We know the reality facing Quebecers. We know that SMEs are the backbone of our economy. This measure is going to make our SMEs more productive and competitive both nationally and internationally. The Premier of Quebec said it was good for Quebec.

While Bloc Québécois members keep arguing, we are going to keep building a strong Canada with strong businesses in Quebec.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal parole is out of control. The family of Constable Todd Baylis and the Toronto Police Association recently asked for parole reform. The victim's family has to go to parole hearings every two years. A Conservative bill would have changed that to every five years, and yet the Liberals voted against it.

Will the Liberals listen to the family of Constable Baylis and the Toronto Police Association and do right, when they have previously done wrong?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take a moment to remember Todd Baylis, who was killed in the line of duty in 1994. His bravery and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Our government is committed to strengthening our criminal justice system and protecting victims' rights. That is why we passed Bill C-14, to strengthen bail and sentencing, as well as Bill C-16, to strengthen victims' rights. I continue to engage with the Toronto Police Association to ensure that we strengthen our laws.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what an out-of-touch answer. Unlike that minister, I was a parole officer. Unlike that minister, I attended Constable Baylis's killer's parole hearing. Unlike that minister, I voted to change the hearing interval from two years to five years.

If that minister wants to put his money where his mouth is, I have a proposal. Why does he not join me, Constable Baylis's family and the Toronto Police Association? Let us have a meeting. He can look them in the eye and say exactly what he just said to the House.

Will he have that meeting, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the issue is being politicized. I have met with the Toronto Police Association on a number of occasions. I have also met with their counsel—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I cannot hear. The minister may start from the beginning.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that this matter is being politicized. What I will say is that victims absolutely deserve their right to be heard, as well as to be in attendance at these important hearings. We have been working with the Toronto Police Association. My commitment is to continue to work with

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them, to ensure that we have laws that reflect their needs but also to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians.

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Toronto Police Constable Todd Baylis was murdered in cold blood. His family lost him forever. Under the Liberals, that pain never ends. Every two years, they are forced to relive that nightmare, with another review, another hearing and more pain for that family. The police associations and the families are demanding action, but the Liberals are dragging their feet.

Will they join us, stand up for the victims, meet the families and repeal Liberal parole?

• (1435)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will note that this Sunday, many families of those officers who have been killed in the line of duty will be here in Ottawa. I look forward to meeting with those family members and to express our continued solidarity with those who died in the line of duty.

I will also take this opportunity, as Constable Jeff Smith is fighting for his life, to ensure and to reiterate our support for law enforcement on the front lines. We will always be there to support them and their families.

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives stand with Jeff Smith's family as well. The Liberals are all talk, and there are no results. They created this mess. When Conservatives tried fixing it with Bill C-243, they voted it down. The brother of Todd Baylis said, "[The] killer's rights are more important than mine, my dead brother's, yours, or anybody else's."

The Toronto Police Association agrees that this is wrong. Conservatives agree that this is wrong, because it is our mission to keep Canadians safe. We stand with victims. We stand with our brave officers.

When will they?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect, what a disingenuous comment. All of us in this House, every single member of Parliament who was elected, stand with law enforcement, stand with victims and stand with those who have died in the line of duty. This is not a competition.

We will ensure the safety and security of Canadians, and we will always stand with those on the front lines. It is shameful to suggest that one party stands with victims over another.

Oral Questions

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government's parole regime, a murderer can ask for freedom again and again. Each hearing forces grieving families to relive the worst trauma of their lives.

Paul Bernardo's fourth chance at parole is approaching. Once again, the families of Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy are being forced to relive this nightmare. Victims' families and police are calling for parole reform. Conservatives proposed legislation to make it happen. The Liberals voted no.

Why are the Liberals protecting repeat parole hearings for killers instead of protecting victims' families?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working aggressively and diligently to reform the Criminal Code of Canada over the last 15 months. However, we are very careful in making sure that we pass legislation in this House that will stand up to our Constitution and to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Conservatives believe in creating laws in this House, and confusing Canadians with laws, that are never going to withstand a charter challenge. We are open to making reforms, but we will make the reforms that are right for our country and for Canadians.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in June, a 19-year-old woman in Sainte-Foy was shot after being mistaken for someone else. Two suspects were arrested and released on a promise to appear. They were recently rearrested, and a third suspect was apprehended earlier today.

Will the Prime Minister tighten bail rules and keep people accused of violent crimes in jail when the safety of Canadians is at risk?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is well aware that we introduced a bill to combat serious crime in our communities and to make the criminal justice system tougher on those who commit offences.

[English]

We have not only put forward laws that are going to do more to keep violent offenders behind bars. We have also included stronger supports for participants and families when it comes to their role, when it comes to understanding the impact on those families and victims at parole hearings and transfers between different levels of security systems.

We will work with victims to understand their concerns, and we will advance policies on the advice of experts and police to help keep communities safe.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Talk, talk and more talk, Mr. Speaker. Before 2015, public safety in Canada was fine. Since 2015, the Liberals have made a complete mess of the criminal justice system. Since 2015, they have been saying that they are going to fix it, but absolutely nothing has been done. Conservatives have introduced a number of pri-

vate members' bills to address public safety issues in Canada. The Liberals always say no.

When will the Liberals stop wasting time on empty talk and start taking real action to protect public safety?

• (1440)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member cannot be serious.

[English]

The member had the opportunity not just to take action but even to offer his thoughts when it came to the bills that we put forward to help protect communities. What did he actually do? He voted against the measures to strengthen security in this country, and his entire caucus sought to delay the implementation of the very bills they have been calling for for years.

We need some honesty in this House. We need some integrity in this House. We need words to match actions. On this side of the House, we will not only tell the story of how we are going to protect victims, but we will adopt the laws that will do so. If the Conservatives want to talk a big game on crime, the least they can do is vote for the measures to protect—

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

* * *

CANADIAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Broadcasting Act is among the many laws that the Prime Minister intends to break.

It was the Liberals themselves who legislated for the CRTC to impose levies on American online streaming platforms. However, they are breaking their own law by asking the CRTC to disregard it and cancel the levies. That is unbelievable. That is a complete sell-out of Quebec culture in favour of the world's wealthiest.

Is it too much to ask the government to comply with its own law and allow the CRTC to impose levies?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm to the House that we never said we would amend the Broadcasting Act.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has said that it is dropping the levy and that it will make up for it with public funds. Where is it going to get that money? Directly from the pockets of taxpayers is where.

The problem is that, instead of taking money out of the pockets of multinational Internet companies, the federal government is sticking citizens with the bill while giving them no say in the matter. On top of being grossly unfair, this approach replaces sustainable, legally protected funding for culture with a one-time amount that any government can cut at any time.

Will the minister finally reconsider and choose the side of francophone and Quebec culture?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be able to rise in the House, on our side of the House, to represent members, including about 50 from Quebec, who rise time and time again to vote for culture in Quebec and Canada, with historic investments that no other government has ever made in the history of Canada.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Toronto police constable Todd Baylis was just 25 years old when he was murdered in the line of duty. His family has relived that tragic loss at parole hearings in 2019, 2021 and 2024, and will again in just a few months.

For 14 years, victims' advocate Lisa Freeman from Oshawa has repeatedly been forced to face the axe murderer who bludgeoned her father to death.

Liberal parole has caused this problem, and victims' families are demanding change.

Why do the Liberals keep making victims constantly relive their worst day? People get a chance at parole every time.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, although I respect the sentiment, this is not Liberal parole. We have not made changes under this government.

People do not get parole every single time. For instance, in this case, the assailant has not gotten parole. Therefore, I think a lot of what is being said by the Conservatives is not factual. They are trying to politicize this matter.

As I have said before, we are open to amendments that are appropriate.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly the Liberals are missing the point. It is the Conservative mission to keep Canadians safe. Conservatives have already given the Liberal government opportunity to fix its failed Liberal parole. Yes, it is Liberal parole, because Bill C-243 would have increased time between parole hearings for convicted murderers so families would not have to repeatedly go through the traumatizing ordeal. The Liberals voted it down. Now police associations and victims are calling for action.

Will the Liberals admit they got this wrong and scrap Liberal parole for the rights of victims? These need to come before the rights of killers.

Oral Questions

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is completely incorrect. It has not been the Conservatives' role in the current Parliament to keep Canadians safe. That is the job of the government, and that is the job we have been doing. All they have done all along is delay. They delayed lawful access. They voted against Bill C-16, the protecting victims' rights bill. They also voted against strengthening hate crime laws in this country. They are not for public safety. They are for letting criminals go free.

• (1445)

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, heinous serial killers should not get to plead their case and have a chance at parole every couple of years. This is precisely why Conservatives brought forward the Conservative bill Brian's bill: to respect victims' families.

Paul Bernardo is a convicted serial rapist and killer, yet he will get his fourth chance at parole, while the victims' families suffer. Trial lawyer Tim Danson said, "It's just pure entertainment for him. He has no remorse."

Why do the Liberals keep making the families of victims relive the worst days of their lives?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take a moment to honour the lives of Leslie Mahaffy, Kristen French and Tammy Homolka.

As the House may know, this individual who has been in jail for a long period of time went to the University of Toronto Scarborough campus and petrified my community of Scarborough—Guildwood—Rouge Park. The impact that this individual has had on our society is unprecedented, and I know that many people continue to struggle with the impact this individual has had. I can assure the House that we will continue to work with the Toronto police—

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are allowing families to be retraumatized. The Conservatives gave you guys an opportunity to fix this. Bill C-243 would have increased the time between parole hearings for convicted murderers so families would not have to go through this ordeal every couple of years. You voted it down. The Liberals voted it down.

The Speaker: I just want to remind members to go through the Chair.

The member may continue.

Oral Questions

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, the Toronto Police Association is demanding that the government, the Liberals, stop forcing families to repeatedly face the killers of their loved ones.

Will the Liberals admit they were wrong and change the law so victims' rights come before the rights of convicted murderers?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us just go back over the last six months and see the record of the Conservative Party of Canada. On Bill C-8, the party opposite dragged its feet and opposed the bill initially. Regarding Bill C-9, on protecting and combatting hate, the Conservatives fought tooth and nail right until the end and blocked this legislation that is going to help vulnerable communities. On Bill C-14, which is strengthening bail and sentencing, as well as Bill C-16, on the victims' rights, again, the Conservatives dragged their feet. That is the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for North York.

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Mr. Speaker, serial rapist and killer Paul Bernardo will have a fourth chance at parole this January. The lawyer for the families of Leslie Mahaffy and Kristen French said, "It's just pure entertainment for [Bernardo]." Sadistic murderers should not have a parole hearing every two years. They traumatize their victims' families again and again. Conservatives put forward a bill to end this practice, but the Liberals voted it down.

I would like a clear answer from the public safety minister. Will the Liberals finally protect these families by scrapping Liberal parole?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me just underscore that the issues around public safety, issues around parole and issues around bail should never be politicized. These are very important issues that we need to collaborate on and work together on. That is why I find it rather difficult when these issues are politicized.

We will always stand with victims. We will always stand with people who are impacted. We also need to recognize that we have the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which balances the interests of both.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the global landscape is changing quickly. I am constantly reminded by my constituents in Pickering—Brooklin to act quickly to secure our country's economic sovereignty. That is why, on the first day of this fall sitting, our government introduced the building Canada strong bill.

Can the Minister of Transport please explain how this legislation will help us respond to the challenges we are facing today and deliver our government's mandate to build Canada strong?

• (1450)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her work and for her incredible advocacy for continuing to build our country.

We are indeed building at the speed the moment requires and at the pace Canadians expect. This means being ambitious. It means moving quickly and getting big projects built while continuing to talk to Canadians and to stakeholders. That is why we brought forward the building Canada strong bill on our first day back. It would give us the tools to build bigger, for Canada to have ambition, for our young people to look forward to employment for the decades to come and for our country to be—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauce.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 11 years of Liberal rule, even full-time workers are having a hard time making ends meet at the end of the month. According to the National Payroll Institute, half of all employed Canadians now report spending all, or sometimes more, of their net pay. That means that families are being forced to go into debt just to put food on the table. The Conservatives have identified over \$150 billion in unnecessary Liberal spending. That works out to \$10,000 per family.

Will the Liberals adopt our Conservative plan to save families money?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to help my colleague with his next letter to his constituents.

First off, he should remind them that we have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. I hope he will mention that to his constituents. Second, I hope he will remind them that we have extended the federal gas tax holiday, which will help people across the country. I hope he will also talk about the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, which will help 12 million Canadians. These are concrete, immediate and targeted measures that will help Canadians.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are completely disconnected from reality. I am sorry, but the minister's answer is not going to put food on Chantal's table.

Chantal is a single mother in Saint-Georges. She works full-time but still needs to use food banks. After she pays her rent and bills, there is not enough money left over to feed her children. Chantal is not alone. This morning, I spoke with people at Moisson Beauce and they told me that over 6,300 residents of Beauce use food banks every month.

How many more families have to reach that point before the Liberals put our Conservative plan into action?

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

Many Canadians are struggling to make ends meet; that is true. What really baffles me is why he voted against the Canada child benefit. How is he going to explain that to Chantal, who lives in his riding? For a single mother with two children, that could add up to \$8,000 or \$10,000.

Why did he vote against Canada's national school food program, which is helping 100,000 vulnerable children in Quebec City and saving their families about \$800. Why, at every turn, does he consistently vote against every affordability measure, whether the Canadian dental care plan or the Canada groceries and essentials benefit?

[English]

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a survey released yesterday by the National Payroll Institute found that half of employed Canadians are now spending all or more of their take-home pay, leaving nothing for savings. Liberal taxes and wasteful government spending are only making things more expensive for Canadians. Our Conservative plan will save Canadians money. We have identified nearly \$10,000 in savings for every Canadian family.

Will the Liberals adopt our Conservative economic action plan so Canadians can keep more of their money and afford to live again?

Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a new government in Ottawa and a new approach: Show up, listen and deliver. I can say on behalf of the Government of Canada that through the child care benefit and the groceries and essentials benefit, we are listening to what the people of Saskatchewan are saying. We are helping them in their time of crisis, but every time we try to do something, the confusing Conservatives turn around and vote against that. Which is it? Do they want us to help Saskatchewan people?

On this side, I say we do not need advice on how we support Saskatchewan families. We have a lot of support—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake.

• (1455)

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us listen to how out of touch the Liberals are. More than one in four Canadians say they “would struggle to meet their financial obligations if their [paycheque] was delayed by just one week.” Canadians need a government focused on lowering their costs and helping them get ahead. As I said, our Conservative economic action plan identifies nearly \$10,000 in savings for every Canadian family. I hear the Liberals scoffing, because they think that is not a lot of money.

I am going to ask again, will the Liberals adopt our plan so Canadians can save money and afford to live again?

Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really, truly believe that the Conserva-

tives do not have a plan. They tout this plan, but I do not think the plan exists. To make a long story short, as we look at all the benefits we are trying to support Saskatchewan families on, one thing is real: The folks across the way voted against it. In fact, the Premier of Saskatchewan, the hon. Scott Moe, has said Canada is doing a wonderful job. I am not sure whom they are talking to, but perhaps they can get back and talk to the Saskatchewan people to see what is really happening.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that affordability is the best it has been in over a decade. He could not be more out of touch. The latest National Payroll Institute survey shows that more than a quarter of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque and more than half of Canadians are spending all of or more than their net pay every single month. Liberals are just not delivering results for everyday Canadians.

Will the Liberals adopt our Conservative economic action plan so Canadians can save money and afford to live again?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we hear the same again and again, but what we will not hear when we talk to actual Albertans is this kind of doom and gloom, because there has never been a better time to be an Albertan in Canada. We are seeing investments at record levels. We are seeing oil production at record levels, and we are seeing satisfaction with the federal government and our leader at record levels.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are so out of touch.

Let me tell members about a Canadian named Mark. Mark has made promises to his employer that he just cannot keep. He has had to compromise all of his beliefs in order to keep his job. Mark has so little faith in the Canadian economy that he has put almost all of his investments in the United States. Mark is focused on his European retirement plans, which now seem in jeopardy.

How can Canadians like Mark actually deliver the changes they promised?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe that member and Mark might want to speak to another Albertan named Danielle Smith, who said that it has never been such a good time to be an Albertan and that she has never been so optimistic about the future of Alberta and a strong Canada.

Oral Questions

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for millions of families, payday is no longer a chance to get ahead. It is simply the day to hopefully pay the bills. The National Payroll Institute says that more than half of working Canadians are spending every dollar they take home, leaving absolutely nothing to save, and only 18% say that their pay is keeping up with the cost of living.

The Liberals seem to insist that their plan is working, but they are so clearly out of touch, and Canadians are out of money. Families are working harder and harder and falling further and further behind.

When will the Liberals stop the pain and embrace our Conservative economic plan so that Canadians can afford to live again?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not get the fake outrage, because when we think about the voting on the Conservative side, we know they have voted against every measure to support Manitobans. For example, there was the groceries and essentials benefit.

We are putting money back in the pockets of Canadians with the child tax benefits, dental care and pharmacare. We are helping Canadians where it matters most, and the member opposite continues to vote against every single measure.

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the latest survey from the National Payroll Institute demonstrates how the Liberals are out of touch and Canadians are out of money. More than one in four employed Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque and would struggle to cover their bills if their pay was delayed by just one week. This is at the highest level in five years.

Things continue to go in the wrong direction, and the Liberals continue to double down on the same failed approaches. Our Conservative plan is to save Canadians money by taking all federal taxes on gas, about 25¢ a litre, off until Canada Day next year. Will they finally adopt our plan?

• (1500)

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back in the House. I hope all members had a good summer.

Our government is focused on making sure that we are not only building Canada from coast to coast to coast, but also building partnerships around the world. We are diversifying trade like we have never seen in the history of our country.

Our businesses have access to 1.5 billion consumers through tariff-free partnerships at this moment, and we plan to double that. That is our plan. The Minister of International Trade, the Prime Minister and the entire government is focused on building those partnerships so we can help grow our businesses around the world.

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is all talk and no results, because the data from the survey gets worse. It further confirms just how bad the cost of living

crisis is for Canadian workers. Only 18% believe their income increases are keeping pace with the rising cost of living, and groceries are now the largest source of financial stress, which was cited by 55%, while nearly half of employed Canadians say they are worried about personal debt.

How many more surveys and reports that show the struggle of everyday Canadians do we need to see before the Liberals reverse course and adopt our Conservative economic action plan to put more money in Canadians' pockets and help them afford to live?

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree with the premise of the member's question. I think we are seeing results. If we look at the first-ever Canada investment summit, in just one year, we saw a \$500-billion commitment, that is half a trillion dollars, to invest right here in our country. What does that mean? It means good-paying jobs for Canadians coast to coast to coast.

Similarly, we are seeing the results of the trade agreements we have been signing. With United Arab Emirates alone, we were able to sign a trade agreement within 45 days. We have never seen those kinds of action before. This is how we are going to build Canada strong.

[Translation]

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our recent investment summit attracted investors from around the world who wanted to be part of Canada's future.

As our country attracts new investment across the entire economy, can the Minister of Transport tell the House about the measures our government is taking to create the right conditions to encourage investment and strengthen the Canadian economy, including in the transportation sector?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her work to help build Canada strong.

The first-ever Canada investment summit is a testament to the extraordinary potential and opportunities we have to offer right here in Canada. We saw that confidence transmuted into concrete action, with nearly \$500 billion in new investment commitments.

We are going to build bigger, faster and more efficiently with the help of that member and the entire government.

[English]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on TV this weekend, the transport minister gave a master class in dodging simple questions. When asked if airport privatization will hike prices, he said he could not say no. He actually promised partially regulated fees. If a pilot announced that the landing gear was partially working, nobody would fly, and under this government, soon no one will be able to afford to. The Liberals are out of touch and costing Canadians more.

Is the minister so out of touch that he thinks a partially regulated price hike is a bargain for families, or is he selling our airports just to enrich Liberal insiders and friends?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we intend to regulate those fees that show up on airfare tickets that cause prices to spike. In fact, those fees are going up as we speak. As airport facilities get improved, capital investments get made and those costs get passed on to travellers in the form of airport improvement charges. They are unregulated today. We intend to regulate them.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been 11 years, and it is getting worse all the time. In fact, the minister's dodge ball routine in the House might win him points with the Prime Minister, but every time he ducks, the Canadian taxpayer behind him takes the hit. Canadians asked for lower airfares, not a new Liberal surcharge on visiting grandma. The Liberals are all talk and no results. Our Conservative plan is to save Canadians money.

Which is it? Is the minister going to admit he has completely given up on keeping air travel affordable for families, or does he just want to turn our airports into a country club for the wealthy and elite?

• (1505)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member's leader writes the questions, but he really should listen to the answer and kind of make an adjustment after he hears the first answer. I just told him those fees are currently unregulated. We intend to regulate them.

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we in the Conservative Party want to help Canadian taxpayers save money, but the Liberals are coming up with new ways to get money out of people's pockets.

In an interview on CTV on the weekend, the Minister of Transport, the one who wants to privatize four airports, said he cannot guarantee that passenger fares will not increase once the airports are privatized.

Could the Minister of Transport be clear? Will passenger fares go up or not?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speak-

Oral Questions

er, as part of the ongoing process, we have discovered that there are indeed fees in the current system, including funds for airport infrastructure improvements, that are recouped through airfares, prices and flat rates. This is not currently regulated. We fully intend to subject these types of fees to regulation.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is home to some of the greatest filmmakers, actors and producers the world has to offer, and just last week, we saw exactly that at the Toronto International Film Festival with innovation hubs showcasing new ways of storytelling, content creators proving that Canadian talent belongs on the world's biggest screens and a reminder that our country continues to attract global attention.

Could the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages tell us about the work Canada is doing to foster these international friendships so that our audiovisual sector can continue to thrive both at home and around the world?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a real pleasure to be at TIFF over the last week and connect with creators from Canada and around the world. I had the opportunity to sign two co-production agreements: one with the United Kingdom and the other with Spain. This is part of a network of 60 agreements that we have around the world that generate about \$500 million in our economy. They need the support of the Canadian government, but at the same time, it reinforces our cultural sovereignty, which we need to do now more than ever.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spent months redefining his relationship with the United States. He said that President Trump was “transformational”, and then he was the source of global rupture. He said that integration was subordination. Then came fortress North America and a pledge in New York for Canada to make America great again. After declaring an economic war, the Prime Minister now proposes a potash bloc.

Forgive us, but can we just get some objective consistency from the Prime Minister, or is the pain of our people and the stagnation of our economy just politics?

Private Members' Business

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian potash keeps food affordable all around the world for all of our allies, including the Americans. Maybe the member opposite could understand that we are in a complicated geopolitical situation, and Canada can be the solution for the world. We can provide the potash that keeps food affordable for the world. Maybe the Conservatives can figure that out.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Seniors for Climate Action members who came across Canada on the Seniors Climate Witness caravan and raised the issue of the climate crisis, just as scientists are raising it. The Prime Minister, on the floor of the House, committed on October 17, 2025, to meet the Paris targets. Ever since then, he has been galloping in a different direction.

My question is simple: Before committing to spending tens of billions of dollars to build a climate-killing pipeline, will the government at least present to the House a cost-benefit analysis, a pre-tense, even, of a business case that this has any place in our strategy?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely committed to continuing to fight climate change and to take action toward moving toward a low-carbon economy.

If we want to talk about news over the summer, I would like to highlight Churchill Falls. That is 14,000 megawatts of power that could heat and cool every home in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver through clean electricity. That is what we are doing. We are focused on building clean energy options for our country so that we can switch to decarbonization. That is what we are going to do.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1510)

*[Translation]***NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON SKILLED TRADES AND LABOUR MOBILITY ACT**

The House resumed from September 21 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.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-266, under Private Members' Business.

Call in the members.

● (1525)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 174)***YEAS**

Members

Aboultaif	Acan
Aitchison	Al Soud
Albas	Ali
Allison	Alty
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Anstey	Arnold
Au	Auguste
Baber	Bailey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Bardeesy
Barlow	Barrett
Battiste	Beech
Begum	Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	Bendayan
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Bittle
Block	Blois
Bonk	Borrelli
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Caley
Calkins	Caputo
Carney	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chambers	Champagne
Chang	Chartrand
Chatel	Chenette
Chi	Chong
Church	Clark
Cobena	Cody
Connors	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Dancho	Dandurand
Danko	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Niagara South)
Dawson	Deltell
d'Entremont	DeRidder
Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan	Dzerowicz
Earle	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Epp
Eyolfson	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Falk (Provencher)	Fancy
Fanjoy	Fergus
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Fry
Fuhr	Gaheer
Gainey	Gallant
Gasparro	Gazan
Genuis	Gerretsen
Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Gill (Windsor West)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Gladu
Gobeil	Goodridge
Gould	Gourde
Grant	Greaves
Groleau	Guay
Gughielmin	Gull-Masty
Gunn	Hajdu
Hallan	Hardy
Harrison	Hepfner

Hirtle
Hodgson
Holman
Hussen
Idlout
Jaczek
Jeneroux
Joly
Kayabaga
Kelly
Khanna
Kirkland
Kmieć
Koutrakis
Kramp-Neuman
Kuruc
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lattanzio
Lavack
Lawton
Leitão
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Long
Ma
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Sidhu (Brampton South)
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Stevenson
Strahl
Sudds
Thomas

Ho
Hogan
Housefather
Iacono
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LeBlanc
Leslie
Lightbound
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Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
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McLean (Calgary Centre)
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Ménard
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

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

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in relation to Bill C-244, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, and the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

*Government Orders***NATIONAL DAY OF THE CANADIAN ATHLETE ACT**

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce An Act to establish a National Day of the Canadian Athlete.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to introduce an act to establish a national day of the Canadian athlete.

(Motion deemed adopted)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The 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, we request it be carried on division, please.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried on division.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUILDING CANADA STRONG ACT

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved that Bill C-39, An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House today to speak to this important bill, the most important piece of economic legislation in decades.

Canada's prosperity has always depended on our ability to transport goods over long distances. It is in our DNA, an inherent part of who we are, because of the very nature of our geography.

[English]

Today, our ability to move goods at the speed and scale necessary for prosperity is being tested. Global supply chains are shifting. Competition is intensifying. Long-standing trade relationships can, unfortunately, no longer be taken for granted. For Canada, that means something fundamental. As an open economy, we must respond. We must become more resilient, more diversified, more globally competitive and more capable of standing on our own.

We must respond by strengthening our economic sovereignty, while continuing to be a strong and reliable partner to countries around the world. In this new environment, the old ways of thinking, the old ways of doing business and the old ways of looking at the world are no longer enough. They are not fast enough, big enough, resilient enough or reliable enough. In fact, they must be reimagined sometimes in their entirety.

As Canadians, we must take control of our own destiny and build the capacity to stand on our own, while strengthening the partnerships that matter most. We succeed as a country, one and all, today and tomorrow, by building the supply chains of the future. Ports; railways; roads; airports; trade corridors; the way we work, make decisions and process our information; and the speed at which we build will all have to change.

● (1530)

[Translation]

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to travel across our country and speak with Canadians from coast to coast to coast. I have also met with chambers of commerce, councils and businesses. I have spoken with workers at length about the challenges we are facing. We came up with some proposals together, and, most importantly, I took the time to listen carefully to what people across Canada had to say.

Earlier this year, Transport Canada released two discussion papers that outlined proposals, and we listened once again. Bill C-39 is the result of all that work, a whole-of-government effort involving numerous discussion papers across various departments.

This bill is one of the most important economic pieces of legislation in a generation. It is the result of a number of departments coming together, and it explains exactly how we are going to turn those advantages into opportunities.

[English]

Let us get into the specifics of the bill. I would like to begin with what we call trade corridors. We are an export nation. Canada's transportation system is the backbone of our export nation, enabling the safe, secure and efficient movement of goods. It gets key products onto shelves at home and abroad and others to ports for overseas shipping, and it directly impacts affordability for Canadians.

Over the past few years, our government has worked hard to improve that infrastructure. Through the national trade corridors fund, we have invested more than \$4 billion in over 200 projects across the country. Our goal in doing all of this has been simple: to scale up and improve capacity so that there is less waiting, smoother flow and faster results. This important work has continued with the trade diversification corridors fund and the Arctic infrastructure fund, as well as the new Canada strong fund, which will be used to make commercial equity investments in major nation-building Canadian projects and companies, alongside private sector investors.

With Bill C-39, we are going further, with the ability to designate specific geographic areas or important routes as national trade corridors and then set clear performance goals. The overall goal would shift from increasing capacity to improving efficiency and reliability. In other words, we would be helping different parts of the system, such as ports, railways, airports, trucking and warehouses, work together better and then track how well things are running. A national corridor council would also be created to find problem areas that cause delays and suggest ways to improve the system, improve efficiency and help different players make more coordinated decisions.

Overall, these changes would move goods faster from where they are made to ports, reduce delays at these busy points and make shipping more reliable for exporters. That reliability is about more than efficiency. It is about giving Canadian businesses options.

Last year, the Prime Minister set an ambitious goal for Canada to double its non-U.S. exports within a decade. That goal has inspired this piece of legislation. It is no small feat, but it is absolutely necessary if we are to make our economy more resilient and less vulnerable to the risks that come with relying too much on a single market or country.

[Translation]

Canada has what the world is looking for. While that is true, we also need to take action. We need to make our country so accessible and predictable that other countries want to expand their trade with us.

That means that trade hubs, especially ports, must operate at the speed of business. They need to be able to make decisions and raise capital more flexibly. They need to work together better, move goods faster and track them better to reduce bottlenecks and cut costs, making Canada a much more attractive economic partner.

Here is how we are going to do that. The proposed legislative amendments would strengthen the governance of port authorities by requiring regular assessments and third-party assessments that would be submitted to the minister. Other provisions would require regular updates to land use plans and business plans and would modernize the way fees are fixed for ports owned and operated by Transport Canada. Ports would benefit from greater financial flexibility and new revenue-generating opportunities.

This would, of course, be accompanied by increased oversight and the creation of a regulatory authority that could require operators to provide data so that we can more accurately gauge the performance of our supply chains.

However, it is not enough for one port or port authority to act alone. These changes must be coordinated, and port authorities must strengthen their collaboration along trade corridors to scale Canada's trade gateways up enough to compete internationally and to strengthen our domestic supply chains.

I want to be very clear. Canada is not privatizing its ports. Canada owns the land. Our port authorities are independent, self-funded bodies that have been given the responsibility for managing these lands on behalf of the Government of Canada. They basically act as landlords who then lease plots of land to private terminal op-

erators. These operators build and operate the essential infrastructure on which our Canadian farmers, producers and manufacturers depend.

What this bill does is increase the flexibility that our port authorities have to pursue new trade opportunities and to adapt to the changing landscape of international trade. Our ports must be agile, reliable and efficient. They must have the resources they need to meet our goal of doubling our trade with partners other than the United States over the next 10 years.

We are therefore proposing to establish a national trade corridors council, which will be responsible for consulting with indigenous peoples, provinces, territories, municipalities and other stakeholders and for making recommendations to strengthen collaboration among ports within each designated trade corridor.

Roughly 80% of Canada's trade by volume with countries other than the U.S. moves by sea. This measure would help ports expand, plan for the long term and meet growing global demand.

• (1535)

[English]

We also want to talk about regulatory certainty and red tape reduction. A clear and simple regulatory system will bring a consistent foundation to support businesses to invest, grow and stay competitive while keeping strong safety and environmental standards.

This bill proposes legislative changes to improve efficiency, cut time-consuming administrative burdens, reduce costs to businesses and support a more competitive transportation system. The proposed changes would simplify rules and approvals while maintaining Canada's world-leading standards. For example, we would remove many duplicate reviews where other processes already apply. We call it a "one project, one review" approach, with a streamlined process, parallel assessments and clearer timelines.

We would also align more quickly with international standards, speed up approvals for lower-risk projects, reduce some unnecessary reporting requirements and provide flexibility during emergencies.

Finally, to complement efforts being led by the Major Projects Office, Transport Canada would establish a transportation project office within the department to strengthen federal permitting, coordination and Crown consultation for some transportation projects.

Government Orders

Taken together, these measures aim to support competitive and resilient supply chains, improve system flexibility and help move key goods more efficiently at a reduced cost to businesses and Canadians.

• (1540)

[Translation]

Next, I want to address our plan to improve the digitization of trade. This is one of the greatest opportunities available to us. Many Canadian exporters still rely on paper-based systems, which is slowing the movement of goods and increasing costs. Customs forms, bills of lading and certificates of origin are often processed sequentially by several different authorities. That is an outdated way of doing things.

In some cases, red tape can add days to the customs clearance process. Meanwhile, our competitors, including Singapore, Japan, South Korea, the Netherlands and New Zealand, have embraced the future and already have end-to-end digitized trade systems. A 2025 report by Access Partnership estimates that paperless trade in Canada could reduce trade costs for businesses by up to 4.2%. Documents are sent just once and are passed along simultaneously. Goods clear customs in a matter of hours, rather than days.

The bill would change that. Its measures would support trade digitization. In many cases, this would enable companies to provide information only once and share it securely across multiple federal departments and agencies, in accordance with the “tell us once” principle. The legislation would also clarify the legal validity of transferable electronic documents, such as bills of lading, to encourage their use in international trade processes.

These digitized trade processes would allow goods to move faster, providing businesses with greater predictability and strengthening Canada's competitiveness and reputation. The shift to digital would reduce documentation errors and administrative delays while promoting more efficient supply chain management. Crucially, this kind of efficiency could help unlock up to \$100 billion in economic potential.

[English]

Perhaps nowhere is that potential more evident than in the Major Projects Office, which must accelerate and streamline the federal approval process for high-priority infrastructure projects and nation-building projects. By creating a single entry point for all these projects, we would reduce the timeline for federal review and decision-making to no more than one year. Other changes would allow us to have a single project authority and a single project decision. The associated regulatory environment would become streamlined and efficient.

I have already pointed out that transportation and our supply chains are the backbone of our country's economy, but without a stable and skilled workforce, supply chains cannot function. Dozens of work stoppages in recent years, including major rail shutdowns, have shown how quickly instability can ripple across the economy. That affects workers, that affects businesses and that affects Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner. When these shutdowns occur, hundreds of thousands of unionized jobs in manufacturing locations, in factories, in coal mines and in energy

projects are all put at risk as well. That is why we would strengthen labour stability to keep supply chains moving, with well-paid workers with solid collective agreements.

Practical solutions within this bill would offer things like better dispute resolution, improved labour mobility, skills training and workforce development. We need long-term solutions for recruitment, retention and resilience, because building and operating modern supply chains require people with world-leading skills, like Canadians have, and require those people to be deployed in the right places. We need to be building that workforce now.

I reject the criticism that this bill would not contribute to stability in our supply chains. This government is investing and putting in place measures to support workers, to support employers and to reach agreements where they are best reached, which is at the table. We will continue to invest in processes and regulations that allow getting collective agreements and getting the people we need. The best people in the world work in our national supply chains in many of Canada's leading labour unions, and we should help them stay on the job. They want to be on the job, and they are proud to do the jobs that they do.

• (1545)

[Translation]

The changes we are proposing will help establish a more modern and responsive transportation network that can withstand economic pressures, improve the performance of our trade corridors and unlock new capabilities.

As the Prime Minister said, the world will not go back to the way it was. The old order is not coming back. We need to respond, adapt and move forward.

As I was saying, we need to build the country and the systems that are behind the best country in the world, including supply chains. We need to build the supply chains and systems of the future. We need to build a Canada that is more connected to the world, more competitive, safer, less vulnerable to a single market and better able to stand on its own. We must act. We must act now as we move toward this new horizon.

[English]

In conclusion, this bill is an important piece of economic legislation. It gets at the very foundation of our economic system, which is our transportation networks, which is the way we deal with investment proposals and projects of all sizes, from one end of the country to the other. It streamlines processes but does not lower standards. It helps labour and employers reach collective agreements and does not look to labour conflict. It helps to make our transportation systems more efficient and more effective and to reduce costs for businesses, for exporters and, especially, for Canadians on the grocery shelves and everywhere.

I am so proud to recommend to this House Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, and I look forward to the debate we will have in this chamber.

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government announced a supply chain office in 2023, with no results. Then last year we passed Bill C-5, which gave the Liberals extraordinary powers, with no results. Then they started a special projects office, but so far, there are no results. Now they want to build on more bureaucracy.

When will the government finally get something done? There are 500 projects in the wings waiting to be approved, and so far, the government has done nothing. We have had enough of announcements. When will the Liberals actually get to work for Canadians?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, this is a legislative body, and we intend to legislate. Let me challenge virtually everything the hon. member said. First of all, we will be reducing bureaucracy, not creating it. We will be streamlining processes, not expanding them. As for Bill C-5, a bill we are very proud of, it created the Major Projects Office, which today is actively examining 27 nation-building projects. The model and the success of the Major Projects Office need to be replicated across the Government of Canada.

[Translation]

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister agree that the Canada Energy Regulator is effectively run by the oil companies?

The lead commissioner is the former senior legal counsel at TC Energy, previously known as TransCanada Corporation, the owner of the TransCanada pipeline, which changed its name following the energy east fiasco. The deputy lead commissioner is a former executive at Royal Dutch Shell. Another commissioner is a former legal adviser to Pembina Pipeline Corporation and Shell Canada Limited. Another one comes from Imperial Oil and Canadian Oil Sands Limited. Then there is one from Cenovus Energy, an oil sands company.

Does my colleague agree that the Canada Energy Regulator is effectively run by oil companies and that Bill C-39 sidelines scientists and replaces them with lawyers from this industry?

• (1550)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the Canada Energy Regulator is a world leader in this area and has access to the best expertise and all the science. It operates independently.

Government Orders

We think that those responsible for regulating energy should regulate energy, nuclear should regulate nuclear, and so on. We want projects to be approved or rejected faster so that investors can feel confident, regardless of whether the project is happening in Quebec, in renewable energy, elsewhere in the country or in another sector.

We will take action, and we will do so quickly.

Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Transport for his speech on Bill C-39. I would like to ask him the following question: What reassurance can the government offer to people who have concerns about the right to strike, and how can it explain to them that this bill actually aims to make it easier for unions and workers to reach agreements?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sherbrooke, who is also calling for a more secure future for local businesses and entrepreneurs in her riding.

Canadian workers have a constitutional right to strike. In that context, we have proposed measures, such as appointing a special mediator. This process is tailored to particularly challenging cases. We know that 95% of disputes are settled, but for the remaining 5%, we think there should be a special mediator to help both parties come to an agreement without—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona has the floor.

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Labour Congress, Unifor, the United Steelworkers, Teamsters Canada and other unions representing millions of workers across this country have told the government very clearly that Bill C-39's new powers would undermine the fundamental right of workers to strike, to withhold their labour.

These organizations participated in the Liberals' sham consultations. They raised these concerns directly, and yet the government proceeded with legislation that would give the minister extraordinary new powers to intervene in a legal strike. Why did the minister ignore the warnings from Canada's labour movement, and will he commit to removing these new powers from Bill C-39?

Government Orders

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague well knows, we have in the Canada Labour Code today section 107, which is relatively unfettered. This bill would put in place specific guardrails that would govern its use, and only after special mediators and other processes designed to assist parties in particularly difficult labour-management relationships to actually reach a collective agreement. The government has no interest in getting involved in labour disputes. We want parties to solve disputes at the table, and this bill would put in place measures that would help them do that.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way mentioned in his speech that the Liberals have a major projects office that was going to approve projects within a year. That is 12 months. This place passed Bill C-5 15 months ago, and yet not a single project has been approved by that office.

How long does it take to figure out which companies benefit Brookfield, so that they can approve a few projects?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I want to say to my hon. friend is, “Stay tuned.” There have been projects in the Canada Gazette. I would invite him to read the regular distribution of the Canada Gazette. There are 27 major nation-building projects under consideration by the Major Projects Office.

While I am on my feet, I want to thank Dawn Farrell and the entirety of the Major Projects Office, who have done heroic work in building our country over the past 12 months.

• (1555)

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport mentioned wanting to use the available expertise to accelerate projects of national interest. Speaking of expertise, Canada's chief science adviser told the Standing Committee on Science and Research that she had never been consulted about projects of national interest.

It is funny. The minister is talking about expertise, but he is not consulting his own expert, who is paid with public money. Instead of trying to convince us that he is using available expertise, can he simply confirm that he uses it only when it suits his narrative?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that we are proud to have a chief science adviser, because we are always guided by science. It helps us define a science policy for the entire government. As for regulators and regulatory agencies, they obviously have access to the best expertise available in the fields of energy, nuclear power and transportation so they can carry out their respective independent roles.

[English]

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this bill is an abomination. I want to go back to Bill C-5 along with Bill C-39. All of the language in these statutes rests on the assumption that cabinet can pick a project of national interest or a region of national interest without any criteria and without any cost-benefit analysis or proof of a business case.

Will the minister commit that before naming any such project or any such region, we actually have some facts presented to this House?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, this bill, as Bill C-5 did, sets out a process that helps investors, project proponents, those who assess independently or otherwise each individual project, and applies the best possible scientific and other expertise, in addition, of course, to the duty to consult first nations, to the proposal that is before that regulator.

This process can go faster without having any standard lowered or any other Canadian standard or ability to evaluate diluted. We can make these projects get evaluated quicker: a yes or a no within a year.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is déjà vu all over again.

A year and a half ago, the Prime Minister came storming into the House of Commons with a cape on his back, saying that he had a new bill, Bill C-5, which was going to bring in sweeping legislative changes to build at speeds not seen in generations. The media declared that we would build the unimaginable with this bill. Here we are, 18 months later, and how many projects has it built?

An hon. member: Zero.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, did I hear “zero”? Is there any dispute on the other side? They are dead quiet on the other side. The answer is “zero”.

How many permits have been issued by the new office? Zero. How many employees are working on those projects? It is zero, zip, nada, nothing, after 18 months, but do not worry. Today the Liberals have come in and announced another sweeping bill, which the media has regurgitated unfiltered, as though it were gospel truth, and this time the Liberals are repeating exactly the same promises.

It is not just that the Liberals have approved and built nothing. There are 500 projects, at least, waiting on the Prime Minister's desk. I say 500, because the Impact Assessment Agency has that number of significant projects, but there are also countless other projects at other departments, which are too dispersed among too many agencies for anyone to tell us how many projects the federal government is waiting to approve. Still, 18 months later, none of them are approved. Not a single Trudeau-era, antidevelopment law or tax has been removed. Not a single inch of oil pipeline has been built.

Remember, the Prime Minister said that we are in an existential crisis. That is to say that if we do not get it right, we will not even exist in his terms, that we are in a “war”. Is this the speed of war? Imagine this: If we had travelled at this speed back in the Second World War, we would not have gotten the Lancaster built in two years. In fact, the plane would not be off the ground even today.

There have been dozens of announcements, summits, speeches, signing ceremonies and other illusions. We have heard lots about this project or that, which will be designated, declared or listed. Pipelines do not go on lists; they go in the ground. Shovels do not go on designations; they go in the ground. Energy does not go in an MOU; it goes in a tanker to another market. Unfortunately, none of those things are happening. It is all talk, no results; all show, no go; and all theatre, no reality.

Here is the reality and the result: Gushing media headlines aside, there has been nothing in 18 months. The previous bill was called the Building Canada Act. It built nothing. Today we have a bill called the building Canada strong act, so in 18 months, the Liberals have managed to add one word. One word on a piece of paper is 18 months' worth of achievement. The only thing the Prime Minister has built is 14 new government agencies.

Now, here we go again. We have another bill, and it would not repeal Bill C-69, Justin Trudeau's antidevelopment law. It would not eliminate the industrial carbon tax, and it would not ultimately change the obstacles that are in the existing legal framework.

For example, let us take the administrative burden created by Liberal Bill C-69, Trudeau's antidevelopment law. Even if the bill before the House were to pass today, we would still have on the books requirements that anybody who applies for a project include analysis on “the intersection of sex and gender with other identity factors”, as if that has anything to do with mines, pipelines or marine ports.

My favourite is that projects, even if the bill before the House today were to pass, would still have to take into account “any other matter relevant to the impact assessment that the Agency requires to be taken into account.” That means there is no limit on the number of things that the bureaucracy would consider before a project were approved. How can the Liberals even talk about regulatory certainty with that kind of ambiguity?

● (1600)

The Liberals are claiming that it will help get things built, but they promised this the last time, so we should not hold our breath. Does it reduce the number of vexatious or irrelevant obstructions from hard-core foreign-funded interest groups that have been killing projects for over 10 years? Well, the bill maintains a wide-open approach to consultation about projects that would allow literally anyone to have their comments and testimony included in hearings before a project can actually occur, so we could have American interests that want to keep Canada down, the ones that helped Justin Trudeau get elected with massive foreign funding in the 2015 election, fund antidevelopment groups against the interests of Canada to block things from happening. It is elbows up, indeed. That would not change under this law.

Government Orders

Mr. Speaker, I am just wondering if I can ask for a favour. Could you pause the clock so that I can speak for longer than 10 minutes but still come in under the 10-minute limit?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Well, technically we can.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: No, it turns out we cannot.

However, Mr. Speaker, under this bill, the one-year time limit could be paused at any time. The regulator could stop the clock so that it would not count within the one-year time limit. We could waste seven or eight years and still claim that it all happened under one. Under this bill, the bureaucrats could use three or four different excuses to hit the pause button on the clock, meaning that the famous one-year turnaround time on the decision that the minister advertised to the media is nothing in reality except an illusion.

On top of that, the minister sitting before me could actually add 90-day extensions to the time it takes to get a permit for a project. If that is still not enough for government bureaucrats, they could go to cabinet and get a permanent extension on the consideration of a bill. Who in their right mind, as a company, would put aside billions of dollars for a major project knowing that a Liberal cabinet, which has spent the last decade blocking projects, would have the legal power to delay the approval of or even a decision on a project forever?

Under the current system, the legislative timeline does not start until the proponent has done lengthy mandatory preplanning and consultations. That does not even come into the existing legislative time frames. Under Bill C-39, the proponent would have to gather and produce even more information, all the detailed engineering and scientific data necessary not only for the impact assessment, but also for whatever permitting processes apply to the project. That would all happen before the clock starts running on the one-year limit.

Mr. Speaker, if you would like me to stand up and speak for an hour before the clock starts on my 10-minute speech, I am sure the Liberals would love for that to happen. However, in reality, there is no one-year timeline for a project.

In sum, this is once again all talk and no action. The one-year timeline is smoke and mirrors, another illusion. The reality is that there would still be many years before concept can lead to construction. There is ultimately no limit whatsoever. This bill appears once again to be all talk and no results, headlines without deadlines.

Government Orders

Meanwhile, there are real consequences for the Prime Minister to continue along with the same policies of the Liberal government of the prior decade. Despite him claiming in the House of Commons that affordability is the best it has been in more than a decade, all he proved by saying that is that he is out of touch while Canadians are out of money.

The Prime Minister promised the fastest-growing economy in the G7. It was all talk and no results. Instead, today we got information from the OECD that we will be fourth out of seven, and our economic growth for the present year was downgraded by a quarter, down to a pathetic 0.9%.

Inflation is outgrowing wages, meaning Canadians are getting poorer in real time. Liberals are costing us more. Canadian households are now the most indebted in the G7, as interest rates rise on their mortgages, and rising prices at the grocery store ultimately leave our people behind.

We have a better way, and that is for the government to get out of the way and pass our economic action plan, which would scrap Bill C-69, the antidevelopment law. It would repeal the ban on shipping oil off the west coast of British Columbia. It would eliminate the industrial carbon tax.

● (1605)

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have? It is unlimited. It is kind of like the timing on the Liberal approval for projects: It is unlimited. They can take as much time as they want. We can see why the Emiratis, who wanted to invest \$90 billion in Canadians, came back six months later and said they could not find a project that was approved for them to invest in under the government. The Conservatives have a way to fix that. It is called the “one and done” plan. It is very simple: one project, one approval, one year, and better yet, one page. Members may say that it is impossible, but it has been done.

Under Prime Minister Harper's government, in the 2008-09 world financial crisis, then minister John Baird told his bureaucrats that he wanted to get the application form for a project down to one page. They said they could never do it, that it was impossible. They came back saying that he would be very happy because they got it down to 100 pages. He said that he wanted one page, and he told them to get out of his office. They came back, saying that the minister was going to be thrilled because they got it down to 50 pages, which had never been done. He told them to get out of his office and said that he wanted one page. They came back, saying that the minister was going to be thrilled because they got it down to 10 pages. He told them to get out of his office and said that he wanted one page. Finally they came back and told him it was one page. Then he told them he wanted one approval for each project. They came back and delivered one approval.

Guess what happened. We finished 23,500 projects, from concept to completion, in under two years. Despite grave warnings from the Liberal opposition at the time that this would destroy safety and the environment, the environment commissioner did a full audit of 23,500 projects, and not one came back with a safety or environmental problem, so “one and done” can be done.

What was funny was that the NDP got up and waved around a document saying that the environment commissioner had found a problem with a project that the feds had approved in Kanata, so we looked into it. It turned out that this project had not been part of the “one and done” plan but had taken seven years to approve and had the worst environmental outcome. That proves that all the paper, process and delays have nothing to do with the environment, and everything to do with feeding an insatiable bureaucracy that creates work and money for itself by getting in the way, a bureaucracy that the government has allowed to metastasize over the last decade.

We need a real bill that will truly cap the consideration time for a project at under a year and set a target of six months. A year should be the worst-case scenario. In fact, why not bring all the first ministers and all the mayors into a room to sign a document that we in Canada should be the fastest place on earth to get a building permit? No matter what someone wants to build, it should be faster to build it in Canada than anywhere else on earth.

The Prime Minister could set the example today by granting permits for the 500 projects we have identified that are waiting in the impact assessment office. He could also get rid of the capital gains tax for reinvestments in Canada so we could bring back the trillion dollars of investment the Liberals have driven out of our country. That would be an avalanche of investment that would come pouring back into construction. It would be possibly one of the most patriotic tax cuts ever.

We will look very carefully at this 250-page Liberal bill, but we are not going to believe all the rhetoric, the hype and the talking points, because we have heard it all before. The Liberals have been repeating the same promises since the Prime Minister took office.

● (1610)

[*Translation*]

We are going to study the bill, but we have reservations about the outcome. The Liberals have made similar promises before. So far, they have not gotten rid of Liberal anti-development laws, Liberal anti-development taxes or Liberal anti-development bureaucracy. We want to remove these barriers so that we can build in earnest and make our country affordable, safe and independent here at home.

[English]

We will study the bill, and we will do so based on the criteria of whether it meets our mission of a country that is affordable, safe and independent here at home. Our mission is to save Canadians money, save jobs and put Canada first. We have a real plan to do it.

We ask the government to steal our plan. Perhaps what it should do is just take our plan and amend it over this bill. That way we would actually get some results. At the end of the day, the Prime Minister does not need to do, he needs to stop doing. He needs to stop blocking, stop taxing, stop obstructing and stop signing meaningless MOUs. He needs to get out of the way, get off the backs of our people and let our builders build, our workers work and our investors invest.

We should be the richest, most affordable country on earth. We have been blessed with an abundance that is unmatched in the history of humanity in geography, oceans and resources and, of course, the best people on planet earth. Let us unleash their potential and let us fulfill the promise of this country that anybody who works hard gets a great life, an affordable home, a fridge full of groceries and a bank account that is overflowing at the same time. That is the promise this country made to every single person.

[Translation]

That is our country's promise. That is what we are fighting for.

[English]

That is the fight we are having on behalf of all Canadians, so let us get the job done. There has been enough talk. It is time for some action.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the Leader of the Opposition knows that we have started on five significant major national projects. I know he knows that there are five more in the queue. I know that he knows we have \$500 billion in investment commitments as a result of the Prime Minister's investment summit last week.

That speech was yet another very Justin Trudeau-obsessed piece of rhetorical flourish from the Leader of the Opposition. We have heard a lot of it before. The one thing I did not hear, and I would like the Leader of the Opposition to have the chance to answer this, is whether he actually has comments, criticisms or other observations of the bill.

• (1615)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister missed the speech. Maybe I should give it all over again, but before I do, let me just point out that he says they have “started” on five projects. They have started looking at five projects, not actually building anything, and that is the reality. The Liberals think that if they imagine something, that if they say something or that if the Prime Minister gives a speech or the media gives him gushing praise, it is the equivalent of that thing actually happening, when in fact single moms cannot eat the Prime Minister's speeches if they are low on money for groceries. People cannot pay their rent with the Prime Minister's fake MOUs. They cannot fill their tanks with Liberal rhetoric and promises. We need reality.

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Yes, I do have comments on the bill, and I will repeat them. The bill would actually allow the government to violate its own promised one-year time limitation by delays at the front, delays in the middle and delays at the end. That is just one of the many criticisms that this bill deserves.

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the leader of the official opposition about a very specific aspect of Bill C-39. I am referring to the government's option to approve development projects even before an environmental assessment has been done. What purpose do environmental assessments serve? They serve to ensure that approved projects are good projects and not too environmentally harmful. Environmental assessments are supposed to come first, before the project.

In some cases, Bill C-39 will pre-approve projects that are ready to get started. What happens if the assessment is negative? Proponents will be asked to come tear down any work already done. So much for predictability. In other words, these will be sham assessments, junk assessments.

With that in mind, how can the leader of the official opposition say that this bill does not go far enough?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, even if the bill before us passes, the Liberal government will continue to block and tax the projects Canada needs, with endless delays, excessive red tape and taxes that discourage investment. That is why we are saying that it does not go far enough.

The government needs to get out of the way. That is what it comes down to. This federal government does not build projects. It blocks them. It is investors, businesses and workers who build projects. The problem is that the government is blocking them, and that has to stop. I know it is hard for the Bloc Québécois not to block everything, but we want the government to stop blocking projects in Canada.

[English]

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the leader of the official opposition's speech today. I would like him to comment on the following examples. I have noticed a pattern with the Liberal government and with its predecessor.

In 2023, the Liberals established a national supply chain office, because they were all concerned about supply chains. They created the office, and yet we see food inflation being quite high in Canada. It continues to be a concern, especially in my riding.

We saw, in 2025, in Bill C-5, that they created a Major Projects Office that is supposed to get big projects built.

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As we have seen, and as the member has said, zero projects have been built or have been approved by that office. We now have the Minister of Transport creating a national trade corridor office to do the same thing.

Does he see a pattern and is this bureaucracy actually helping or hurting?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the pattern is that the government confuses the problem with the solution. The problem is the government. It is not the solution. The government inflates food prices with high taxes, inflationary deficits and red tape on farm production. It then says that the solution to that must be even more government spending and bureaucracy, which drive up the cost of food and everything else.

The reason we have high housing costs is that government bureaucracy and taxes drive up housing. The Liberals say that the solution must be even more government programs to fix the problem that they caused. It is like the doctor who administers a poison so that he can administer the antidote and then claim to have saved one's life. Why did he not just do neither in the first place? The patient would be fine without the government doing the damage in the first place.

We have had 11 years of this. People cannot eat, heat or house themselves. Why do we not try something different? Why do we not get the government out of the way and off one's back?

• (1620)

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 is designed to strengthen our economy and to look for ways to build the economy, so that, essentially, it can help everyday Canadians. In my riding of Scarborough—Woburn, I have people coming into my office all the time, talking about the challenges of life. Affordability is a real issue.

I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition why, when he was given the opportunity to support programs like the groceries and essentials benefit, which actually puts food on people's table, the child benefit, dental care, pharmacare and lunch programs for kids, which actually put food in the classroom for kids, when he was given the chance to vote to support everyday Canadians, at every single opportunity, he voted against them.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I think the answer is in the member's question. He says that his constituents are coming into his office to say how much they are struggling with the cost of living. This is after all of these wonderful programs that they have brought in. Maybe he should listen to his constituents, who are telling him that their empty stomachs, empty fridges and empty bank accounts prove that Liberal programs are not working.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, allow me to remind the Conservative leader of a few things that seem to be moving well. The first are the several Conservative members who crossed the floor to the Liberals. That even made it possible to deliver a majority, for the first time in history, after a minority government was elected in Parliament.

The other things that are moving quite well are all the Conservative ideas that are being taken up by the Liberals. It is quite striking. The Conservative Party also promises to build energy, electricity and rail corridors. The Liberal Party is proposing the same thing in Bill C-39.

The Conservatives claim to support Quebec's autonomy. Will they put their foot down and ensure that Quebec's wishes as to whether or not we want this type of project on our territory are respected?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, of course we want corridors for projects, but the Liberals have not created any. They have had 18 months since the passage of Bill C-5, which would have allowed the Prime Minister to set up corridors and provide building permits to build pipelines, power lines and other projects. The Prime Minister did not use those powers to issue a single permit.

The difference between us and the Liberals is that, yes, the Prime Minister repeats our words, but without acting on them. He is all talk and no action.

[English]

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question about, not just how much bureaucracy, but whether it troubles him as it troubles me that the government creates new agencies that are not transparent. Rather than creating Crown corporations or entities within departments, we are looking at special operating agencies, like the Major Projects Office, that are not as accountable as other types of bureaucracy. I wonder if the leader of the official opposition has any comment.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, this is the top-down crony capitalism that the Prime Minister has brought to our economy. It is an economy of carve-outs, bailouts and handouts to special corporate power brokers, and taxes, red tape and inflation for small business. As such, yes, I am very concerned about the idea that politicians will hand-pick winners and losers and that profit will be determined by who has the best lobbyists, not who has the best product; and by who has the most political influence, not the best product for Canadians. We need free market, bottom-up capitalism, not top-down—

• (1625)

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to share my time with my excellent colleague from Joliette—Manawan.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-39, a bill that we feel is a drastic step backwards when it comes to the environment, workers' rights and democracy.

I will set the stage. This bill pre-approves projects by turning the environmental assessment process for pipelines and nuclear power into a mere formality. It weakens workers' rights, limits the right to strike and significantly undermines workers' rights. It gives more power to the executive branch and ministers while diminishing the role of Parliament. It privatizes ports, following the privatization of airports.

In short, this bill has nothing to do with a strong Canada. It is a nearly 250-page omnibus bill designed to weaken democracy. The Liberals are using the tariff crisis as an excuse to quietly pass permanent measures that will cause us to lose ground. In five minutes, the government is eliminating gains for the environment and workers' rights that took years to achieve.

The Bloc Québécois will not accept this backsliding and will stand up for workers' rights and the right of Quebecers to live in a healthy environment. I will talk more specifically about the backsliding when it comes to workers' rights, the environment and democracy.

Let us talk about workers rights. As the Bloc Québécois labour critic, I can confirm that there have been a lot of negative reactions. I will talk about the Canadian Labour Congress' reaction, which was swift.

According to the Canadian Labour Congress, a red line has been crossed when it comes to workers' bargaining rights and right to strike. The consensus among the country's unions is that this is an affront to workers' rights. As the bill currently stands, the balance between the parties and industrial peace will be severely disrupted. The Canadian Labour Congress wants the full repeal of the provisions on the right to strike and the overhaul of section 107.

Minister Hajdu claims that the bill does not weaken the right to strike, but that is not true. The Canadian Labour Congress believes the opposite is true. The provisions on section 107 are the worst attack on bargaining rights and the right to strike. This is one of the most serious, if not unprecedented, attempts in the country's history.

Also according to the Canadian Labour Congress, no compromises are being made, but the government is asking workers to fully submit, which in no way motivates workers to build the country. This bill is very demotivating. Employers have no incentive to negotiate, because all they have to do is allow a labour dispute to escalate and the Canada Industrial Relations Board and, ultimately, the minister will order them back to work. There are no guardrails, despite what the government claims. This gives the minister almost absolute power. No G7 country allows this type of approach in labour law. Just as he did before, the minister will be able to decide when a strike will take place, how long it will last, when it will end and which economic sectors will be able to strike and which ones will not be able to exercise that right.

The Canadian Labour Congress is deeply concerned about the introduction of the concepts of "national interest" and "serious social disruption". The bill does not define them, so current and subsequent ministers will be able to interpret these two concepts as they

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see fit. The Canadian Labour Congress is currently assessing all the legal options. In its view, the section that regulates strikes and the use of section 107 is in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically the freedom of association.

The government wants to impose these new rules as quickly as possible, before the four cases that are currently before various courts across the country can submit their interpretations of section 107.

The Canadian Labour Congress has pointed out that, before governments began misusing section 107, a bill had to be introduced, a debate had to take place and parliamentarians had to vote on legislation aimed at resolving a labour dispute. A right that cannot be exercised is, ultimately, not actually a right at all.

If the bill remains unchanged, it will harm non-unionized workers. Compromises between employers and trade unions establish acceptable norms and standards across many economic sectors. Stifling the trade unions' right to strike is tantamount to stifling negotiated agreements and reasonable compromises. In other words, it is six of one, half a dozen of the other. The only thing that will change is the messenger.

To release the minister from her responsibility, the burden shifts to the Canada Industrial Relations Board, which is not answerable for its decisions to the House of Commons. It also allows the board to impose administrative monetary penalties against good-faith negotiations. Who ends up deciding what constitutes good faith? It also raises questions concerning disputes between Crown corporation employees and the government.

The bill allows for subjectivity by introducing national interest and serious social disruption as criteria for issuing back-to-work orders. The minister and her successors are left to interpret that as they wish and as their tolerance for dissent allows.

● (1630)

The Bloc Québécois remains committed to defending workers' right to organize, to strike and to seek better wages and benefits. As I said earlier, a red line has been crossed, and workers' rights are not negotiable. The provisions relating to section 107 of the Canada Labour Code are a definite step backward for bargaining rights and the right to strike. They are buried in an omnibus bill that, as I said, is nearly 250 pages long. This is one of the most serious attacks on the right to strike.

My time is running out, but there is so much more to say about this bill. I will say a few words about environmental policy rollbacks. I know that many of my colleagues will want to talk about that, including my colleague from Repentigny. I am sure he will have the opportunity to do so. Over the summer, a number of groups shared their concerns about environmental policy rollbacks with me. Members of the Eastern Townships branch of Mothers Step In met with me even before this bill was introduced. Given everything the Liberal government was doing, they were already very worried about the prospect of such rollbacks.

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What we know is that, during public consultations in 2026, citizens expressed legitimate concerns about shortened timelines and fewer opportunities for public participation, as well as the risk of projects being approved without a full understanding of the environmental impacts, which could lead to long-term environmental damage and much higher rehabilitation costs.

In addition, the mandatory fast-tracking of timelines for environmental assessments does not guarantee the quality and scientific integrity of the assessments. Approving projects before assessments are complete contradicts the inherent logic and purpose of environmental assessments. What would happen if a project that has already begun with the government's approval is later found to run afoul of the law and found to carry health and environmental risks that outweigh the project's economic benefits? Well, it is going to be too late. Authorizing work prior to final approval leads to it being seen as a done deal.

In addition, there are provisions that would give the government the power to later change conditions that it originally imposed to approve a project. This means that the government could approve projects under certain environmental conditions and then simply remove those conditions.

I could also talk about the fact that the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada would no longer do impact assessments. That, too, is absurd. Having the Canada Energy Regulator assess pipeline projects could potentially constitute a conflict of interest. Environmental assessments for nuclear projects are to be handed over to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, or CNSC, even though reports from the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development have already pointed out the CNSC's lack of independence from the Department of Natural Resources. This could even weaken the Species at Risk Act.

All of this is gradually eroding our democracy. On top of the democratic erosion and the fact that this bill violates other laws, there is also the issue of commercial zones, which could be an intrusion into Quebec's jurisdictions. The Carney government is ignoring Quebec and the provinces by subjecting transportation companies to yet another new body, the national trade corridors council.

The government therefore introduced Bill C-39, an act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy. The Bloc Québécois read and analyzed the bill. The measures it contains seek to dismantle, weaken or circumvent laws that protect the public, workers and the environment. It seems to favour specific economic interests to the detriment of democratic interests. It is completely ridiculous.

What we also see is that the main goal of the government's Bill C-39 is to make certain laws inoperative, which is another troubling setback for democracy. Who will be responsible for deciding in advance whether these projects are in the national interest? That, too, is a troubling setback. The Bloc Québécois will not endorse such an authoritarian view of public authority. Even in the context of a trade crisis, we cannot agree to such a centralization of power and such a devaluation of the law.

Ministers in the Liberal government have said the following two things when introducing Bill C-39: that Bill C-39 will not weaken environmental requirements and that it will not weaken workers'

rights. Well, both of those statements are false. The Bloc Québécois will prove it. I have purposely left out a number of elements, since we will come back to them later. The proof is in the pudding: All it takes is to read the provisions of Bill C-39. We will vote against Bill C-39, just as we voted against Bill C-5, the Building Canada Act. The trade environment should not be used as an excuse.

● (1635)

Quebeckers can count on the Bloc Québécois not to fuel this narrative of Canadian sovereignty, which is nothing more than a narrative that serves the private interests that the Liberal Prime Minister alone decides to serve.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I would like to remind members that they may not use the name of a member, or even that of the Prime Minister, in the House.

We will now move on to questions and comments. The hon. Minister of Transport has the floor.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it will surprise no one that the Bloc Québécois is opposing something that is meant to build Canada stronger. The Bloc systematically opposes any proposal to build a stronger country. No one will be surprised by this decision by the Bloc Québécois.

My question is on labour relations. The member, who seems to know it all, has certainly read the report of the industrial inquiry commission, which recommended the establishment of a special mediator system.

What does the member think of these findings? How could this cause labour relations in Canada to deteriorate, since she seems to think that will be the case under this bill?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, what I have read about that report, and more notably what we are hearing, is that this bill merely shifts the responsibility and frees the minister from accountability, particularly with regard to government intervention under section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. It ensures that the minister is not held accountable by Parliament.

The members opposite may well laugh, but that is what will happen with this bill. We are placing this responsibility on the shoulders of a board that will not be accountable to us, the MPs. In terms of the rule of law, democracy and workers' rights, this is a serious matter.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I fully agree with my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. She gave an excellent speech. She clearly outlined the democratic setbacks regarding the environment and workers' rights.

What does she now think of this government and the Prime Minister, who, in the past, presented himself as someone concerned about climate issues and the threat of climate change? Why is he moving so far away from those values?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, it is simply because the Prime Minister has decided to continue the process of turning Canada into an oil monarchy that serves the interests of oil and gas companies.

As I said, the lack of transparency and the setbacks that will be introduced by this large—what I call “mammoth”—bill will remove a layer of independence. The government will no longer listen to science and independent people so that it can conduct environmental assessments based on facts and science. Instead, it will ensure that the process serves the interests of oil and gas companies.

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on her excellent speech. I would like to discuss the erosion of workers' rights in this bill.

The government is giving itself powers to end disputes and issue an order. This change merely kicks the problem down the road. It does not make it go away. On top of that, the problems between employers and unions remain unaffected, and this has a snowball effect.

The problem, in my view, is that the Canada Labour Code has not been reviewed in a very long time. This has led to the problems we are seeing. They will not be resolved by passing special legislation, like the provisions in Bill C-39, but rather by amending the Canada Labour Code and, as a first step, introducing anti-scab legislation and prohibiting the use of scabs, as Quebec did roughly 50 years ago. This would help resolve labour disputes. What does my hon. colleague and friend think about that?

• (1640)

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, bills on this subject have been introduced in the past. I previously spoke to a bill about section 107, the issue covered so extensively in Bill C-39. The government could have taken a serious look at this issue, rather than inserting it in an omnibus bill that includes other measures.

Ultimately, the government is hypocritically taking away workers' rights and undermining accountability to Parliament in a backdoor way. It used to be that these issues had to be debated among parliamentarians. The only thing that delegating this to the Canada Industrial Relations Board does is give power to another body and ensure that the minister will no longer be accountable to Parliament on this matter.

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by telling a little story.

Ten years ago, almost to the day, on August 29, 2016, the National Energy Board arrived in Montreal. The board's commissioners were there to hold public hearings on the energy east pipeline project. People in Quebec wanted nothing to do with that pipeline. It would do nothing to improve our energy security. It was just a big oil pipeline going from one side of Quebec to the other. It would cross 800 waterways that provide drinking water to most of

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Quebec's population. Over 130 municipalities, accounting for 70% of Quebec's population, opposed the pipeline.

I have to say that the proponent, TransCanada Pipeline, did nothing to help its cause. It was full of contempt and kept telling anyone who would listen that Quebec had no say in the matter, that it did not recognize the authority of the Quebec government and that Ottawa, and Ottawa alone, would decide.

It was against this tense backdrop that the commissioners of the National Energy Board left Calgary and went to Montreal to listen to the little people. Things got off to a bad start. Half of the commissioners did not speak a word of French, and things only got worse from there. The public realized that the consultations were a sham, that most of the commissioners were from the oil industry and that the board was basically an extension of the American oil companies. Needless to say, tempers flared, and the whole thing almost turned into a riot.

It reminds me of the Félix Leclerc song *L'alouette en colère*, in which he talks about how he became a separatist because of Canada's contempt. He sings about how “the big neighbour from across the street came over” and how this stranger's rude behaviour filled him with rage. That sums up what happened at the government's sham consultations. In the end, the commissioners shut down the hearings. The energy east pipeline was scrapped, the commissioners got on a plane back to Calgary, and we never saw them again.

Ottawa realized that stacking the deck in the oil companies' favour only stoked more opposition. The National Energy Board was too toxic, so it was rebranded as the Canada Energy Regulator, which sounded better. Most importantly, its mandate was confined to energy-related matters. Public consultations and impact assessments would no longer be conducted by former oil company lobbyists. Now, they would be done by neutral, objective, serious-minded people, scientists working together at an impact assessment agency. That was a big step forward. Thanks to Quebeckers, Canada was making progress. That is what the government wants to destroy with the stroke of a pen.

Bill C-39 is even worse than the process that angered Quebeckers 10 years ago. This bill rolls out the red carpet for American oil companies, as if the way to resist Donald Trump is to copy him. Forget about impact assessments; the Canada Energy Regulator will be in charge of reviewing projects.

What is the Canada Energy Regulator? Simple: It is oil companies. There is no making this stuff up. There are seven commissioners. The lead commissioner is the former senior legal counsel for TransCanada Energy, formerly known as TransCanada Pipeline, which changed its name after the energy east fiasco. The deputy lead commissioner is a former executive of Royal Dutch Shell. Another commissioner served as legal counsel for the Pembina Pipeline Corporation and Shell Canada Limited. Another one is from Imperial Oil and Canadian Oil Sands Limited. Yet another is from Cenovus Energy, the oil sands company. That is the Canada Energy Regulator in a nutshell. Bill C-39 sidelines scientists and replaces them with oil company lawyers. It basically hands the fox the keys to the henhouse.

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In the energy east saga, Quebecers helped Canada move forward. Today, Canada is setting Quebec back. We will remember that. Even if the structure of the energy regulator could be completely changed, even if oil lobbyists could be removed and replaced by genuinely neutral individuals, that would not do much. The regulator could ask that the pipeline be painted green, but that would be the extent of its authority. Regardless of what the regulator says, the projects will already have been approved. The regulator will not be able to say that the projects are bad, and if it did, it would not change anything. The projects are all pre-approved. The entire process is tainted. In fact, the process does not even really exist anymore. Now projects will be approved at the Prime Minister's whim. The emperor's word is final.

I do not know of any government that has rolled back environmental protections so much, except Donald Trump, perhaps, and we are told that he is a fool. Stephen Harper would not have dared gut environmental protections so brutally. He would not have dared tell the public that he did not want to hear their opinions because he had decided everything on his own. He knew that would not go down well.

• (1645)

Why is the government so distrustful of the public that it does not want to hear from them? Apparently, it has to act this way because Donald Trump is a fool. Go figure.

As children, we were told to go inside or the bogeyman would get us. It was a trick to keep us quiet. Today, the bogeyman wears orange makeup and has yellow hair, but it is the same thing. We are being told, "Hide and stay quiet or the bogeyman will get you". By fearmongering about Donald Trump, the government is trying to make us accept things that we would never put up with otherwise. Donald Trump will not be around forever. Two months from now, he should already have less power. Two years from now, he will be gone. However, the setbacks and damage from Bill C-39 will remain. The Liberal members who are bragging here today will likely have a hard time hiding their shame in two years.

Democratic processes are not the only thing that Bill C-39 throws out the window. It does not just sacrifice the fight against climate change in a complete betrayal of our children and grandchildren. It also attacks workers' rights.

In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that the right to strike is a fundamental right protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that there must be a very good reason for infringing on a protected right. Protecting the life, health or safety of the public is a good reason. However, protecting the interests of large companies is not. That is essentially what the Supreme Court wrote in its ruling in the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour case. As a result, it is possible that this part of Bill C-39 may be unconstitutional. I cannot wait to hear the Liberals extol the virtues of using the notwithstanding clause to defend Bill C-39. It will be quite the sight, watching them twist themselves into knots.

The Canada Labour Code is outdated. It allows for the use of replacement workers, a practice that has been abolished in Quebec for almost 50 years. That is why disputes at the federal level drag on. When that happens, the government ends the strike through special legislation or stops negotiations and imposes working condi-

tions by invoking section 107 of the federal labour code, which amounts to the same thing, but without the democratic debate.

We need to be aware of what this means. Since the negotiations never reach a conclusion, the disagreements are never resolved. They are swept under the rug, but the thorny issues remain. Invariably, they resurface as even bigger problems in the next round of bargaining, and the cycle begins all over again. The dispute becomes harder to resolve and eventually drags on indefinitely. The government ends the strike. The issues are put off until later, but nothing is ever actually resolved.

Bill C-39 makes the situation even worse. It will make it easier to end strikes. It will ensure that disputes and disagreements are never resolved. It will only postpone them until later, when they will be even bigger. It will undermine bargaining and the work environment, because employers will know full well that it is better for them if things come to a standstill. Thanks to the bill, they will know in advance that the government will be there, ready to end the strike and impose working conditions that benefit employers, of course.

What is great about democratic societies is that they allow for peaceful resolution of disagreements. That is what makes life in a democratic society better and easier. There are built-in conflict resolution mechanisms, places where people can go to and be heard, knowing that their voices count. Parties can negotiate in good faith in an environment where everyone's rights are respected.

However, when consultations take place after the decision has been made, when an emperor's decree replaces social licence, when the interests of the powerful replace scientific facts and serious analyses, and when negotiations are rigged in favour of companies, the social contract starts to fall apart. When the only choice for people to be heard is to take to the streets, social peace is in jeopardy.

Bill C-39 is a downward spiral and a democratic, environmental and social step backward. When the social contract starts to get ripped apart, who knows where we can end up. Gilles Vigneault put it best when he had his character Ti-Cul Lachance say these words to a corrupt politician:

That's a lot of hot air you've been sowing
But it seems like you're oblivious
To the great whirlwind you'll end up reaping

We in the Bloc Québécois are not oblivious and we will firmly oppose Bill C-39.

• (1650)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment this evening are as follows: the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Health; the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock, International Trade; the hon. member for Calgary Centre, Finance.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just over a year ago, Canadians elected a new Prime Minister, along with 70 new members of Parliament. Throughout that campaign and all the way to today, we have seen a Prime Minister and a government that have been focused on building a stronger and healthier Canadian economy, an economy that works for all Canadians.

That is one of the reasons we witnessed the largest summit of investors ever commit around \$500 billion. That is half a trillion dollars. That is a historic amount of investment coming to Canada because of the Prime Minister and the agenda of the government to support and build a stronger, healthier Canadian economy. This legislation is to help—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I have to give the member some time to respond.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Joliette—Manawan.

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague the following question. What is the environment worth to his government?

The impact assessments that used to be carried out by scientists are being taken away and handed over to the Canada Energy Regulator, which is an oil lobby. It will have the power to approve everything, and even if it does not approve a project, projects are authorized before they have even been assessed. That is why I want to know what the environment is worth to this government.

What are workers' rights worth when the rules can be changed to make it easier to pass special legislation ending labour disputes and the right to use scabs stays intact? What are workers' rights worth? What is this government's goal? Is it to serve large foreign interests or to defend the public's interests?

The public cares about the environment and workers' rights. That is precisely what Bill C-39 is trampling on, and it is unacceptable.

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my esteemed colleague from Joliette a question about what he just said.

He said that the government has gutted environmental regulations. I would like him to tell us where it says that. All we have asked our public servants to do is to act more quickly to provide a faster response. We are not cutting corners; we are continuing to do the assessments.

Can my colleague tell us where in the text of the bill it says that we are gutting environmental protection regulations?

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, first of all, that already happened with Bill C-5. As soon as a project is designated as being in the national interest, a whole host of environmental protection laws no longer apply.

In this case, rather than maintain the consultation process involving scientists, a gain achieved under the Liberals in 2015—I do not know where the hon. member was at the time—the government is now proposing to have the Canada Energy Regulator take care of

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that process. A quick look at the list of commissioners shows that they are all oil industry lobbyists. Even if the regulator were to oppose a project, it would be pre-approved anyway, so the regulator would no longer have any power.

That is what the government is doing. It is trampling on the environment and workers' rights. I could take a highlighter to the 250 pages of the bill and show him every place where this bill clearly undermines workers' rights and the environment for the benefit of big international investors. Is that what standing up for the public means to this government? Does it mean favouring big international investors?

I think the government should have tried to strike a balance.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that we are witnessing an ecological betrayal. We know that the Prime Minister is not just anyone. He worked at Brookfield. Most importantly, he is the United Nation's former special envoy on climate. However, he is the one buying a second pipeline with public funds and disregarding all of Canada's environmental laws for the sake of projects that are in the so-called national interest. If that is not a betrayal, my colleagues will have to let me know the strongest word there is to judge, observe and analyze that situation.

I would like my colleague from Joliette to explain his point of view. Is the government turning the environment into a pipe dream by trying to take advantage of the tariff crisis to push things that could never have been done before?

• (1655)

Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, a Conservative government would never have gotten away with backtracking so much on the environment. There would have been an outcry from across society. Now people are afraid of our American neighbours, with good reason, so they are giving this Prime Minister carte blanche. For all his green promises, never has the environment suffered so many setbacks as it has under the current Prime Minister, including with Bill C-39. It is unprecedented.

As the Bloc Québécois leader said, it takes decades to put measures in place to protect the environment and only five minutes to tear them down. That is what this government is doing.

[English]

Braeden Caley (North Vancouver—Capilano, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Beauport—Limoilou.

I rise to give my first speech in the House with gratitude to the people of North Vancouver—Capilano and a profound sense of responsibility. This seat belongs to them, and I will hold it in trust and work every day to further earn the confidence that they have placed in me.

I thank my predecessor, Jonathan Wilkinson, for his service to our community and continued service to our country; the Prime Minister; and so many friends and neighbours for their confidence throughout such an important campaign.

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With the highest voter turnout in a British Columbia federal by-election in nearly half a century, I am grateful to everyone who cast a ballot, whatever their choice, for their faith and their involvement in our democracy at this important moment for our country. From Loutet Park to Ambleside, through thousands of conversations, we heard what our community expects, which is for everyday costs to be brought down, homes people can afford to be built faster, transportation that keeps pace with the growing north shore, action on climate change and protection of nature.

Above all, I heard determination about Canada being able to choose its own strong future. That is why I rise today in support of Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. For the people I represent, a stronger, more independent Canadian economy is a practical necessity. It means a job that can withstand a tariff, a business that can reach another market and a community whose future cannot and will not be decided elsewhere. The Prime Minister has clearly set out our task, and it has always been our new government's plan A to build our strength at home and broaden our partnerships abroad.

At last week's Canada investment summit, he made the case for turning Canada's advantages into investment and investment into lasting prosperity for all. Our responsibility in the House is to make that prosperity real in people's lives. In an uncertain world, we have argued that Canada can offer something increasingly valuable, which is trust, the confidence that a commitment will be honoured, that an investment can really become a project and that a trading partner will deliver. We have to earn that confidence in what we do next, and we will with this bill.

On the north shore, we can also see what that means from the waterfront. Neptune Terminals beside Low Level Road is the world's largest potash terminal. It connects workers and communities in Saskatchewan with customers in China, Brazil and beyond. Cargill, Richardson and G3 connect prairie grain growers with markets all around the world. Lynnterm moves forest products that sustain livelihoods all across British Columbia.

Our community moves what the world needs. Every railcar and every ship carries more than cargo. It carries the work of Canadians, the incomes of families all across the country and the promise of another order from another market far or near. A ship built at Seaspan on the north shore means skilled, high-paying work; an apprenticeship for someone's kid; and Canadian capability that we can depend on to secure our sovereignty on all of our shores, not just the north shore.

Our home is where national ambition meets a working waterfront and a gateway to a world that wants more Canada, but the opportunity before us will not realize itself, as we know. New projects need reliable routes to market. Businesses need confidence that decisions will come reliably. Workers need to know that the gains from growth will reach them directly. Bill C-39 would help connect these pieces, designating national trade corridors, enabling a national trade corridors council, modernizing port governance and laying the groundwork for updated transportation security clearances. The purpose is straightforward. It is to get Canadian goods to customers with more certainty, attract investment and give Canadian businesses more choices about where they sell and can sell. More routes to market mean more room for Canada to make our own decisions.

However, that requires government itself to work better, too. A project should not stall because one department is waiting on another or because the same information has to be submitted again and again. Building on last year's Building Canada Act, these reforms would better coordinate federal reviews and permitting, with a one-year decision timeline in place once the required information and studies are submitted. Rigorous scrutiny and timely decisions must go together. Canadians deserve both, and people across the north shore have long demanded both.

Provinces are also working to accelerate infrastructure and energy development. In British Columbia, that effort includes reforms to infrastructure approvals and renewable energy permitting. Federal and provincial governments also have different responsibilities, and the people depending on us need those responsibilities to add up to results. That is what a whole-of-government approach should and can mean: a system that works together so Canadians can get to work.

How we build matters as much as what we build, as the Prime Minister often says. My mother taught school for decades, like my grandmother before her. My father was a bus driver and fuelled aircraft at Vancouver International Airport. In my family, like so many represented in the House, service meant doing a day's work with determination, taking responsibility and being there when people needed us. Those lessons belong in this House, too.

● (1700)

So, too, does the understanding that a paycheque supports a household and that strong unions and collective bargaining help people build and secure lives they can count on. That is why this bill's labour measures matter as well. Earlier engagement and stronger mediation can help unions and employers reach lasting agreements at the bargaining table.

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Following significant consultations, the bill also proposes key important guardrails on certain interventions under section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, alongside public reporting by special mediators. These measures will and always must support genuine collective bargaining and respect Canadians' right to strike. We must always build in solidarity with Canadian workers, whose skill and effort make the kind of transformation that we are talking about possible, and we always will. Success must mean more apprentices learning a trade, more families with a secure income and more young Canadians able to see a place for themselves in the stronger economy that we are building together.

We must also build in partnership with indigenous people, including the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations on the north shore, which will also be leading builders of our shared future. Their leadership and ambition are also helping shape so much of what our region and indeed our country can become. I have heard directly about how difficult overlapping federal processes can be to navigate for them and others. Better coordination needs to mean that meaningful participation is easier and that the Crown's obligations are upheld. Alongside this legislation, a Crown consultation hub within the Impact Assessment Agency would help coordinate federal consultation, working toward one comprehensive process per project, per indigenous community.

Partnership must begin early and carry through to the opportunities and prosperity that a project creates. For a community framed by mountains, forests and ocean, protecting nature is also inseparable from building our future. Following a lot of the consultation we saw this summer, the government dropped one earlier discussion point to allow exemptions from the species at risk jeopardy test, and I would say that is a very welcome response to the considerations Canadians raised. Building faster must go hand in hand with protecting the natural world that we live in, thrive off of and pass on. Listening well is part of governing, and I really applaud the ministers' leadership in that regard and the depth of the consultation that the ministers undertook.

Canada's advantages are extraordinary, but future generations will inherit the country we build with those advantages, not simply a list of the advantages we once had. They deserve a country that can make things, move them and sell them to the world, a country where the people who make our communities work can afford to live in them, a country that protects its lands and waters, honours its commitments and gives its people the confidence to plan a future across the country. That is the purpose of the work before us. It is why I support this bill.

I will say to the people of North Vancouver—Capilano that I will bring their ambitions into the House and carry the responsibility of the House back into our community too. Canada's future will be built in places like ours by people like those who sent us here. In this House, let us be worthy of their work and get on with ours. Let us build Canada strong.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Conservative members from British Columbia, I would like to congratulate the member for North Vancouver—Capilano on his victory and welcome him to this chamber. I remember that when I came to Ottawa, my predecessor was also a minister. I know how difficult it is when people say that we have

big shoes to fill. I took it as a challenge. I hope the member does too.

In the member's speech, he talked about a lot. I would like to hear how his election was, what he heard on the streets of his riding and what his priorities as a member of Parliament in this parliamentary session are.

● (1705)

Braeden Caley: Mr. Speaker, genuinely, I thank the hon. member across the way. It is an important opportunity to speak about a lot of what we heard in the community, over the past two months especially.

It was and is a fascinating time, with so much vulnerability in all the communities we come from given exposure to the trade war, but it is also a time to reflect on a lot of the upside. I found at every door a lot of hope for that too. There was hope in buying more Canadian, investing in more of our own community capacities to build big again, and thinking big again about how our country can build more independence into so many facets of our economy. There was a lot of hope and optimism about that, even for a place with such incredible exposure to the rest of the world's economy, and we are going to carry those priorities into this House.

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lestiguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by welcoming our new colleague on behalf of the Bloc Québécois. I would like to congratulate him on his election, and I hope that we will have fruitful debates in pursuit of the common good.

My colleague talked about development, but he also talked about environmental protection. If a project is approved before an environmental assessment has been done, and if the project is already under way, what value can that environmental assessment possibly have when it is carried out?

How can anyone seriously believe the environment will be protected if the assessment does not happen until the project is already under way?

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Braeden Caley: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's important question. I know that exactly that kind of consideration was a key theme of the consultations that have taken place over previous months. It is one that is important to me as well in ensuring that those assessments are rigorous from the beginning, that they are built in from the beginning and that they are serious at every stage. The bill would do that by ensuring that rigour is not conflated alone with the time that such a process takes, and that this rigour could be brought into the timelines that allow us to build faster while still building sustainably. That is what I believe the bill would do, and that is why I am very proud to support it.

Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from North Vancouver—Capilano, along the same sort of lines as my colleague across the way. I know that he was knocking on doors for almost a month recently, and it has been a great success for him. I also want to ask him about how this bill specifically would answer or quell any concerns that he heard when knocking on the doors of the great people of North Vancouver—Capilano.

Braeden Caley: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's excellent question.

The bill would allow us to build faster in Canada once again, to build big once again, to orient our economy in the way that we need to, to reach new markets and to diversify our market partners around the world much more quickly than we otherwise might have, having this conversation years ago. That is exactly what people at their doors were expecting across North Vancouver—Capilano this summer in a very important campaign.

Urgency is what is expected, as is the ability to do that in solidarity with Canadian workers and in a way that is sustainable for our nature. These are key facets of every community across the north shore, and really of every community across B.C. and of so many communities across the country. The bill would ensure that we can meet those balances properly and quickly.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I also welcome the member for North Vancouver—Capilano to the House. I suppose I could also welcome him to North Vancouver. I also was up and down the hills of North Vancouver quite a lot through the by-election, and I may have heard different things from the voters there. I do want to help the hon. member.

This question was asked to my friend the member for Joliette—Manawan by the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer: Where in the bill do we find retrenchments and abandonment of endangered species? It is riddled throughout the bill. It is changes in the Canadian Navigable Waters Act, it is changes in the Fisheries Act and it is changes in the Species at Risk Act all around the idea that before conditions can be set, they would have to be examined for their practical feasibility and economic impact. This bill is nothing but a disgraceful abandonment of environmental regulation across Canada and decades of work.

Since the hon. member references the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, how can he ignore, and does he ignore, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation

court case against the dredging of Burrard Inlet, which would destroy habitat that the federal government committed to protect?

• (1710)

Braeden Caley: Mr. Speaker, the centrality of first nations partnership and building has been a key commitment of the government and is a key commitment of the Prime Minister and all of the cabinet team. The bill would really honour that commitment in several important ways, and it is a commitment that as a member of Parliament and working with the bill that we will hopefully pass, I would certainly want to uphold in every way we can as one team of Parliament.

This is a fundamental set of partnerships across the north shore, two nations in the Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish, that have thoughtfully and ambitiously prepared visions about how we build our economy together. It builds the country stronger when they do, and I am grateful for that chance at partnership.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the parliamentary session begins, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and all my colleagues well, along with the many parliamentary employees who make our work here in the House possible, day in and day out. I am very pleased to see everyone again after a great summer in my riding of Beauport—Limoilou.

Over the past few months, I have met with over 50 organizations and businesses in my riding and participated in various activities and festivities in my community. Before I speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, I want to take a moment to tell you about an experience I had this summer in my riding. It shines a light on the importance of our work as MPs, whether here, in Ottawa, or through programs that directly affect our communities, like the Canada summer jobs program.

I met with more than 30 organizations this summer that participate in this program. I can guarantee one thing: The program is making a real difference on the ground. People from one of the organizations I visited told me that they had been asking for two student job positions for a number of years but, unfortunately, they always received only one. This year, we made sure that they got two. I would like to repeat what the people at this organization told me. They told me that the second position would let them give their volunteers some time off—

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand that my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou has some good stories to share about his summer, but that is not the subject of the bill we are currently discussing. I would like you to call him to order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I thank the hon. member for his comment. Members have some leeway in their speeches, but I am certain that the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou will get to the bill before us.

The hon. member may continue his speech.

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, my story is almost finished. My colleague will be able to put it to good use and I will get back to Bill C-39 very soon.

What the people at that organization told me is worth remembering. The second student job position really helped get volunteers some time off, time for their first-ever vacation. Let that sink in for a second. Having one extra person made it possible for volunteers to take some vacation time. What we do here has a real impact in our communities. I wanted to highlight that at the start of my speech today.

Now, I would like to get back to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, under discussion today. I want to begin by referring to a book published in 2025, which I am sure will call to mind Bill C-39 for my colleagues. In the book *Abundance*, by Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson, one of the questions the authors ask is why a country as rich and technologically advanced as our southern neighbour currently struggles to build enough housing, infrastructure, energy and other essential goods. To some degree, I think we all see some similarity to the challenges facing Canada today.

The authors argue that part of the problem is the rules, procedures and institutions that, over time, have made delivering major projects much slower and much more difficult. They therefore advocate for placing greater emphasis on our ability to produce, build and deliver. In short, this means shifting from a policy focused primarily on distributing resources to one that also seeks to increase supply, ramp up our production capacity and boost our ability to build.

At this point, I think it is fair to draw a parallel between that analysis and what we are proposing in Bill C-39 to build Canada strong. I am sure all of my colleagues have heard the old saying about doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. We need to do things differently. We need to think differently. Anyone who believes we can keep doing exactly the same things and suddenly achieve different results is sticking their head in the sand. That is choosing inaction. That is choosing the status quo, and the status quo is a choice. Changing nothing is a choice. Leaving things the way they are is a choice.

We must move away from this mindset and regain our ability to build. We are capable of building more, with greater ambition, and more quickly. Let us take an example from our history: the St. Lawrence Seaway. Major construction work began in 1954, and the Seaway was officially opened to navigation in 1959. It took five years to build the Montreal-Lake Ontario section, which spans approximately 300 kilometres of waterways. It was not just a matter of digging a canal. It required building locks, constructing canals, erecting dams, carrying out major dredging work, modifying bridges and relocating infrastructure.

Continuing westward, Montreal is about 600 kilometres from Lake Erie by waterway via Lake Ontario and the Welland Canal. The entire waterway network connecting the St. Lawrence to the heart of the Great Lakes stretches over 2,000 kilometres. Just think about that for a moment. In the 1950s, in just a few years, we were able to carry out one of the greatest infrastructure projects of our time, and we did a significant portion of the work right here at

home in Canada. We built, we thought big, and we transformed our economy.

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The question we need to ask ourselves today is simple. Can we still build with that same ambition? I believe that Bill C-39 invites us to reflect on this question and, above all, to regain the ability to complete major projects for future generations of Canadians.

What does that mean in concrete terms? First, it means making our approval processes for major projects more predictable.

● (1715)

These days, when a business, community or proponent wants to build a major project, they often have to navigate multiple processes and steps that might overlap and make the work more complex. It can take longer to get results. Bill C-39 proposes to better coordinate these processes so that decisions on projects requiring a federal permit can be made within one year. Let me be clear. We do not have to choose between upholding Canada's strong environmental protections and streamlining the project review process. We can and must do both. We can be ambitious and rigorous at the same time.

I cannot help but immediately think of my region, the Quebec City region, and specifically the Port of Québec, which plays an important role in our regional economy and our trade with the rest of the world. Bill C-39 proposes to modernize the governance of Canadian ports, reduce certain administrative burdens and facilitate the digitization of trade. The bill also designates strategic trade corridors and establishes a transportation project office to better coordinate federal permits and advance priority projects.

A product manufactured in Quebec does not only create value when it leaves the factory. It must then be efficiently transported to a port, a railway or the border and on to new markets. An efficient supply chain is essential to enabling our businesses to grow and innovate. At a time when Canada is looking to diversify its trade and reduce its dependence on certain markets, this capability becomes even more important. We have signed 20 trade agreements over the past year. We must now honour our commitments.

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This is what building Canada strong means in practical terms. It means enabling a business to carry out a project. It means enabling a port to operate more efficiently. It means enabling our products to reach new markets. It means providing future generations with the infrastructure, jobs and opportunities they will need. Canada has the resources, the talent, the workers, the businesses and the communities capable of achieving great things. Our challenge is not knowing whether we have the capacity to build. Our challenge is equipping ourselves with the means to do just that, the means to realize our ambitions.

We need to simplify where we can simplify, coordinate where we can coordinate better, protect what we need to protect. Above all, we need to rediscover our collective ability to build Canada strong.

• (1720)

Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for his excellent speech. He is obviously very proud of his beautiful region of Quebec City. In August, the government awarded a contract worth over \$11 billion to the Davie shipyard to build six new icebreakers.

I would like my colleague to tell us how such a contract, which is good for our workers and our suppliers, fits into Bill C-39.

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. We were fortunate to be able to make that extraordinary announcement this summer after years and years of working with Davie, a real gem in our community. I worked in the Quebec City area as the president of the chamber of commerce. The Davie shipyard is located on the other side of the river, in Lévis. Most of its suppliers are from the Quebec City area. The rest of them are from the surrounding areas. I reviewed the list of all of the suppliers and they are from all over Quebec.

An announcement like this has a direct impact on a community like Lévis. We are talking about 5,000 workers, 5,000 good jobs. That gives those families predictability because these are long-term contracts. It provides predictability for Davie over the very long term. It will enable business owners to invest in their companies to supply Davie. This is the kind of thing that the government wants to do and that people need.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned the administrative burden.

[English]

Under Bill C-39, proponents would be allowed to do preliminary, early site work, but only if the minister deemed it in the public interest. Why is the government creating such subjective ministerial discretion instead of just simple, clear, predictable rules? Why add to the red tape?

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I talked about something very important in my speech: the status quo. I have talked about it throughout my career, and I will keep talking about it. People often keep doing the same things while hoping to achieve different results.

We introduced a bill. We want to do things differently. We want to speed up projects and provide predictability for investors. Doing

things faster does not mean being less rigorous. We must always be rigorous. We can walk and chew gum at the same time, as they say. That is what the government is going to do. This will provide predictability for businesses and contractors, who will be able to pursue projects. The process used to take up to eight years, which is way too long, but it will go much faster now.

We are doing the right thing. We are taking action, and that is what Canadians want.

[English]

Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, the member across the way says that he repeats things over and over about the administrative burden. He did not answer the question before about ministerial discretion and what the public interest is. Maybe he will answer this instead. Part one adds regions of national interest and more administrative layers. Why does every Liberal solution involve expanding Ottawa's bureaucracy rather than getting out of the way? Why more bureaucracy? Why more discretion? Why more rules? I thought the member said he was against red tape.

• (1725)

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie: Madam Speaker, taking a closer look at the bill, clearly the goal is to fast-track projects. My colleague talked about bureaucracy. What we want is to make it easier to get projects done. We want to make everything more predictable over time. We want to speed things up. That is exactly what Canadians are asking us to do.

We have signed more than 20 trade agreements. Now we need to allow businesses to export their products. A delay of six or eight years is far too long. What we are saying now is that we will do this in less than a year, which will help accelerate projects. We are thinking about supply chains. I mentioned the Port of Québec earlier. Officials there want to invest, and we are giving them a chance to do so. We are providing predictability for investors.

[English]

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a great honour to rise in this place on behalf of the great people of Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna. It is my honour.

I would also like to take a brief moment to welcome our newest members in this place. I am certain I am not alone when I say that a member's first time sitting in the chamber is one they will never forget. Mind you, things work a bit differently these days from when I first came as a new member of Parliament. Much like our new members of Parliament, I too first joined this place as a rookie MP on the government side of the House with a majority, only in those days, if a majority government introduced an omnibus bill the same way the Liberal government has with Bill C-39, the crowds went wild, and I do not mean in a happy way either.

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Whether “anti-democratic”, “dictator” or “bully”, the accusations and media headlines were rampant. Heck, omnibus bills were considered so bad that in one election, the Liberals even promised that, if elected, they would never, ever use them, and yet here we are. To be fair, I always looked at omnibus bills a little differently. I went on the record at the time to suggest that when facing challenging times, it is better to be accused of trying to do too much instead of too little, and indeed, this bill proposes to do some interesting, but also some very different, things.

Many have suggested the bill could have and should have been split up. We are still early in this debate, and I am sure that topic will be coming up. The Liberals will argue, and I quote them on this, “Canada’s new government has a mandate to build big, build bold, and build now.” Wait a moment. I got it wrong. That is what the Liberals said about the last mega bill that would build Canada strong. Members might remember it as Bill C-5.

For Bill C-39, the Liberals’ new talking point is, “This legislation will give our country the tools we need to build more, better and more efficiently.” Members will, please, forgive me for getting those two quotes just a little mixed up. They sound so similar that it is easy to understand how the Liberals even get mixed up. Now, I credit the PMO’s communication shop for creatively saying basically the same thing over and over again, only slightly differently so that, hopefully, people focus more on the words and less on the results.

Of course, as an opposition member of Parliament, I would be remiss if I did not point out that over this past year, not a single shovel went into the ground for a brand new project that did not exist more than a year ago. There were literally no new projects. It has gotten so desperate that Liberals now try to claim pre-existing projects as proof of progress. “Building at speeds not seen in a generation” was the promise, but in reality, it is about talking about building at speeds not seen in generations, but the actual building part, not so much, and the building part, let us all agree, is really the most important part.

Here we are today, once again, with a new bill that would “give our country the tools we need to build more, better and more efficiently.” Apparently, the reason nothing has been done over the past year is that we lacked the tools we need. This is the country that built the Canadian Pacific Railway, the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Trans-Canada Highway and so much more. It is amazing how over the past 159 years, we have built the greatest country on earth, with all kinds of amazing achievements, but suddenly we no longer have the tools we need to build any more. This begs the question, what happened to the tools? Well, in 2015, the Liberals happened.

It is interesting that there is a segment in the background for Bill C-39 that reads:

the [Canadian Energy Regulator] will conduct the assessment under the Canada Energy Regulator Act, rather than through an integrated review panel with the Impact Assessment Agency. Since the introduction of the integrated review panel process in 2019, no project has met the threshold to be assessed by a panel.

Let me just read that last part one more time: “Since the introduction of the integrated review panel process in 2019, no project has met the threshold to be assessed by a panel.”

• (1730)

I hope everyone here heard that. Let us go over that again. Since the Liberals brought in the Impact Assessment Agency review process in 2019, “no project has met the threshold to be assessed by a panel.” How many projects? None, zero, zip, nada.

That is an incredible feat when we think about it. It has been seven long years and not a single project has ever met the threshold imposed by the Liberals. Here is the best part: along come the Liberals proposing to remove the very same red tape they themselves created. Think of all the lost opportunities over those seven years. It was so damaging.

I know that on the government side, there is a particular minister fond of saying, “We will take no lessons from the Conservatives”, unless, of course, it is axing the carbon tax, repealing the electric vehicle sales mandate, rolling back the planned capital gains tax increases or temporarily removing part of the federal fuel excise tax. These are all things that Conservatives called for.

[Translation]

However, let us be fair. We did not ask for some of the changes to the Canada Labour Code that are proposed in this bill. In fact, we are having a hard time even understanding where the Liberals came up with some of these proposals.

They said they spent the summer consulting different groups, but which groups and where? It all seems a bit suspicious to us. We all know that the bill also includes a new power that would allow the Minister of Labour to intervene to end a work stoppage, but only if the work stoppage is deemed to be contrary to the national interest.

That is where this bill becomes extremely concerning for Canadians. The modern Liberal government has gotten into a very bad habit of doing things that serve the interests of Liberal Party friends and insiders, rather than the interests of Canadians. If my colleagues doubt that, I will give them an example.

[English]

Not so many years ago, the Liberals gave the green light to and approved the Rogers takeover of Shaw. Critics warned the Liberals not to do that and warned what would happen if they did, but the Liberals of course know better. The Liberals promised that more jobs would be created and that rates would go down, and just in case there was any doubt about this, the minister promised that he would watch Rogers like a hawk after the takeover. What happened? Let us go through it.

Government Orders

Shaw was popular in my riding. Citizens started bringing in their new Rogers bills with rate increases. Even though they had contracts with Shaw, those contracts were raised by Rogers because the fine print allowed Rogers to charge more for the old Shaw equipment they had been renting. This happened to seniors and single mothers. As for the jobs that were promised by the minister, there is a new Rogers call centre in Morocco, and I am certain that the good people of Morocco probably appreciate those jobs.

This was a complete and total massive failure by the Liberals that benefited their friends on Bay Street and sold out Canadians on main street, like my constituents, and across the whole spectrum. As for the minister who promised to watch this deal like a hawk, he will say he does not take any lessons from Conservatives, or, it would appear, from anyone else for that matter, because there were lots of people who warned him.

● (1735)

Getting back to the bill we have at hand, it is easy to understand why many Canadians are a tad uneasy when the Liberals say that a Liberal minister gets to decide what is and what is not in the Canadian interest. People who have those concerns, of course, are even more skeptical because the Liberals packaged all of those changes up in a nice omnibus bill. I mention this last point for the benefit of the new Liberal members of Parliament who may be unaware of some of the greatest hits from previous Liberal governments that were authored by members of the current Liberal government.

Before I close, I also have to reference that this bill also proposes some changes from an environmental perspective. One of those changes is a timeline to complete certain reviews in one year. At the same time, the Liberals are also promising indigenous communities and environmental groups that everything is going to work out like it previously did, and telling them to relax and not worry. Believe it or not, when you propose to do things differently but promise that nothing will change, that causes people to worry, and even more so when it is buried in an omnibus bill, where some people think the Liberals intentionally did this shocker to avoid proper scrutiny.

[Translation]

Now, let us keep in mind that I am simply passing on concerns.

[English]

Madam Speaker, excuse me. I would like to take a moment to catch my breath.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member can take a little break.

The hon. member may continue if he is ready.

[Translation]

Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, bear in mind that I am merely passing on concerns that others have expressed to me, because, at the end of the day, choosing to introduce an omnibus bill is a choice, and that choice has consequences.

We must not forget that there is a reason why a previous Liberal government promised never to resort to omnibus bills. Of course, that promise was sincere, was it not?

Surely the Liberals would never make a promise they had no intention of keeping just to get elected, would they? Did they say they were going to spend less? I am getting off topic.

[English]

For a recap of where we are today, I feel it is a bit like a sci-fi franchise movie. In episode one, the government needed a big bill to make Canada strong, which is Bill C-5. About a year later, when everything promised in year one did not happen, it of course needed a sequel, another new omnibus bill, to make Canada strong, which is Bill C-39. I suspect next year or later in this Parliament we may live to see another so we can finish the trilogy.

● (1740)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, It is important for us to recognize, as I pointed out yesterday on legislation, that often the government has a much larger agenda, and this is one of those examples. The legislation today is all about how we can actually take advantage of things, such as a half a trillion dollars of committed investments through an economic summit that was led by the Prime Minister of Canada. We want to see foreign investment come into Canada. One of the ways we can attract that is to have legislation of this nature passed through the House.

I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts with respect to the larger picture.

Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, one would assume that if someone wanted to invite capital to come to Canada we would make sure our permitting system worked well. Maybe the government thought Bill C-5 was enough. Maybe the feedback it got back was not, so now it needs to do a sequel. We will see this member for the trilogy.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from December 5, 2025, consideration of the motion that An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are debating Bill C-218, which seeks to specifically exclude patients with a mental disorder from being able to request an assessment of their condition to determine whether or not they are eligible for medical assistance in dying. Some of these patients have had a mental disorder for decades, 20 or 30 years. They have tried everything, all available treatments, have been treated for decades without significant improvement in their condition and have endured stigma and discrimination their entire lives. These are people whose decision-making capacity is established according to the rules, people for whom psychiatry can only offer a life indefinitely housed in palliative care with no cure. These people's suffering has become intolerable, but Bill C-218 tells them to try again for their own good, because their only option is repeated treatment. They are told to suffer so that, maybe one day, they will be cured.

In June 2022, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying recommended that MAID be expanded to include mental disorders. The only two reservations it had were about how prepared clinics were to ensure safe and appropriate implementation, as well as the very short time frame leading up to the March 2023 deadline. Those reservations can be found in the conclusion of the June 2022 interim report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying.

However, in its latest report in 2026, the Special Joint Committee did a complete 180° and questioned the merits of expansion, despite proof that such a position is discriminatory; despite proof that the groundwork had been laid, according to the Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers, the psychiatric associations of Canada and Quebec, the Department of Health and the Department of Justice; and despite the establishment of practice standards by the task group that the Liberal government funded to define the practice standards and required training for assessors and providers.

I find it troubling to stand here before legislators who support a blanket, definitive exclusion from MAID for patients with mental disorders, even though the exclusion is discriminatory and unconstitutional, yet who lack the courage to refer the matter to the Supreme Court to spare suffering patients from having to bear that burden. It speaks to ideological rigidity, unfortunate partisan politics and a flagrant lack of compassion. It is unbearable to hear constant claims that issues with accessing care and structural vulnerabilities supposedly lead patients to choose MAID over treatment, despite evidence to the contrary and without proposing a substantial increase in health transfers.

In terms of structural vulnerabilities, Health Canada data, annual reports on MAID in Canada, and a scientific study by James Downar and Kieran Quinn, entitled "Is Structural Marginalization Driving Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in Canada?", have con-

cluded that structural vulnerabilities do not play a significant role in MAID requests.

When it comes to MAID, it was not the House but the Supreme Court that did the work. Back in 2015, it forced the House of Commons to amend the Criminal Code to respond to requests from patients whose constitutional rights were being violated. The Bloc Québécois believes that the Carter decision and the Boudouin ruling justify opening up MAID to people with a mental disorder whose chronic suffering has become intolerable.

On what grounds should the government undermine or restrict the right to self-determination of a person with a mental disorder, as long as their decision-making capacity is not affected? On what grounds should chronic suffering that has become intolerable be considered reasonable? On what grounds would discrimination be reasonable?

• (1745)

The role of the state is not to claim it knows better than a person facing unbearable suffering what is right for them in a matter as personal as their own death. The role of the state is to ensure that the conditions are in place for that person to make a free and informed choice.

The right to self-determination, free and informed consent, informed decision making and the exercise of a patient's decision-making capacity, when this has been established in accordance with best practices, all run counter to the medical paternalism that still seems all too present in psychiatry.

We must ask ourselves the following: On what grounds should certain patients with a mental disorder whose suffering has become intolerable and has been established as chronic, and whose medical records demonstrate beyond any shadow of a doubt that all available treatments have been administered without resulting in a permanent improvement or significant relief from intolerable suffering, be discriminated against or forced to continue suffering?

Some psychiatrists argue that it is impossible to determine that a mental disorder is irreversible. They question whether a psychiatrist can establish a prognosis or even diagnosis of incurability. However, all of these issues are clearly explained in the expert panel's report, which proposes guidelines and precautions to be taken for the safe and appropriate provision of medical assistance in dying for people with mental disorders. I urge everyone to consult it.

Madam Speaker, the members opposite are really bothering me because they are laughing and talking. If they do not want to listen to me, they are free to go outside. I ask that you intervene and stop the clock.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I would remind hon. members that it is important to remain silent and listen when a member has the floor.

The hon. member may resume his speech. He has three minutes.

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• (1750)

Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, a few psychiatrists use anecdotal, unsubstantiated claims to assert that every mental illness is treatable or curable, but they also say that psychiatry is wrong about both prognoses and diagnoses. Those psychiatrists cannot explain why we should rely on anecdotal, unsubstantiated accounts involving patients whom they say would have met the MAID eligibility criteria and safeguards set out in the expert panel report when those psychiatrists have no experience with MAID, either as assessors or providers, and when they are effectively opposed to track 2 or MAID in general.

The report by the expert panel that proposed the conditions under which MAID could be expanded to mental disorders is clear. Just because a patient makes a request does not mean they will be eligible. During her testimony, Stefanie Green explained that the following individuals are ineligible: a person in a suicidal crisis; a person who has recently been admitted for treatment and diagnosed; a person whose request is based on structural vulnerabilities; and a person who refuses, without justification, all treatments that could improve their condition. A person is also ineligible if accessible and effective treatments are available or if the assessors are unable to determine eligibility based on all or part of the criteria.

Evidence of de facto accessibility, linked to a level of preparedness for the safe and appropriate provision of medical assistance in dying for people with mental disorders, was demonstrated in the recent study by the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying. Those who oppose MAID must do so for other reasons.

The Bloc Québécois opposes Bill C-218 and proposes that the dispute over whether the exclusion of patients constitutes discrimination be clarified by the Supreme Court.

In the meantime, we ask that the sunset clause not be removed prematurely and indefinitely. The final recommendation is that recommendation 16 of the expert panel report, which calls for establishing prospective monitoring at the conclusion of the assessment process, be implemented as an additional clinical safeguard.

[English]

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of Bill C-218, the right to recover act, introduced by my friend, the member for Cloverdale—Langley City. The title of the bill fully reflects the substance of the bill. It is the right to recover: to give persons struggling with mental health challenges hope and help, instead of state-sanctioned, state-administered death, by putting an indefinite pause on the Liberal government's ill-thought-out expansion of MAID where mental illness is the sole underlying condition.

I commend the member for Cloverdale—Langley City for bringing forward the bill, because it is absolutely needed. We need legislation to be passed by Parliament. Otherwise, this ill-thought-out expansion will take effect in March 2027.

I have to say that it should never have been this way. It should never have come to this. The planned expansion is a master class in how not to do policy and how not to legislate.

Back in 2021, the then Liberal justice minister David Lametti, at the eleventh hour, accepted a radical Senate amendment, which he

initially opposed, that set the train in motion for the expansion of MAID for mental illness, effective March 2023. There was no meaningful study, no meaningful consultation and no meaningful debate. The Liberals simply rammed it through. This was on a question of life and death concerning among the most vulnerable persons in Canadian society. It could not be more reckless than that.

Here we are, more than five years later, and the planned expansion has been nothing short of a mess. It has been completely sham-bolic, including the fact that the government has been all but forced to introduce two emergency bills to delay implementation because it did not do its homework at the outset.

Had the Liberals done their homework, they would have heard loud and clear what experts, including leading psychiatrists, have been saying, and that is that MAID for mental illness is a really bad idea, that it cannot be implemented safely for a multitude of reasons, not least of which include two unresolved clinical issues.

The first of those issues is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict irremediability. In other words, it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict whether someone suffering from a mental illness will get better. Indeed, many mental illnesses are remediable, and they are very difficult to predict in terms of a prognosis.

As Dr. Karin Neufeld, who is one of Canada's most renowned psychiatrists and is none other than the chair of the Association of Chairs of Psychiatry in Canada, put it in her brief to the Special Joint Committee on MAID, which is studying this very issue, "Psychiatric disorders lack reliable biomarkers, follow non-linear trajectories, and frequently improve after years of severe impairment." Accordingly, Dr. Neufeld concluded that psychiatrists are poor predictors of long-term outcomes. Simply put, modern psychiatry lacks the tools to predict irremediability in individual cases of mental illness. It is so uncertain in terms of predicting irremediability, that studies show that psychiatrists get it right less than 50% of the time.

As Dr. Sonu Gaiind, who is the past chair of the Canadian Psychiatric Association, told the special joint committee, one would be better off flipping a coin to predict irremediability. This is on a matter, again, involving life and death. What that means is that if this expansion were to go forward in March 2027, or at all, tens of thousands of Canadians who could get better, recover and lead productive lives will have their lives prematurely ended.

• (1755)

This prospect is untenable, and it is unconscionable. The uncertainty around predicting irremediability not only renders MAID for mental illness a completely reckless and dangerous policy, but also makes it impossible to administer in compliance with the law. This is because a prerequisite to qualifying for MAID is that an individual must have a grievous and irremediable condition. Given that it is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately predict irremediability in cases of mental illness, the legal basis for MAID cannot be satisfied, full stop. Therefore, we have not only a clinical issue, but also a major legal impediment to this expansion going forward.

The second major clinical issue identified is that it is difficult to distinguish, in cases of mental illness, a rational request for aid versus one motivated by suicidal ideation. This is because, in many cases, suicidal ideation, suicidal thoughts, are a symptom of the illness, and that is underscored by the fact that, in more than 90% of suicide deaths in Canada, mental illness is a factor. What that means is, if this were to go forward, long-standing suicide prevention efforts would be undermined. The mental health law would be upended, because given that suicidal ideation is often a symptom of mental illness, it begs the very practical question of which requests for MAID would merit intervention and suicide prevention versus the granting of MAID.

Given these unresolved clinical issues and other issues, and the clear opposition from the vast majority of psychiatrists, including the 17 chairs of psychiatry representing all 17 medical schools in Canada, who penned a letter to the Minister of Justice saying to put an indefinite pause on this, the Liberals twice, as I alluded to, introduced emergency legislation to kick the can down the road. They kicked the can down the road yet again with a new date of implementation, that being March 2027. Guess what. Nothing has changed. The same clinical issues remain unresolved, and there is no evidence that they will be or can be resolved in the foreseeable future, if ever.

This is why the special joint committee on MAID, which wrapped up its work in June, of which I was a member, of which the member for Cloverdale—Langley City was a member, recommended that the government stop kicking the can down the road and simply put an indefinite pause on this ill-thought-out expansion. I would note that the recommendation was a unanimous recommendation from Conservative and Liberal MPs on the committee.

The government likes to claim it makes decisions based upon evidence, that it make decisions based upon the facts. Well, if that is so, then to follow the evidence, there is only one, objectively speaking, reasonable course of action for the government to take, which is to admit it got it wrong in 2021 and to reverse course by putting an indefinite pause on this expansion. Bill C-218, the right to recover act, provides a clear path forward to do just that.

Let us pass Bill C-218.

• (1800)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a few thoughts I would like to share with the House on the legislation and what it is that the member is actu-

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ally proposing. With what the previous speaker just mentioned, it is important for us to recognize that the government took action because of a superior court decision that was made in the province of Quebec.

Both the member and I have actually been around since the creation of the MAID legislation, so we are very—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): May I interrupt the hon. member?

While members were speaking on that side of the House, we had calm. Can we continue to have calm and let the member make his speech?

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I think it is really important that we put into perspective why we are where we are today. This is not something for which a political party made the decision. The member who just spoke, as well as the members opposite who were around, back in 2015, like myself, just need to reflect back to that time and what was taking place. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada put it on the political agenda, so there was a need for the House of Commons to respond to it. It was the *Carter v. Canada* case, which obligated all of us at that time to deal with the issue.

The government worked collaboratively and there was a high sense of co-operation on the issue. After all, what could be more personal than having to deal with the issue of medical assistance in dying, and having to make difficult decisions as to when to say no to a medical treatment, or to have a medical treatment that would ultimately lead to the death of an individual? It is very much a personal decision. I think that we need to amplify that. Those personal decisions are best made by the individual working with the experts they have access to, and having those heartfelt discussions with family members and often close friends.

I think we often underestimate the important contributions and understanding that health care providers, in particular, and others provide while dealing with the difficult issue of death. For those who are dealing with it on a more frequent basis, if they go to hospice care facilities or personal care facilities, they will often find those health care professionals and others in situations where they have to deal with death on a regular basis. As we all know, it is a part of life. If we then factor in the difficult complications that come to the table with individuals who have a desire to seek MAID, there have been a great deal of arguments brought forward. The decision was made in February or maybe March 2015, but the Supreme Court started hearing about it in 2014.

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The passion was very real. We got to see some of that passion. If members recall, we had a special committee of the House. I believe it might have even been a joint committee that included members of the Senate. Whether members were on the committee or not, there was a great deal of discussion that took place between committee members and other members of different caucuses. I can recall members inside the chamber delivering speeches on MAID, even talking to some of the individuals who were involved in the lobby rooms. We would often see tears while listening to their personal stories. All one needs to do is to review Hansard during the second reading. Even back then, I spent a lot of my time on the floor of the House here.

• (1805)

However, I can say that the committee that studied it after second reading, and even prior to second reading, was deeply engaged. It went on at great length, for hours and hours, with personal stories of witnesses who appeared before it. It was not an easy decision. Sitting back, what I witnessed was some members of the Conservative Party advocating one way and others advocating another way, as it was with the Liberal Party and other entities within the House, because it was based on sharing our free thoughts, having a free vote and so forth.

It was difficult, but ultimately a vast majority of members of Parliament voted in favour of Canada's having MAID legislation. That is something that was not done lightly or taken lightly, and I think we need to emphasize that in this debate. It was very thorough, and ultimately, members from all political entities ended up voting in favour of Canada's having MAID legislation.

A number of years after that, as I alluded to at the very beginning and as the previous speaker was making reference to, was the issue of mental illness and whether it should or should not be part of MAID. Once again that was put on the table, brought to the House of Commons, because of a decision from a superior court.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Can we allow the hon. member to finish his speech?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the issue of MAID came before the House again because of a superior court decision in Quebec. That we can say.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, they can call it what they want. It is still a superior court in Quebec.

Moving forward, the issue has been brought to the House, and a decision has been made. There is a sunset clause within the legislation that does need to be addressed.

On the issue of mental illness, ever since I have been a parliamentarian, I can remember Dr. Gulzar Cheema, one of my colleagues in the Manitoba legislature, arguing and articulating on why it was so important that we have not only a department of health but also a department of mental health, because we need much more to recognize mental health as part of our health system. There are severe files within mental health that I believe, if this leg-

islation were to pass, would never, ever get any consideration, and I do not believe that would be appropriate.

Given the very importance of the issue of mental health, let us have more discussions. I would like more provinces to establish departments of mental health, but at the end of the day, I do not necessarily believe the exclusion is the way to go.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place on behalf of the great people of southwest and west central Saskatchewan.

Canadians sent us here to deal with many problems affecting them personally and impacting the country as a whole. There is no doubt that what we are debating right now is a very serious issue facing our society. I first want to thank my colleague the member for Cloverdale—Langley City for her leadership in bringing forward the right to recover act, Bill C-218. She has already brought hope to so many people and approached such a difficult topic with the compassion and the urgency that it deserves.

Not only has the member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South seconded the bill, but along the way he has done a lot of work advocating for it. He had the courage to share his own personal story of battling years of severe depression and surviving suicide attempts. While telling his full story, which includes a challenging process of recovery, he shone a light on a struggle facing thousands of Canadians and their loved ones.

To give us more perspective, here are some of the latest numbers from the federal public health website. Each year in Canada, there are 4,750 deaths by suicide and 20,000 hospitalizations caused by self-harm. There are 100,000 reported suicide attempts, along with 250,000 people who make suicide plans and 840,000 people with serious thoughts of suicide. That means every single day there are 250 Canadians who make reported suicide attempts, 700 who make suicide plans and 2,300 who have serious suicidal thoughts. Let us allow all of that to sink in for a minute.

We often talk about having better awareness about mental health, but we also need to build on that by actively meeting people's needs and providing real protection for those who are vulnerable. With this bill, both of these MPs have moved us forward in that important goal.

At the moment, we are in a situation where the current law would allow access to MAID for people who have a desire to die solely on the basis of their mental illness. If we think about it for a second, we can start to imagine how that creates an opening in the medical system where it becomes easier for a suicidal person to end their life. In other words, it is pretty clear that we are really talking about assisted suicide.

As Canadians learn that this is happening, they are increasingly against the idea, but currently, if nothing changes, the Criminal Code would allow eligibility for assisted suicide on the basis of mental illness alone starting next spring. As disturbing as it is to think about, it is not too far in the future. However, Bill C-218 provides a simple solution. By a short amendment to the Criminal Code, it would stop the expansion of MAID for mental illness before it takes effect.

Just recently, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying studied this exact issue and came to the same conclusion. Based on the consistent testimony of witnesses and experts, the committee's report officially recommended an amendment to the Criminal Code to exclude mental illness as the sole underlying medical condition for MAID. This recommendation reflects a consensus across party lines, and now that we have Bill C-218 in front of us, it just makes sense for us to proceed with it to achieve the final result we would like to see.

Earlier this year, I had the chance to work with the special joint committee as it carried out the study. That happened because I ended up filling in for one of the regular members, the member for Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, who was supposed to be on that committee but had to spend some time away to recover from surgery he had on his knee.

I want to make a special mention of something here. It made perfect sense for him to participate in the study because he has been one of Canada's strongest advocates for mental health. He has worked tirelessly for years to make the 988 suicide prevention hotline a reality. After his motion passed unanimously in the House, it still took a few years before it finally launched, thanks in large part to his persistent efforts with introducing legislation, setting timelines and helping to keep up the pressure on the government to get the job done.

It needed so much time and effort to accomplish, even though it was a project that already had broad support across parties. It was worth doing because we know that 988 has made a real difference and has been saving people's lives.

We all support suicide prevention. We have a good idea of how important it is to be prepared so that we can respond with compassion and provide resources to people who are suicidal. On the other side of the equation, we also need to be extremely cautious of sending the wrong signals or messages, which could push a vulnerable group of people in a worse direction.

We had a representative from 988 appear as a witness in this study on assisted suicide for mental illness. She provided data to us based on her team's experience:

...on frontline signals from 988, up to 7% of interactions on the service refer to MAID. Critically, among those who reference MAID, 74% endorsed thoughts of suicide in the past two days, compared with 48% among other contacts. In short,

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interactions with our national suicide crisis line that reference MAID are associated with substantially higher suicidal ideation. That's not a theoretical concern; it's a real, measurable, elevated risk among people who mentioned MAID to Canada's suicide prevention service.

● (1815)

The same witness also went on to say:

My recommendation is straightforward. Do not expand MAID to cases where the sole underlying condition is a mental disorder. This recommendation aligns with the position of the International Association for Suicide Prevention that the overlap between MAID requests and suicide makes distinguishing between them impossible. MAID for mental illness will undermine suicide prevention by positioning MAID as a viable alternative to treatment.

This was one of the key concerns raised during the committee study. As this witness said, which was a point echoed by others, it is impossible to distinguish a desire for death inspired by mental illness from being suicidal.

Dr. Sandip Singh Gandham expressed, "I worry that in some cases, we may not be responding to an autonomous, enduring request for assisted dying, but rather to the voice of the illness itself."

We also heard the story of Donna Duncan in B.C. Her daughter, Alicia, appeared as a witness and has been raising the alarm on her mother's case, which is directly related to the issue before us today. Donna was approved for and died by MAID in British Columbia in 2021, only hours after being released from a psychiatric unit and following a suicide attempt.

Donna was clearly suicidal and facing a mental health crisis, and all her blood tests came back normal. She had no terminal condition. She should not have been a candidate for MAID, yet the system deemed her eligible for track 1 MAID because, under the influence of a mental disorder, she was starving herself. In this case, the existing safeguards failed despite the family's best efforts and despite Donna's own admission that she did not want to die. She just felt deprived of proper care.

If a mistake was made in this case or any others, what is the remedy supposed to be? Death is irreversible. As the Duncan family found out, the only person authorized to access Donna's MAID assessment records is Donna herself, and Donna has died. Neither her family nor even the police can access the records, and neither the regulators nor the B.C. Privacy Commissioner is prepared to override that. Realistically, then, how is anyone supposed to investigate whether the law was followed?

Private Members' Business

There are also concerns about new conflicts with providing patient care in the relationship that therapists have with clients. Are Canadian care providers there to fight relentlessly for every last person who can be helped or are they there to process people according to their requests and wishes, even if they could eventually recover in the future from their mental illness?

Dr. Jitender Sareen put his finger on this when he said, "This goes to the core psychiatric practice, which is grounded in assessing and treating hopelessness and preventing suicide."

Is the psychiatrist there to help prevent suicide or enable it? What does it do to a psychiatrist's ability to do the former if the patient knows all the time that all they have to do to have their life ended is refuse to co-operate on therapeutic help that might work?

In that context, if MAID is available as an option, it becomes a factor on its own, which can undermine the effectiveness of therapy. Along with the general problem of recognizing suicidality for what it is, medical and psychiatric professionals also share deep concerns with the idea of irremediability and predicting patient outcomes while considering all the complexity of treatments for mental illnesses.

Dr. Karin Neufeld testified about a middle-aged patient of hers who had been suffering from a major depressive illness since childhood. He was seeking a referral for MAID and would have qualified, but after undergoing treatment with this particular therapist, he has now recovered the will to live. We have heard about similar cases as well.

Across Canada, people struggling with a mental illness are contemplating MAID not because they want to die, but because they are not getting proper support. They come from all walks of life. In this area, we heard about particular concerns related to indigenous communities and people with disabilities.

Our approach to allowing assisted suicide for mental illness is something that medical professionals, psychiatrists, advocacy groups and the United Nations have called on us to rethink. Parliament has itself pushed the deadline back multiple times and our special committee has now recommended indefinitely suspending it. We should listen to Canadians and listen to the committee and finally reverse this expansion. Let us pass Bill C-218.

• (1820)

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my honour and privilege to rise today to speak to Bill C-218, a bill that would repeal the coming into force of MAID for mental illness as the sole underlying cause for concern.

Canada is becoming a parable. It is becoming an example of what not to do for the world. The United Kingdom recently had a discussion about introducing euthanasia or MAID to the country. It looked at Canada and said, "That is not what we want to do", and it actually rejected it.

I remember back in 2016-17 making arguments in the discussion about introducing MAID into Canada and calling it a slippery slope. I can say that I was wrong when I said it was a slippery slope. It turns out that it was a cliff. We had no idea that we were

going to fall off this cliff. One-fifth of people who die in Canada die because of MAID. This is a major cause for concern.

We can look to other jurisdictions that are very similar to Canada. California has demographics similar to Canada's, has similar political understandings and has a similar population, yet in the same time frame, we saw that 13,000 people in Canada used the MAID program and only 300 people used the assisted suicide program in California. Something is seriously wrong with our system.

When MAID was brought into Canada, there were two criteria for it. Someone had to have a reasonably foreseeable death, something that we argued against. We said that was nebulous; we did not know what that meant. Most people's death is reasonably foreseeable. We will all die. That was one criterion for MAID, along with the fact that a condition had to be grievous and irremediable.

That was then challenged in the courts. I recall that we had just passed the MAID regime through Parliament. Parliament had spoken as to what the law ought to be in Canada. Just a couple of years later, it was challenged by two people from Quebec, and it was overturned at the first level of court in Quebec.

David Lametti, the justice minister at the time, refused to defend the work of Parliament. His personal opinions on MAID and the direction it should go were well known, but as the justice minister of Canada, it was his responsibility to defend what Parliament had put in place, and he refused to or was negligent and did not do that. He did not challenge the lower court decision in Quebec.

Therefore, that decision stood, and that then placed an arbitrary deadline upon Parliament to come up with a solution. That is how we got the so-called track 2 MAID, and along with that came the idea, which they put in in 2026 and then extended out to 2027, that MAID for mental illness should become a thing here in Canada.

There has been a committee study since then that looked at this. I tried to answer this question: Is Canada ready for MAID for mental illness? We heard over and over from people who said that if somebody is suicidal and wants to die, we cannot determine who will get better and who will not get better. There is no test for this. That is reason it was extended for one more year, because they said we had to continue to work on it.

Here we are, about a year out from that, and there is still no test today. When somebody calls the suicide prevention hotline, there is no test to say that someone is going to come around, that we can put them into treatment, they will recover and have a desire to live again and we should put them into a suicide prevention program.

• (1825)

There is no test for people to say they will send one person to the suicide prevention program and another person will be offered MAID. There is no test to say one person is going to recover and another person is not. We just do not know. The default should be that people having suicidal ideations will get better. We will give them treatment, support them and try to remove the things in their lives causing the suicidal ideation.

I would point Canadians to the work by my colleague, the member for Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, and the many speeches he has given on this, saying that, if this had been the law several years ago, he would not be here today because he would have availed himself of it. Today, he is a member of Parliament and a high-functioning individual. He is laughing at that. It is a true story. I thank him for being vulnerable with us, sharing these stories over and over again, telling this story and being a champion for Bill C-218.

Bill C-218 would make it so that we have suicide prevention in this country and only suicide prevention in this country. It is not for the Government of Canada to set up a program where some people get suicide prevention treatment and some people do not get suicide prevention treatment. That is not a country any of us want to live in, where we say suicide prevention is good for one person but not good for another person. We heard over and over again at committee that there is no test to determine the difference.

With that, I look forward to voting on this bill. I will be voting for it. I am very hopeful this bill will pass and we will once again restore suicide prevention in this country.

• (1830)

Andrew Lawton: Madam Speaker, this is a bill that is very personal. It is an issue that is very personal. Through the course of the work of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, we heard from a number of experts who have worked with patients going through challenges, much like those I went through 15, 16 years ago, people who felt that they were better off dead than alive. These are people who deserve support. These are people who deserve treatment. These are people who should be welcomed into wanting to live, not assisted with end of life.

The bill from my colleague from Cloverdale—Langley City, who so eloquently called it the right to recover act, is a bill that would do exactly what the title says. It would offer people a right to recover. It would offer hope. It would offer light to people in the darkest moments of their lives. I was so honoured, with my story, to be able to be a champion for this, even before my colleague introduced her bill. I was equally honoured to be named to the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, at which we were able to tackle—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I have just been informed that the hon. member has already spoken to this

Private Members' Business

bill and it is not appropriate that he speaks to it again. My apologies.

I would invite the hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City to rise for her right of reply.

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will begin by grounding the end of this debate in remembering young Kiano Vafaeian who lost his life to MAID. He was 26 years old, and he had lived with type 1 diabetes since he was four. After a serious car accident as a teenager, he also struggled with his mental health, and later he lost vision in one eye.

In 2022, when he was just 23 years old, Kiano sought MAID in Ontario. His mother, Margaret, fought desperately to keep her son alive, and she succeeded for a time, but Kiano had become obsessed with getting MAID. He continued to request it from Ontario Health until they told him straight out that he would never qualify in Ontario, but shockingly, they suggested other jurisdictions he could contact in his quest to end his life. Sadly, he found a willing doctor in B.C., where he received MAID on December 30, 2025, from the now infamous Dr. Ellen Wiebe. He was 26 years old.

When I heard Kiano's story, I could not stop thinking about my own little brother Johan. In 2023, he was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. He knew he was dying, but he wanted to live. However, the medical staff at the Abbotsford hospital seemed to want to end his life. While lying on a bed in the hallway on the oncology ward, he was asked not once, not twice, not three, four or five times but six separate times if he wanted MAID. They were relentless. They pressed him, saying that they did not think they would be able to control his pain, scaring him out of his wits, but he still had a will to live.

I am very proud of my little brother for standing up for his life, for having the courage and the commitment to make a statement that his life was still worth living, even if it was for only another eight or ten months. He had time to mend fences, make friends with the people at the hospice and say goodbye to his family.

This is why Bill C-218 is necessary, because not everyone will have the will and the ability to fight the way my brother fought. Not everyone will have the strength to say no six times. When someone is sick, frightened, depressed or unable to see any hope for tomorrow, surely the responsibility of our medical system is not to reinforce the despair but to protect them while they are vulnerable and help them find their way back to hope.

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This is particularly true when we are talking about mental illness. For years, Conservatives have warned that expanding MAID to people suffering solely from mental illness crosses a line we should not cross. We were told that the safeguards would be enough. We were told that the system could be made ready. However, the implementation has been delayed again and again, while the fundamental question remains unanswered: How can we declare that a person's mental illness is irremediable when we cannot reliably know that they will never recover? However, we do know one thing with absolute certainty: Once that life is ended, there is no tomorrow.

When we first debated the bill, members told us to wait for the special joint committee to do its work. Well, it has. The committee heard the evidence and recommended that people whose sole underlying condition is mental illness be indefinitely excluded from MAID eligibility. Parliament asked for that review. We now have its answer.

If the concern with Bill C-218 is the wording and the use of the term “mental disorder” instead of “mental illness”, then let us fix the wording at committee. We are prepared to work with the government at committee to make the technical changes. A bill should not be defeated at second reading over one word when there is agreement on the principle. Time is of the essence. The scheduled expansion is coming in March. Let us work together and send the bill to committee.

The measure of a compassionate society is not how efficiently it helps people die. It is whether in the moment when someone can no longer see the value of their own life, the rest of us are prepared to see it for them. Our answer to suffering should be care. Our answer to despair should be hope. When someone believes there is no possibility of recovery, Canada should never be the one to agree with them. That is why I am asking my colleagues to vote for Bill C-218. Give Canadians the time, the care and the hope that they need. Give them the right to recover.

• (1835)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): 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.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

HEALTH

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, here we are just three days into the fall sitting of the House, and I am once again having to drag the government back into the House for an adjournment debate to protect our universal public health care system.

Back in April, I asked a question during question period referencing the fact that the Minister of Health stood here and called herself “the guardian of the Canada Health Act”. After months of delay, she has failed to act while Alberta Premier Danielle Smith expands American-style pay-for-access diagnostics and two-tiered health care. Canadians cannot afford more stalling while our universal health care system is being undermined.

Since that time, on September 1, Alberta's Bill 11 has landed on our doorstep. The Canadian Health Coalition, which I want to thank for its tremendous work advocating for our public health care system, commissioned a legal opinion stating that Bill 11 is the most serious threat against public universal health care we have seen since the Canada Health Act was passed in 1984.

The first parts of Premier Smith's draconian Bill 11 in Alberta just recently came into force at the beginning of this month, with the rest being enacted in the coming months. Bill 11 opens the door to the privatization of public health care in Canada. As Friends of Medicare has so succinctly said, we must slam it shut.

Shockingly, despite my repeated attempts at ringing the alarm bells around Alberta's Bill 11 here in the House, through the media and in many meetings with the Minister of Health asking that she enforce the Canada Health Act to protect our public health care system from a threat that no one voted for, it was not until the eve of the recent coming into force of the bill that the minister finally said that she would be considering the ramifications of the bill.

If the minister is truly the guardian, why is she taking so long to enforce the law and stop the erosion of our public health care system? This is an issue of national unity. What can happen in Alberta does not necessarily stay in Alberta.

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Canadians are united in their opposition to the insults and damage flowing from the American President towards Canada. The Prime Minister has been travelling abroad and hosting summits with billionaires here at home, so what happened to “elbows up” and “Canada strong”? Protecting our health care is Canada strong. That is nation building, but eroding our public health care system through inaction and failure to enforce the Canada Health Act is not Canada strong. It weakens Canada. It is not Canadian. It erodes the security of the very thing Canadians most closely identify with as part of being Canadian. Canadians do not want American-style health care, the queue-jumping for people with money or the so-called dual practice, which is now under way in Alberta.

I will ask the government this again. Why has it not enforced the Canada Health Act to prevent the erosion of our public health care system, something that Canadians identify with in our shared values as a healthy and inclusive society? People should use their health care card, not their credit card, to get the help and services they need when it comes to their health.

● (1840)

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Courtenay—Alberni for the collaborative working relationship that we have had for quite a number of years. He is a great guy and a great representative for his community. I understand his question, and just for the record, I was not dragged here. I volunteered to stay to answer his question this evening.

Our public health care system is a point of pride, that is for sure, for all Canadians, including all Albertans. Our government will always work to defend our health care system because we understand that access to care should be based on someone's need, not someone's ability to pay. Furthermore, we recognize that our universal health care system underpins our economic strength. To build Canada strong, we need healthy Canadians. However, at the same time, all of us can see that our health care system is under strain. While provinces and territories are responsible for delivering health care, we all know that the federal government plays a key role in supporting the provinces. All of us need to work together to make sure that Canadians have the strong health care system they need and deserve.

We have seen how provinces and territories are responding to these challenges with new ideas and determination. They are finding new ways to bring care closer to Canadians, by expanding the roles of nurse practitioners, pharmacists and midwives; embracing virtual care; and even training the health care professionals we will need for the future. There is no doubt that this is important work, which is why we have taken a collaborative approach with all provinces and territories, including Alberta, that respects their jurisdiction to explore innovative ways to improve access and care while strengthening the public universal health care system that we all take pride in.

That does not mean that provinces and territories have free reign to ignore the principles of the Canada Health Act. As the Minister of Health has said repeatedly, she has been in close contact with Minister LaGrange, as she has been with all her provincial and ter-

ritorial counterparts, to talk about how we can best support Alberta in strengthening our health care system and not eroding it. Likewise, as the minister has noted, Health Canada officials are working closely with Government of Alberta officials to ensure that the principles of the Canada Health Act are fully respected.

A collaborative approach between our government and the Government of Alberta has always produced stronger results, and we will continue to work in that direction to benefit all Albertans and all Canadians.

Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I have deep respect for my colleague. I want to thank him for volunteering tonight and for coming in.

I am going to ask him to volunteer to stand up against a province that is in violation of the Canada Health Act. They are moving toward a private model. That is clear. This undermines the Canada Health Act. It is the responsibility of the government to enforce it.

If the government is truly the guardian of our public health care system, it needs to act. It needs to act now. Innovation is one thing, but breaking the law and the rules of the country is another. That is the responsibility of the government. It is the NDP that is showing up here at night. I am volunteering to show up, to stand up for Canadians, because no other party is coming in here to stand up against the privatization of our health care system. We will stand strong to protect our public universal health care system. I hope the government will act and act soon.

● (1845)

Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his acknowledgement and respect for me as a member of Parliament, which I share with him and reciprocate completely.

We can have disagreements in the House, but on this I do not think we disagree. In fact, what I am saying is that the Government of Canada is deeply committed to preserving the principles that are embedded in the Canada Health Act. We are working hand in hand with provincial and territorial partners to strengthen our health care system at a time when we know we need that strong health care system to lift Canadians up, to make sure that we can build a strong Canada and a strong economy, and to assert our sovereignty. It is essential to the country. We all take pride in the universal health care system.

I have had many debates and issues with the Province of Ontario and how it manages our health care system. I share some of my colleagues' concerns about making sure that we uphold the Canada Health Act and ensuring that provinces and territories are accountable to that and accountable for the funding that is transferred from the federal government.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, before the government's summer vacation, I asked the government why it was putting trade talks with the United States in jeopardy to protect the Prime Minister's corporate friends instead of fighting modern-day slavery.

The reality is that since 2021, the Canada Border Services Agency has seized only two shipments of goods that were made using forced labour: a shipment of textiles back in 2024 and a shipment of frozen seafood in 2025. Both of these shipments were subsequently released back to the companies. That is it: these two shipments suspected of slavery stopped in five years. Meanwhile, the United States' border security stopped over 7,000 shipments, valued at over \$75 million, for suspected forced labour violations in just the first six months of this year.

The Prime Minister and his government, including the member opposite, love to point to Bill S-211, the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act, as evidence of how tough Canada is. However, I would point out that this law only exists because of the hard work of former Liberal member of Parliament John McKay and Senator Miville-Dechéne, along with the support of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. In fact, the government dragged its feet for years before being forced to take action, so we had to bring in a private member's bill, Bill S-211.

Then we found out last December that the government had quietly changed the directive of Bill S-211 to create an exemption not found in the original legislation, stripping reporting obligations from distributors and retailers who could be profiting from forced labour in their supply chains. Human rights advocates and anti-slavery groups are asking why. The only answer that could be is that it would benefit the Prime Minister's corporate friends. In fact, I wonder how many of these elite corporate friends were at the Prime Minister's pre-summit fundraiser last week.

We also know that China has been using Canada as a transshipment hub to get its products into the United States because it knows how weak our enforcement has been and how strong the American enforcement has been when it comes to products made by forced labour. It is no wonder the United States is launching a forced labour investigation into our country. We have only stopped two shipments in the last five years. Our supply chain law is secretly watered down to benefit Liberal friends, and the Liberals have been turning a blind eye to China's use of Canada as a transshipment hub.

I and many of my Conservative colleagues have been raising these concerns for years in the House, and former Liberal member of Parliament John McKay has also been urging the government to take more action to fight slavery, but we have seen no action from the government to do anything. The Prime Minister and his government ministers have insisted that Canada's measures were robust, that they were strong. Really? Then why, after years of declaring that Canada had what it needed to fight slavery in the supply chains, did the government suddenly introduce Bill C-35, an act respecting the prohibition of importing goods produced by forced labour?

Perhaps, as with other issues like crime, immigration and housing, the Liberals are suddenly realizing that Conservatives have been right all along. Perhaps Canada needs to fight slavery abroad, and perhaps temporarily stopping one shipment suspected of using forced labour every two to three years is not a robust system.

I do not have the time to go into the abandoned CORE office, but the government's absolute failure to tackle slavery in supply chains has put our CUSMA talks in jeopardy. Did the Prime Minister walk away from the table because the United States demanded we take real action on slavery? Did the Prime Minister walk away from the negotiations because he was not able to get supply chain exemptions to forced labour for his corporate friends? We do not know, because the Liberals will not release the deal that they rejected. What we do know is that Canadians are paying the price for the government's inaction on modern-day slavery.

In my riding of Peace River—Westlock, increased software lumber tariffs are threatening entire—

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree in the House that goods that are made with forced labour have absolutely no place in our supply chains. No one should be trapped in exploitation so others can benefit from lower costs. Canadians all want confidence that our economy is built on fairness and not built on human suffering. As we diversify trade and secure investment, Canada is firmly committed to ensuring our supply chains reflect the highest standards of integrity.

Enforcing a prohibition on goods produced with forced labour is an inherently complex undertaking, one that our understanding of has been constantly evolving. Global supply chains span multiple jurisdictions, involve numerous suppliers and evolve quickly over time. As our understanding evolves, so too must our approach. Over the past several years, Canada has built one of the world's first frameworks to address forced labour. The import prohibition established in 2020 started an important foundation, while the supply chains act increased expectations regarding transparency and reporting.

However, we have long recognized that there have been limitations to this approach. We know that we need to think bigger and do more. This is why we tabled new legislation in the spring and consulted over the summer on potential supply chain due diligence measures. Canadian businesses want more clarity, consistency and confidence, and this government is providing exactly that. Our new legislation will allow the government to publish a public list of goods, which will provide clear directions to CBSA and to businesses on where risk exists. Importers will be required to show detailed supply chain information to prove their products are free of forced labour before they can pass our borders.

This will strengthen our ability to identify, intercept and prohibit goods linked to forced labour at the border. These measures give businesses clearer expectations, encourage due diligence before goods reach our border and help ensure that companies following the rules are not undercut by those who do not.

[Translation]

Competitiveness and responsible business practices are not mutually exclusive goals. Canadians want our businesses to succeed. We want Canadian companies to grow, innovate, attract investment, and be competitive on the global stage. At the same time, Canadians expect our markets to operate according to clear, fair rules.

By improving transparency and predictability and by strengthening Canada's approach to forced labour, we are creating an environment where responsible businesses can thrive. We are building a system that Canadians can trust, a system that can also serve as a model for other countries.

[English]

Canada's economic interests are the interests of our workers, and workers must be central to this approach. As Canada diversifies its supply chains and expands trade relationships, we will continue to support businesses in meeting their obligations, while ensuring that those that violate laws are always held to account. Our trade must reflect our values. Our government will always work to ensure we can uphold labour rights, protect Canada's interests and make Canadian businesses more competitive and prepared in international markets. We will promote Canadian interests while upholding labour standards for all workers.

• (1855)

Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I would note that there is a lot of “we will” in the response. The government has been in place for over 10 years, and I have to say that if history is any indication of trying to get forced labour out of the government, it is like pulling teeth. It is incredibly difficult. Attempts to get Bill S-211 across the line took a very long time. Then, once we had it passed, the coming into force took an eternity, never mind the office of the corps, which was a thing the government bragged a lot about, and then it took eons for it to set it all up.

What assurances can this member give us that, in fact, the Liberals will take this very seriously, and will Bill C-35 be able to be implemented in the short term?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, you and I have been in this place for a long time, and we know that while our government has been in place, we have acted with resolve and with intelligence

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on this issue, unlike the previous government, which was in place for 10 years before us and never lifted a finger to solve this issue. As such, we do not take lessons from Conservatives on this at all.

I want to commend my former colleague, the Hon. John McKay, who persisted with this issue to the point where our government was able to act with effectiveness and with an assured nature to make sure that supply chains continue to be safer and safer. The work was not done, so we will continue to make sure that we have effective enforcement and a competitive Canadian economy. We will also ensure there is transparency in supply chains, and I use the verb “will”, which is absolutely chosen by me to assure all members of this House that we will get the job done.

FINANCE

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to raise what I have raised in this House many times: the problem with Canada's mounting debt. We talked about this back in the spring when I last asked a question about it. I have since heard throughout the summer about all kinds of spending the government wants to do that was not part of the \$65-billion deficit that it indicated in last year's spring update.

Spending is continuing to mount with the government. It is as if we have a new economist as our Prime Minister who has not understood the problem with the escalating debt we have in this country. Let me give some examples, because we are a basket case when we look at the total amount of debt that Canadians have, not just government debt in Canada.

The national government debt alone is approaching \$1.5 trillion. Provincial debts on top of that amount to almost \$1 trillion at this point in time. Of course, there is always the other debt, and that is the one that Canadians hold. Canadian individual household debt amounts to about \$3.2 trillion, and then corporately Canadians have about \$3.8 trillion outstanding. This is an amazing amount of debt.

Combined, as an actual function of GDP, Canada, government-wise, has about 100% of its debt to GDP at the government level, about 101% at the household level and about 118% at the corporate level. That means 318% of Canada's GDP is held in debt, debt that it has to pay interest on.

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We are concerned here about the federal government's debt, because I cannot argue about all the rest. There are impacts throughout the rest of the debt based on what happens at the federal level. The more the federal government spends, the more it goes into debt and the more it is going to have to pay in interest. The more it pays in interest, the more debt outstanding causes other interest rates to go up, including for all the financial debt outstanding to corporations and all the debt outstanding for mortgages and loans to consumers. This is a massive amount of money.

We have all seen that around the world, central banks are increasing their lending rates right now. That means that the debt profile is going to continue to go up and the amount of interest paid is going to continue to go up. Why is this so significant for the federal government? It is because fully 29% of the Government of Canada's outstanding debt is due within the next year.

If we think about how much money is going to have to be refinanced, 29% of almost \$1.5 trillion is going to be refinanced within the next 12 months. That is an amazing amount of money, first of all, to go to debt markets. Some of that is expiring debt, and some of it is going to be new debt. I think there is going to be more new debt with the way the government is spending money, but that is just what is expected to be renewed at this point in time. That will mean that the \$57 billion Canadians are actually paying in interest payments right now is going to skyrocket.

Think about that. Think about the actual rate that the government pays right now, which is about 2.5%, as a debt profile across its full portfolio. Think about one-third of that falling off and paying 100 basis points more. This is fully one-third of \$1.5 trillion, or \$500 billion. Where we are paying 1% more, this is going to impact Canadians significantly. We are going to have higher debt payments and higher interest payments as a result of the government's profligate spending.

The issue we want to get to is how we get to a better spending profile. Short-term financing is not taken by the provinces. All the provinces have a much more flat, low-impact duration for when their payments are due. The federal government is the one that is the most ramped up toward the front end of the repayment schedule.

When I heard the finance minister for the government talk this summer about—

● (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance has the floor.

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to be here tonight to answer my colleague's question.

Let us put this in perspective. Canada has the strongest fiscal position in the G7. It has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio. It has a AAA credit rating, which only one other country in the G7 enjoys, which is Germany. This gives it a relatively low debt service cost. The IMF has confirmed that Canada is projected to have the second-strongest growth in the G7. When the current government

came into power under the Prime Minister's leadership, we launched a comprehensive expenditure review, which found \$60 billion in savings in terms of optimizing operational budgets and looking for ways to optimize the way the government operates. It was a significant savings exercise.

We are focused on a capital budgeting framework, which we developed, and capital formation in the economy is really why the government has moved forward with generational investments in housing, infrastructure and defence, as well as innovation- and productivity-boosting tax measures. This is all to create a virtuous circle within the economy of investment, higher growth and additional tax revenues, which can move us down the path toward reducing our deficit. An "investment supercycle" is what TD Bank has called it recently. I think RBC also called it the same, which is a positive feedback loop of additional investment. We are seeing that working.

Canada has added 217,000 jobs, which is twice the rate of the United States. We have had 3.3% second-quarter growth of GDP, the fastest in the G7. Per capita GDP grew by 3.9% in Q2 as real GDP increased and population continued to decline in Canada. Business investment grew at 8.9%, and foreign direct investment is at a nearly 20-year high at \$97 billion.

We also saw, out of the Prime Minister's investment summit just recently, that our government attracted from domestic investors, our major financial institutions and pension plans, commitments of almost \$500 billion of new investment. Obviously now we have to work to ensure that there is a project pipeline of viable, bankable projects that can be financed by domestic and global investors, but these signs are good news.

At the investment summit, as I am sure the member opposite can agree, the Prime Minister announced that we are reducing, cutting in half, our marginal effective tax rate on new business investment, making Canada the most tax-competitive advanced economy in the entire world. That is from a 13% marginal effective tax rate to a 6.4% marginal effective tax rate. That is 10% lower than in the United States, one-third of the OECD average and one-quarter of the G7 average, and it now will apply from 15% of capital assets to 65% of capital assets in our economy.

That is going to bring more investment into this country and allow, again, that investment supercycle in Canada to take place. This is responsible fiscal management from our government. I understand the member opposite's concerns, but I think we have this.

● (1905)

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the numbers he is putting on the table. We do need to address this.

I know that the government has been very good at always pointing out that it has to do something because there is a crisis. The crisis happens because its members have not paid attention to what is in front of them. They are always responding to what has happened behind them. This is something that has already happened. Twenty-nine per cent of our debt has to be refinanced at the Canadian government level this year. It is going to have huge impacts upon Canadians writ large. The amount of interest going out the door is going to continue to mount. The government continues to run deficits as if there is no tomorrow. We have to get ahead of this.

This is my putting on the table for the government, “Address this now before it becomes a crisis and you have to do something in the rearview mirror.” This was faced by the Chrétien-Martin government way back when. The result was, of course, to cut health care funding for Canadians. We want to make sure the government is ahead of it this time.

Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, Canadians elected our government with a mandate to take bold action and build the strongest economy in the G7. That is exactly what we are up to. That is exactly what we are focused on.

Adjournment Proceedings

Budget 2025, of course, delivered on that mandate, and our government's next budget will do the same. It will strengthen our plan to build the strongest economy in the G7 by making generational investments, while preserving Canada's strong fiscal advantage. We are investing in the workers, businesses and nation-building infrastructure that will drive economic growth and strengthen Canada's competitiveness, building the strongest economy that we can build and realizing our full potential.

At the same time, we are ensuring that those investments are made responsibly, laying a clear path toward long-term prosperity and sustainability for our country. Canadians want the standard of living in this country to go up and that is exactly what we are focused on. That is why seeing real GDP growth in this country per capita for two quarters in a row is significant progress.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:08 p.m.)

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