



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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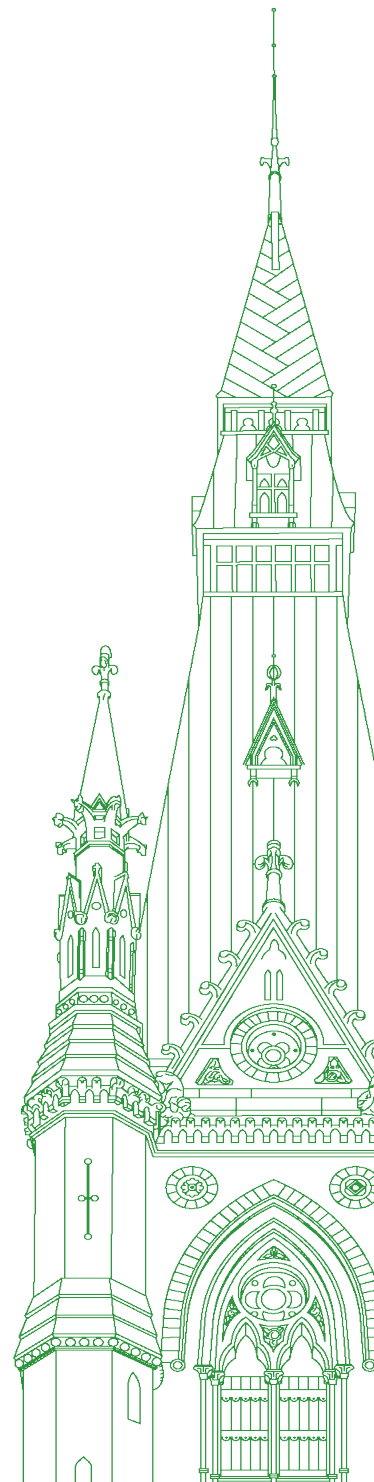
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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 5, 2026

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC) moved that Bill C-255, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief—religious property), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, having served in this place over numerous Parliaments, I know what an honour it is to have the opportunity not only to introduce a private member's bill but to have it debated at second reading. I am very pleased to be able to rise today and speak to Bill C-255, the protecting Canada's places of worship act.

Over the past three years, the Holy Rosary Church in Edmonton, Alberta, was the target of three acts of vandalism. On December 23, 2023, a nativity scene in front of the church was set on fire. On September 18, 2024, two individuals spray-painted a church security camera before being startled and running away. On September 20, 2024, a man was filmed spray-painting the church's statue of Pope John Paul II.

Last year, the Ar-Rehman Islamic Centre in Mississauga, Ontario, was vandalized when an individual with a skateboard smashed the front glass doors of the building. In January 2023, the Shri Gauri Shankar Mandir temple in Brampton, Ontario, was defaced when someone spray-painted anti-Hindu messaging on its exterior walls. In April 2025, the Khalsa Diwan Society gurdwara in Vancouver, B.C., was targeted by vandals who spray-painted exterior walls and parking lot perimeters with graffiti. On August 2, 2025, a man wrote anti-Semitic messages on the Congregation Emanu-El synagogue in Victoria, B.C.

Sadly, I could go on and on with more examples.

In 2015, Statistics Canada reported that there were 66 cases of hate-motivated mischief relating to property used by identifiable groups. In 2025, there were 263. The current peak was in 2024, when there were 274 incidents. This represents a more than 300% increase over the past 10 years.

In light of this trend, I introduced Bill C-255, which would amend the Criminal Code as it relates to mischief to religious property.

As I began to develop this bill, I discussed with my caucus colleagues and subsequently every stakeholder I met with how my sole purpose in introducing this bill was to provide additional tools to protect faith communities across Canada. I was, and remain, convinced that this is not a partisan issue, and that this bill and the broader issue of protecting places of worship in Canada are things that members of Parliament on both sides of this place can and should support.

The freedom of religion and belief is an important fundamental freedom. It is one that the authors of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms understood.

All across our nation, places of worship, including synagogues, temples, gurdwaras, mosques, churches and many more, serve as vital centres in our communities. They are gathering places that provide hope and solace, a sense of meaning and a place of belonging for millions of Canadians. Many of us regularly attend a place of worship and gather with our fellow adherents for fellowship, to worship and to practise our faith.

Both as a Canadian and as a Christian, it distresses me to see a gurdwara, temple, mosque or synagogue vandalized just as much as it does when a church is vandalized. As a person whose faith is an integral part of who I am, I understand the fear and the feeling of vulnerability that would grip someone whose place of worship has been defaced. Finally, as a parliamentarian, I believe I owe it to Canadians, Canadian families and our communities to defend the protection of our freedom to worship in our own way.

By amending the Criminal Code to enhance the protection of places of worship, we send a clear message to faith communities and, indeed, all Canadians that we value this freedom and that vandalizing places of worship is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Let me outline how the protecting Canada's places of worship act proposes to change the Criminal Code of Canada.

Private Members' Business

• (1105)

First, and I think most consequentially, the bill proposes to eliminate the need for police and prosecutors to prove that a crime of mischief committed against a place of worship was motivated by hate. Section 430 of the Criminal Code addresses crimes of mischief. While subsection 430(4.1) addresses crimes of mischief relating to religious property, educational institutions and other properties, it applies only to the commission of mischief if it is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. Bill C-255 would not eliminate any of these sections; rather, it would add new subsection 430(4.12) to address mischief relating to places of worship that does not require proof that the vandalism was hate motivated.

It is structured this way for two reasons.

First, there is no reason or need to remove the crime of hate-motivated mischief directed against religious property.

Second, mostly by way of background, I was working with the legislative drafters throughout the summer and early fall of 2025 to develop a bill to address this issue. When Bill C-9 was first introduced in this place on September 19, 2025, it proposed repealing subsections 430(4.1) and (4.101) of the Criminal Code, which I was planning to amend. Therefore, I rescued the definition of a place of worship from subsection 430(4.101) as the drafters and I had every reason to believe it was being eliminated through the government's bill.

As we are all aware, over time, Bill C-9 was amended, and subsections 430(4.1) and (4.101) remained in place. I am glad they did, as I believe they provide much-needed protection to property used by identifiable groups.

While there are similarities between what is proposed in this bill and what remains in the Criminal Code after Bill C-9 was eventually adopted, the differences are consequential and clear. Removing the requirement that police and prosecutors prove that a crime of mischief was hate motivated would make it easier for police and prosecutors to obtain convictions. Bias, prejudice or hate can be difficult to prove. A video camera can capture the evidence to prove who did it, but what it cannot capture is motivation.

In my opinion, it should not matter what motivated the act. The impact on the victim is still the same. In fact, I would argue that the victims of these crimes would find it more reassuring that someone has been charged and convicted for the offence than they would if they were told the perpetrator was not charged because the police could not prove the suspect's motivation.

The second change this bill proposes to make to the Criminal Code is to implement new penalties for mischief directed at places of worship. Similar to the provision in the Criminal Code that outlines punishments for mischief directed at war memorials, this bill proposes mandatory compensation to the victim for the first offence and mandatory minimal jail time, as well as compensation to the victim, for subsequent offences.

I want to state up front that I am aware that the concept of compensation to the property owner, which I am proposing to add, is novel. The Criminal Code includes provisions which mandate fines. However, fines are paid to the Crown, and in cases of mischief

committed against places of worship, the Crown is not the victim. The Criminal Code also extends discretion to judges to impose restitution in their sentencing decisions. So as not to conflate a judge's discretionary restitution with a mandatory requirement, with the assistance of our amazing legislative drafters, I termed the monetary penalty proposed in the bill as compensation to "the property owner". This is not a duplication but an intentional differentiation. Practically, the process of compensating the property owner would function the same as or similar to the process followed by the courts when a judge imposes a sentence of restitution.

I would now like to address how I arrived at the amount of \$1,000 for mandatory compensation.

First, this amount aligns with the \$1,000 fine imposed in subsection 430(4.11) of the Criminal Code, dealing with mischief directed at war memorials.

• (1110)

Second, the cost to the victim to professionally remove spray paint or replace broken windows or a door is very likely to be at least \$1,000, if not more. It is my belief that a minimum of \$1,000 is reasonable and would not be unduly punitive to the perpetrator of the crime.

Lastly, the wording in the bill states that compensation is to be "not less than \$1,000", which is again consistent with subsection 430(4.11). This means that a judge would have the discretion to impose a greater amount of compensation to the property owner should it be reasonable, given all of the extenuating circumstances.

To wrap up this portion of my remarks addressing the proposed changes within Bill C-255, I would like to highlight the recent coming into force of Bill C-16. Setting aside my personal views and lack of support for that bill, its passage, I believe, has eliminated the need to defend the mandatory minimums as prescribed in Bill C-255.

In closing, I hope my fellow parliamentarians from all parties will support Bill C-255. Reports of places of worship being vandalized have become all too frequent. They are so frequent that they have become commonplace. It is critical that we address this issue. Regardless of whether or not we are part of a faith-based community, I believe we should not ignore the increase in cases of mischief directed at places of worship.

As parliamentarians, the ability to amend legislation is one of our primary tools to improve the safety, security and, ultimately, lives of Canadians. By passing this bill, we would be signalling to criminals that their actions have real consequences. We would be signalling to victims that we recognize that acts of mischief are deeply hurtful, fear-inducing and costly. We would also be signalling to Canadians that we continue to value our fundamental freedom of religion or belief. Finally, we would be providing law enforcement with a new tool that would make their job of protecting society easier.

On that important note, I am pleased to advise my colleagues in this place that the Canadian Police Association, which represents 60,000 frontline civilian and sworn police personnel across Canada, stated in a recent letter that it supports the objectives of Bill C-255. It said Bill C-255 reflects an important principle. Offences involving religious property should be treated seriously. Those responsible should be held meaningfully accountable, and the people and organizations left to repair the damage should not be forgotten. The association particularly welcomes the bill's emphasis on compensation for the property owners, as well as stronger consequences for repeat offenders.

I have met with organizations across the spectrum of faiths in Canada and from different regions, and to date, everyone I have met with has supported this bill. Between now and the second hour of debate, I encourage all members to meet with faith communities in their riding to talk about the measures proposed in this bill.

As I mentioned earlier, I believe this issue is not a partisan one. I believe it is a small but important change to the Criminal Code that could make a big difference. I look forward to the debate and to any suggestions about how this bill might be improved upon. I understand that sometimes compromise is necessary to make progress.

I thank members for their time and attention, and I look forward to answering any questions my colleagues might have.

• (1115)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found the member's comments regarding Bill C-9 interesting. I was here throughout the debate on Bill C-9, and from what I can recall, the member opposite actually voted against that legislation, which addressed hate motivation, dealt with our religious institutions and, in fact, protected our religious institutions from hate.

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts. Has she changed her position on Bill C-9?

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, my private member's bill was already being drafted when Bill C-9 was first introduced. Without repeating everything I said in my remarks or going through a chronology of the changes that occurred to Bill C-9, I would respectfully submit to the member that Bill C-255 proposes a change to the Criminal Code that was not contemplated in Bill C-9 and does not currently exist.

My objective is simply to put forward that the changes proposed in Bill C-255 are important amendments to the Criminal Code that would provide clarity and are supported by faith communities across the country, and I believe this bill should be adopted.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for my colleague.

We are aware that my colleague's bill does not replace section 430 of the Criminal Code, which already provides for sanctions in this respect. It simply adds mandatory minimum punishments. Personally, I see this as somewhat of a parliamentary supervision of our courts, telling judges that they cannot impose a sentence that is less than the minimum punishment described.

Does my colleague have any courts or judges in mind that deserve to be subject to such supervision? Can she give us some examples? I cannot think of any off the top of my head.

Second, our Liberal colleague referred to Bill C-9. In fact, our Conservative colleagues opposed an amendment I proposed, which sought to make it illegal to spread hatred or promote hatred based on a religious text. We wanted to remove that from the Criminal Code.

Does my colleague think that, if somebody commits mischief in relation to property with the goal of inciting hatred on religious grounds, would that be acceptable? The mandatory minimum punishment—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the opportunity to expand on the remarks related to mandatory minimum punishment prescribed in Bill C-255. First of all, my bill simply mirrors the mandatory minimum fines that already exist in the Criminal Code in regard to war memorials. I mentioned I was glad that the provisions in the Criminal Code that address hate-motivated crimes still exist, but the changes I am proposing in this bill do not require law enforcement and the courts to prove that hate was a motivating factor when the perpetrator committed the crime.

• (1120)

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for such an awesome bill. As we all see, the rise of persecution against the Christian church across Canada has been profound. We have seen more than 100 churches burned in the last 10 years in Canada alone. It is a modern-day form of religious persecution, and it is very troubling.

I want to ask the member a question that she alluded to earlier. We are seeing responses from the Liberals across the way. This seems like an obvious bill that everyone can support in this place. Are the Liberals going to support her bill?

Private Members' Business

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that today is a day of debate, and we will be hearing from a number of our colleagues, both on this side of the House and on the other side of the House. I hope that throughout the debate, they will note the merits of this bill, and that even if they have already made up their minds to oppose it, they will be open-minded to what is shared here today.

I want to remind them that this bill seeks to accomplish two things. First, it would broaden the scope of mischief by removing the requirement for the mischief offence to be hate-motivated. That is a huge difference. Law enforcement resources are already stretched. Second, this bill would make monetary compensation to the victim by the perpetrator a mandatory part of any sentence. Those provisions already exist in the Criminal Code in regard to war memorials. I think the members in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary of the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right at the outset, let me make it very clear that, from my understanding, restitution payments exist in law and can be paid to victims. After listening to the member opposite, I note that she seems to be very aware of that. What the member is proposing is a fairly significant change.

I want to paint a bigger picture of what has actually taken place. First and foremost, I think it is universally accepted within the chamber by all members of Parliament that hate has no place inside the country. We all play a very important role to do what we can to promote tolerance and education and, where we can, to call out things that ultimately lead to hatred and acts of violence or vandalism, which cause a great deal of harm in many different ways to the communities we represent.

I think of churches, mosques, gurdwaras, temples and synagogues, all of which have been victims of hate crimes. The issue of hate-motivated mischief is something the government has actually dealt with in its legislative agenda. Coming out of the last federal election, we had a Prime Minister who made a commitment to come forward with a legislative agenda to deal with the issue of crime and safety. That is the reason I posed the question I did to the member opposite.

I sat on the government benches listening to Conservative after Conservative filibuster or speak in opposition to Bill C-9, so it is not because of the Conservative Party that the Combatting Hate Act is now law in Canada. Quite the opposite, it is because of the leadership of the Prime Minister and the government of the day in forcing through the legislation. It was substantial. It dealt with mischief and hatred, which are real, in several different ways. It was part of the overall crime, safety and community safety legislative agenda that the Prime Minister and the government have put forward over the last 18 months, because we take the issue so seriously.

When we think of the core of that legislation, it deals with putting up with, for example, protesters who try to hinder, prevent or intimidate people from being able to attend a church, a synagogue, a gurdwara or a mosque. That legislation is there. It is tangi-

ble. We provided it. It is all part of the bigger picture of the agenda of the government.

I provided the member the opportunity to give some clarification on the legislation. Has she changed her position in supporting Bill C-9? From what I recall, not only did the Conservatives vote against it, but they proactively promoted, I would suggest, a lot of hatred toward the legislation. Listen to the debates or read the debates on it from just a year ago.

● (1125)

If we look at what the member is proposing, restitution payments exist today and are a part of our judicial system, not precisely in the way the member is proposing within this piece of legislation, but there is duplication within the legislation being proposed by the member today. That is because of the changes we brought in through Bill C-9 or because of the current criminal act, prior.

Whenever I think of judicial changes and reforms, I often think about the stakeholders and how they feel about the different issues. It is because of Bill C-9 that I posed a question specifically on that issue to the member, but if I was able to provide a follow-up question, it would be on dealing with the stakeholders. Some of the stakeholders are our provincial and territorial jurisdictions. Has the Conservative Party consulted with or had any direct input from our provincial, territorial or even indigenous counterparts? They all have a very strong vested interest in the area.

If we were to canvass our constituents, the average Canadian, we would find that an overwhelming majority, over 90%, of people understand hate-motivated crimes, including the issue of mischief or vandalism. The vandalizing of places of worship, sadly, is not new, and it varies extensively.

The member cited specific examples from outside the province of Alberta and went into a number of jurisdictions. It does not matter. It happens in all regions of our nation and it varies. It varies from graffiti to burning things down, causing significant damage, all of which we are very much concerned about. Vandalism is something we all take very seriously, and I would encourage us to do so. At the end of the day, there is more we can do on the issue of vandalism that goes beyond our church facilities.

I used to chair a youth justice committee, and through that, we had many different discussions about the issue of vandalism in our communities. At the end of the day, what we need in order to deal with a lot of the vandalism that takes place in our communities is to ensure that the offence itself is being better dealt with through enforcement. Often, we have the legislation that is necessary. Our law enforcement agencies, municipalities and provinces, all of which participate in the process, have something to contribute.

The amount of graffiti in our communities, for example, or vandalism that takes place is significant. I think that co-operation among the different stakeholders and different jurisdictions could have a more positive outcome. Yes, restitution does play a role. I know that when we had discussions in regard to vandalism when I was the chair of the justice committee, we recognized that restitution plays a role, and our courts recognize that today.

• (1130)

Having said all that, I question and hope to hear more from the members of the Conservative Party about whether or not they are now onside—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I am afraid the time has expired.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, mandatory minimum sentences have already been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada, so I think it would be a real shame to try to rerun that failed script.

We share the concerns about the issue of hate and preventing people from committing mischief against religious property. I believe I can say that all members of Parliament share that value. We do not want to live in a society where people commit mischief just to make a point. That said, there are different ways of tackling this issue of hate.

What the Conservatives are proposing—and, with all due respect, I believe this is an argument I have heard rather frequently since I joined the House nearly 11 years ago—is the idea that the more people we can put behind bars, the safer society will be. It is a valid point, and one that can be defended, but that is not the kind of society I want to live in. I maintain, again respectfully, that it is not the sort of society the vast majority of people wish to live in either.

The Bloc Québécois believes that we need to give our judges some judicial discretion. We have faith in our judges. They are not perfect. They are human and sometimes make mistakes, just like the rest of us, but they generally have a good head on their shoulders, good judgment and a lot of experience. They are able to assess every situation on its merits. Trying to force them to follow a certain criteria or framework that they cannot deviate from is a bit like having them supervised or putting them under parliamentary supervision, as I said earlier when talking to my colleague.

It is one thing for Parliament to determine that a given situation constitutes a crime and to set out a maximum sentence, but minimum punishments are another matter. We are telling our judges that they cannot impose a lighter punishment than the one that has been set out. I think that is deplorable. Such parliamentary control over judicial sentencing is a dangerous tool that should be reserved for genuinely exceptional cases.

I asked my colleague the following question: In this case, is she able to identify judges or courts that are so defective that we need to supervise them in that way? I did not get an answer to that question, but I do not think there are any such judges or courts. Earlier, I said that mistakes can happen. Judges are only human and can make mistakes. If a judge from the Quebec Superior Court, the Court of Quebec or any other provincial or other court makes a mistake, there are courts of appeal that can review that decision. If the litigants feel that the court of appeal also made a mistake, they can appeal to the Supreme Court, which is home to the country's greatest legal minds. There are safeguards in place. Judges cannot hand down any punishment in any way they like without running the risk of having their decision appealed and overturned.

Private Members' Business

The problem I have with minimum sentences is when people suggest, as some are suggesting here, that they should be imposed for pretty much every offence. Personally, I believe that sentences should be tailored to the circumstances, that we should trust the courts and our judges, who have, for the most part, been carefully selected. I will not repeat the criticisms I have already shared on several occasions regarding the judicial appointment process, which, in my view, needs improvement. Generally speaking, however, we can trust judges to adapt sentences with a view to building a better society, one where the principles of rehabilitation can be applied, for example, along with monetary or other types of compensation that will benefit society and contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders.

• (1135)

We need balanced principles. These people decide what is or is not a crime, but they also decide not to send everyone who commits mischief to prison, but to rehabilitate them instead.

I knew a young man who once graffitied the wall of a convenience store. Fortunately, the police arrested him, but his punishment was not to appear before a judge or go to jail. He had to clean off his graffiti and do a number of hours of community service for the store owner. They became friends. The young man did a lot for the convenience store owner because he realized that his graffiti, while not as bad as detonating a bomb, had caused damage and a lot of inconvenience, and that was something he had to realize. This young person was rehabilitated.

I get that a convenience store and a place of worship are two different things. I understand that, but the principle is the same. Sometimes, I agree that a crime against a place of worship deserves a serious sentence, and in other cases, it deserves a sentence better suited to the circumstances. The only way to adjust these sentences is to let our judges use their discretion on a case-by-case basis.

To no one's great surprise, the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this bill, which, I would add, is unnecessary, given that section 430 of the Criminal Code already includes sentencing provisions for mischief. There are even specific provisions in subsection 430(4.1) that deal with mischief motivated by hate. If someone commits mischief inadvertently, to have a bit of fun or because they like to show off is one thing. If someone commits mischief because they harbour hatred toward a religious community or another group, that is something else entirely. That does happen, and there are provisions in the Criminal Code that our judges take into account, so that is reassuring.

Private Members' Business

Before I conclude, I would like to say that we need some degree of consistency in the House. We pass a great many laws on various topics. We are not going to start contradicting ourselves from one law to the next. It would be counterproductive and harmful to society as a whole. However, our Conservative colleagues waged an all-out battle against Bill C-9, which was intended to combat hate. Why this all-out battle? It was largely because the Bloc Québécois had proposed an amendment seeking to ban what was known as the so-called religious exemption defence.

Incitement to hatred was recognized as an offence under the Criminal Code unless someone did so based on a belief in a religious text, in which case they would be exempt from this charge both for incitement to hatred and for incitement to anti-Semitism. We said this should be removed from the Criminal Code. Our Conservative colleagues fought hard, arguing that it should remain in the Criminal Code, that people should have the right to incite hatred if their actions were based on a religious text. It made my hair stand on end, but that is what happened.

For the sake of consistency, do our Conservative colleagues believe that someone who commits mischief against religious property would have a valid defence against that charge if they based their actions on a religious text that is part of their faith? I cannot say that I have figured out the answer to that, because the two positions are at odds with one another. I am very keen to hear a Conservative MP reconcile these two ideas and tell us how they deal with it. Is it acceptable for someone to commit mischief against religious property based on a religious text that is part of their faith?

• (1140)

[English]

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many of us know the quiet satisfaction of spending a weekend puttering around fixing things: repairing a broken window sash, resetting a shifting stone in the garden, repainting a door or securing fresh glass. However, when the paint covers graffiti on a mosque or gurdwara, when the stones being reset are headstones knocked over in a churchyard or when the door being repaired is the one set fire to at a synagogue and the glass has bullet holes in it, there is nothing quiet and nothing satisfying about it.

Churches, mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras, mandirs, kingdom halls, shrines, temples and meeting houses, for people of faith, are places to pray, but they are also where our communities go for weddings, funerals, Scouts, craft sales, concerts, recovery groups, community meetings, food banks, pancake breakfasts and commemorations of all kinds. When these places are damaged for any reason, our community lives are interrupted and many people feel a great sense of anxiety and unease.

Right now, the Criminal Code has a specific offence for mischief against religious property, but only when the Crown can prove that the mischief was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. If the police know that somebody smashed the windows of a synagogue or deliberately damaged or disrupted the use of a church but they cannot prove why that person did it, the case generally falls back into the category of ordinary mischief and often escapes prosecution entirely, which is the answer to my hon. colleague's question about why

appeals are not the answer and discretion for judges is not sufficient for this kind of incident. This is the gap.

Motive can be very difficult to prove. A person can smash every window in a mosque and say nothing. They can damage a church during a break-in or make a synagogue unusable without leaving a manifesto or shouting a slur. However, it is not ordinary mischief when that place of worship is used for the community writ large. It is extraordinary mischief, and in proposing this bill, my colleague is seeking to close that gap for communities such as mine where there is simply a shortage of places where large crowds can gather.

Bill C-255 says that the place itself deserves special protection. If a person deliberately commits mischief against a place of worship, the Crown would not also have to prove that what was going on inside that person's head was hatred towards the specific group that runs the place, before the special penalty regime proposed by the bill would apply, because the harm to these places is not purely the dollar value of the damage.

If someone breaks a \$1,500 window in an ordinary commercial building, "ordinary mischief" may describe the outcome perfectly well. However, if somebody breaks the same window in a place of worship on a Saturday night, the congregation cannot hold services Sunday morning, a bake sale cannot happen that afternoon and the AA group cannot meet in the evening. The consequences of damage to these buildings extend well beyond that pane of glass. Bill C-255 would fill the space between ordinary vandalism and a provable hate crime by saying that deliberately attacking a certain kind of building deserves special treatment in the Criminal Code even when prosecutors cannot prove the offender's motive.

Now, listening to my colleagues, despite support from the Canadian Police Association for the objectives of the bill, the government's answer to all this appears to be that Bill C-255 is redundant. I do not think that is an adequate answer. The various offences passed by the Carney Liberals this session deal inadequately with intimidation and obstruction. Blocking a door is not breaking a window, and intimidating worshippers is not burning down a hall.

Bill C-9 created a general hate crime offence, but that offence still requires proof of hate motivation. None of these provisions does what Bill C-255 would do: create a specific property mischief offence for buildings used widely in our communities for so much more than religious services, which would not depend on proving motive.

As for the comments by my colleagues about mandatory minimum penalties, the government claims to have removed that issue as an obstacle through its constitutional safety valve in Bill C-16.

• (1145)

Since 2014, the Criminal Code has treated mischief against a war memorial, cenotaph or cemetery as its own offence, with penalties that are very similar, identical in fact, to those being proposed by my colleagues. Nobody has to prove that the vandal hated veterans, or the people buried there, if they desecrate a cenotaph. Parliament decided that the character of the property itself justified special treatment. Bill C-255 takes essentially the same approach to buildings used as places of worship.

The Liberals' current approach to stopping damage to these buildings is not working. Churches continue to burn, synagogues continue to be vandalized, and mosques and gurdwaras continue to be defaced, all at an alarming rate. According to Statistics Canada's March 30 release, police reported that hate crimes targeting religion rose 154% between 2020 and 2023, from 530 incidents to a jaw-dropping 1,345 incidents, and remained essentially unchanged through 2024. Mischief accounted for 59% of them, but those are police-reported hate crime statistics. Cases that are not identified by police as hate-motivated are not captured by those numbers, so the very cases that Bill C-255 is trying to reach, where the damage is obvious but there is no evidence establishing a hate motive, are difficult to see in the statistics.

In their speeches today, my colleagues have raised some technical issues with Bill C-255 that deserve to be addressed. Whether compensation floors should apply where the damage is minor is a fair question for committee. So are questions about mandatory penalties and how they would operate across the full range of conduct caught by the offence. However, I would remind the government members that they have argued that Bill C-16's safety valve addresses this problem. They cannot have it both ways.

The member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek brought this bill forward because she wants to protect these places for religious and secular Canadians alike. In communities like mine, where places to gather are in short supply, this is a worthy objective. If the government members are truly interested in the collaboration they so often tell the House is necessary at this time, there is an obvious opportunity here for them to work with her to make this bill satisfactory to all parties.

I was at a wonderful little community craft market just this weekend in the hall of St. Andrew's church, run by Volunteer Nanaimo. This craft market is totally secular and provides a terrific benefit to our community. There is a tea vendor and soaps, crafts, knitted baby clothes and tea towels, Halloween and Christmas decorations, kids' crafts and one business with two budding entrepreneurs selling their 3D-printed wares: a little boy, who is six, overseen by his sister, who is seven. There is even homemade nail polish. Every year, I get my husband a new winter hat from this particular market, and this weekend was no exception. I got him a soft forest green knitted cap that will keep him warm this winter.

We should remember who we are protecting when we protect these buildings. Certainly, we are protecting people of faith, their prayers, weddings and funerals, but we are also protecting AA meetings on Tuesday nights and food banks on Wednesday mornings. A mosque may run a youth program or collect food for families who have never set foot in its prayer hall. Gurdwaras feed peo-

Private Members' Business

ple regardless of faith. We do not have to believe in what happens at the altar, the bimah or the prayer mat to have an interest in protecting these buildings.

When someone deliberately attacks these places, the law should look at what was done and where, not require prosecutors to prove motive before an offence with meaningful consequences applies. The current approach has not filled the gap. We see ample evidence of that on the news on a regular basis, but what we do not see often enough are convictions. That is the reason to examine Bill C-255 seriously, amend what needs amending and see whether Parliament can produce something stronger together for the benefit of all our communities.

• (1150)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Before we resume debate, I will just remind the member not to use the name of any member of the House, including the Prime Minister, in their remarks.

Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-255. The bill proposes to create a new criminal offence, mischief to religious property, which would join the existing criminal mischief offences at section 430 of the Criminal Code. The bill further proposes corresponding mandatory minimum jail sentences and a penalty structure whereby the offender would pay money directly to the property owner as part of their punishment.

The existing offence of mischief to property is a broad offence that generally prohibits intentionally damaging, destroying or interfering with someone's lawful use or enjoyment of the property. For example, it could capture throwing a rock through the window of someone's home or vandalizing a building, including a place of worship. We all have an interest in protecting both public and private property from these criminal acts.

The bill's objectives are laudable. This is something we have talked about often in this place in terms of protection of not only places of worship but broader religious spaces. I agree with the sponsor that religious property deserves protection and that property owners, in appropriate circumstances, deserve compensation when damage is suffered. However, after careful consideration, I intend to vote against the bill, and my reasons are these.

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First, the bill would duplicate mischief offences in the Criminal Code. Though members who have spoken today suggest there is a hole in the Criminal Code, there is not. This is illegal. Second, the proposed financial penalties are not necessary given the authority of sentencing judges to order restitution to victims and inappropriately risk overcompensating certain victims when damage to their property is less than the \$1,000 minimum penalty. Also, the proposals are redundant as a result of the recent changes advanced by the government through the Combatting Hate Act, including a new hate crime offence and new offences that address obstruction of or interference with access to buildings for religious worship.

It has been bizarre to sit here for the last 50 minutes and hear from Conservative members who pretend that Bill C-9 does not exist. Also, we did not hear how they voted, which was against. We also did not hear how they spent months and months delaying the bill, months and months spreading misinformation and disinformation, sowing fear in communities where enough fear exists and suggesting that people will be arrested at the pulpit, which is preposterous given the protections under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They stoked so much fear and division. Many of them sanctimoniously got up with bibles at their hearts to vote against this piece of legislation. However, a few months later, they are here to say we need to be protecting religious places.

The previous speaker said the government has an obligation to the sponsor of the bill to work with her. Where was she when Bill C-9 was going through and there was an unwillingness to work through Bill C-9? There was filibuster after filibuster as religious groups were calling for the Conservatives to pass the legislation. What did they do? They spent months fundraising. As religious groups were asking for it, that is what they did. It is interesting to hear now that we should have an obligation to work with this member.

I agree that the member's objectives are laudable, but so too were the objectives of the government in Bill C-9. Those were campaign commitments that we needed to step up, as there was so much debate in this place, in not only this Parliament but the previous Parliament, as we have seen a rise in hate crimes and attacks on religious institutions. The government stepped up, and the Conservatives were nowhere to be found, so it is a little surprising to be here in this place. As I mentioned, I support the intent behind the bill, but I do not believe its specific proposals will enhance criminal law responses to conduct targeting religious property beyond what the existing criminal law already does.

Returning to my concern that the bill would result in duplication, the Criminal Code already contains a mischief offence that applies when any property, including religious property, is damaged. This offence is punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of two years or, if the value of the property exceeds \$5,000, a maximum of 10 years.

• (1155)

In addition to this general offence, there is a specific offence that prohibits mischief to religious property, which is punishable by a higher maximum penalty if the conduct of the offender was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. This specific offence is punishable

by a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years when prosecuted by indictment, regardless of the value.

Now, the previous speaker said we should not look at motive, and that would be a great thing to say if that was not required by the criminal law in all cases. It has probably been 20 years since I took a criminal law class, but we need to look at motive. That motive needs to be proven. Even in the member's legislation, that motive will need to be proven.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chris Bittle: Why? Mr. Speaker, the sponsor of the bill asks why. That is wonderful.

There are two things in a criminal offence that need to be proved: the *actus reus*, the criminal act, which is very easy to prove; and the *mens rea*, or the mental component. One needs to prove that the offender was going to do it, the motive behind it, for every crime in the Criminal Code. It is surprising to hear the Conservatives ask, "Why do we need to prove motive?" If we are legislating around the Criminal Code, we should know what elements are required to convict someone of that offence.

The requirement to prove specific motivation, which the existing mischief to religious property offence includes, would not remove the requirement to prove it as an aggravating factor in sentencing. After a conviction, the law already allows for what we are calling for in this place, that the penalty should be higher if someone is attacking places of religious worship or religious gathering. That is already in the Criminal Code, and members on the other side are pretending it does not exist. The power is already in the hands of judges.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chris Bittle: The member on the other side is heckling, Mr. Speaker. He is saying I am out of touch, but he has spent months spreading misinformation and disinformation, and he believes it. It is amazing when they believe their own supply. He is doing nothing but yelling one line. It is somewhat amusing that he has nothing of substance to say except to shoot me down. He knows that all they can do is spread disinformation and raise money, which is shameful. These communities already have enough fear, and now a political party stands up to spread misinformation and disinformation when every member of this House seeks to protect them.

The bill's goals are laudable, as I have said, but they will not do what the members are saying. The member is laughing. He thinks this is funny. He is going to go back to his constituents, raise money and continue that spread of disinformation. That is all he has. The Conservatives are sitting on the other side because Canadians can see through the act. They see through what the Conservative leader does, and that is all they have. There is nothing of substance, though I think the hon. member has brought this forward in a laudable, honourable way and wants to do better and to protect her constituents.

It is reasonable to stand up here and say the law does not necessarily do that, while the member laughs. The member thinks it is funny, and he will just go back to his riding and raise money off that as he tries to shout me down. This is shameful conduct by the Conservatives.

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Let us have a little order here.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUILDING CANADA STRONG ACT

The House resumed from September 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-39, An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

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

It is an unfortunate fact that Canada's economy is stagnating. There has been 0% growth reported for July 2026, with manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade pulling back in our country. Unemployment is above 6%, with youth unemployment more than double that. Projections for Canada's national economic performance are the worst in the OECD.

We know that Canada needs investment. We know inherently, and through data, statistics and analysis, that our economy requires investment as the foundation for growing gross domestic product, GDP. Unfortunately, in the last decade of the Liberal government, for every dollar of inward foreign direct investment, two dollars has exited. That is not the basis on which we grow our country. The reality is it is a significant contributor to Canada's productivity crisis.

In such dire circumstances, Canada remains a land of great promise. It is a country of strong people and communities. It is a country that possesses great resilience, which has never been more important than now. What we need most is a government that does not seek to determine what is best, does not seek to pick winners and losers in matters of business and industry, but rather facilitates the abilities and capacities of our great nation. There is much more

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that the government can do to unleash Canada's potential. All of this starts with recognizing that the first job of government is to facilitate, and to do that it must stay out of the way to the greatest extent possible.

Industry and business have been clear to the government that doing business in Canada has become too difficult and too hard to undertake. In particular, the first step in major economic projects is permits and approvals, which are too uncertain to justify the work required to obtain them.

It may be a fact some would like to ignore, but investment capital is mobile, and it will go where the opportunity is the best. Over the last 11 years, that has not been Canada. The first effort of the Liberal government to change directions from its prior 10 years of governance has been the Major Projects Office created under Bill C-5. Projects are not, however, getting approved. To date, there have been zero projects approved by the Major Projects Office, despite more than a year since the creation of this new bureaucracy. Everyone does remember the words, "speeds not seen in generations." Those words were spoken by the Prime Minister, and they remain hollow today.

The path forward is a clear and unambiguous framework for project permitting and approvals that is transparent to all Canadians and allows businesses to plan and to build. Let me say here that I am not suggesting that our country cut corners. We need not sacrifice health and safety or environmental standards and practices in order to grow and develop our economy. As all members of the House know well, Canadian industry leads the world in many areas, including environmental practices, and we must continue to do so.

What we need are reasonable processes that are not in and of themselves the reason projects do not go forward. I think of the northern gateway pipeline project, a project that was very important to my home province of Alberta and indeed to our country as a whole. It was an \$8-billion pipeline project that died 10 years ago due to a lack of support from the government. The proponent of that pipeline, Enbridge, spent in excess of \$500 million on that project and lost that money. While the press conferences and announcements of today on this subject from the government have been much improved, the anti-business Liberal legacy is large and still overshadows our country.

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We need to take politics out of the project approval process when our industry and its expert regulators are doing what they know how to do and what they are expert in. Political approvals are uncertain and a barrier to economic development. We need projects to benefit from a clear, transparent and predictable approval process, not just those projects the government likes. There needs to be a simple harmonization of existing regulations. The one-year time frame or target that has been put in place is not a complete answer to the uncertainty that is holding back our businesses. With the ability of the government to extend that statutory time frame, we end up in the same place, which is political process, political approval and political favouritism. This is not a basis on which we can go forward.

We need more than a process that is a workaround designed to avoid the impacts of bad legislation. We need to remove the bad legislation. We need to fix the foundation on which our economy is built, and that means repealing Bill C-69. We all remember the Impact Assessment Act, known in my part of Canada as the “no more pipelines” act. There is a need as well for a massive overhaul of the regulations that are stifling investment all across the approval framework. These small steps forward, as in this legislation, do not get us to the point we need to get to.

A problem with this legislation is that the year-long time frame only begins once a comprehensive application has been completed. It remains uncertain at what point that approval or that step in the process will be secured. Industry and business have been clear with the government that red tape, the regulatory burden of undertaking business in Canada, is a major barrier to doing business in our country. No reductions in the regulations, pre-approvals and studies required will improve the situation. There is no guarantee these changes are going to have success with business.

• (1205)

The pause on the timeline that the government could put in place is also a recurring problem, as there is no limit on this aspect of the approval process. Business needs to be assured that projects will move forward. We need certainty around timelines so that business has the ability to invest. The creation of zones of national interest is very similar to identifying projects as being in the national interest. Again, it is an uncertainty and a political process, and it is not going to be helpful in moving things forward.

Fundamentally, we need greater transportation infrastructure to support trade. Over the last year, I have served on the international trade committee and we have heard from businesses across all economic sectors that the need for improved transportation infrastructure is critical in Canada. It is going to be one of those things that we will not move forward without. While there are some indications that changes may be made, the bill does not go far enough in that respect. We have much more that we need to do with respect to this process.

An example of transportation missteps is the effort of the government to sell off interests in our airports. That alone, a simple transfer of ownership, like foreign direct investment that comes into Canada to purchase existing assets, does nothing in and of itself to increase business capital available for growth, expansion and development. That is yet another thought that makes me think more of a

portfolio manager and less of a Prime Minister, in terms of the disposition of our leadership and the Liberal government.

Going forward, Canada needs an improved foundation for doing business. Conservatives would make those foundational changes and bring in legislation that makes an approval and permitting process clear and certain. I emphasize again that we need cut no corners. We simply need a clear process.

• (1210)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to the Conservatives, it is almost like a big, wet, blue blanket on anything. At the end of the day, I think they need to start thinking in terms of how it is that the government, over the last 18 months, has actually been building a stronger and healthier nation. We see that in terms of Toronto, where investors from around the world came in, half a trillion dollars. We can see that in terms of the major projects. There are 24-plus major projects, half a trillion dollars in terms of major projects, from every region of the country. All we hear from the Conservatives is all related to a wet blanket, quite frankly.

Does the member not recognize that Bill C-39 is a part of building—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill.

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, the question, or, really, the statement with a wee little question tucked on the end of it, really belies a fundamental philosophical difference between that side of the aisle and this side, that the government should be directing our economy and that no project should go forward without government approval, political approval and government investment.

I do not believe that projects that can be financed and undertaken by the private sector require government money. The private sector will build economic projects in our country. It will build prosperity in our country. What it needs, what we need and what Canada needs is for the government to get out of the way.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, of course, there are things that my colleague and I may not agree on, but there are certainly things that we do. He talked about how the bill does not go far enough in terms of infrastructure. I think about the Prime Minister's words about nation building, about building Canada strong. Right now, there are 65,000 Canadians who are homeless. They cite that this costs us about \$3 billion a year and that it would save us \$2 billion if they were to be housed. Right now, in Canada, 3.3% of our housing is non-market housing, compared to France and Britain, which are at about 16% to 17%, Denmark, 21%, the Netherlands, 34%. We do not have to look far to see what 3.3% looks like.

Does my colleague agree that nation building, in a country as wealthy as Canada, should mean making sure that we do not have any homeless people in the country?

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, certainly, no person in Canada who wishes to be housed should be unhoused. However, what is clear in Canada is that the federal government has among the worst ways to try to deliver housing effectively in Canada.

We are now on our fourth major Liberal effort to bring in housing improvements in Canada, without success. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has projected that roughly 5,000 homes at a maximum will be built under the current Liberal government program. That is 5,000 per year for five years. This is a far cry from the 500,000 homes that our Prime Minister stated he would deliver.

• (1215)

[Translation]

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of the changes in Bill C-39 is that decision-making power is being centralized in the hands of far fewer people than it was previously.

For example, in some cases, a single minister may be responsible for approving a project. In other cases, it is the Governor in Council that decides. However, in the majority of cases, the expertise of several agencies is being completely sidelined.

I would like to know whether my colleague sees this as a form of erosion of democracy. Take, for example, the issue of workers' rights and the fact that parliamentarians will be excluded from the process of applying section 107 of the Canada Labour Code.

Furthermore, on environmental matters, scientists and reason are sidelined in order to centralize power in the hands of a few decision makers, who could, in some cases, be tempted to use it for personal gain.

[English]

David McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, we employ in Canada, in various aspects, expert panels that regulate different aspects of our industrial base. That expertise does, in my understanding, and should include representation across all stakeholders within economic development projects and status. We have a system in that respect that works. As I indicated previously, that is where our decision-making should be. It should not be located with a single political minister.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to stand up in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of Saskatoon West. Today, we are speaking about Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. I think everybody in our country, including those in the Liberal government, agrees that 11 years of the current government has left Canada lacking when it comes to investment, lacking when it comes to jobs and the economy and lacking when it comes to GDP per person. We need to do everything we can to get more business activity and more investment in this country.

The building Canada strong act sounds very familiar to me. If we go back about a year and a half to the last election, what happened right after? We heard these words: We need to build at speeds never seen before. It is much like we are hearing today. There is a lot of déjà vu. Members will recall that at that time, the government came

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forward with Bill C-5. The government's website, even today, says this about Bill C-5:

Canada must build critical new infrastructure at speeds not seen in generations. This includes the infrastructure to diversify our trading relationships and to become an energy superpower in both clean and conventional energies.

That is great. The government needed, at that time, to get this bill through the House and pass it immediately so we could create the Major Projects Office and create projects of national interest, because this was urgent for “speeds not seen in generations”. This House did that. This House debated the bill relatively quickly and passed it. We rushed it through.

What was accomplished? We have bureaucrats in place. They are all getting paid and probably getting bonuses too. Five hundred projects have been submitted, so people in the industries stepped up with lots of ideas. However, while the member across the aisle said there were 24 projects, I saw 18 on the website that have been considered by the office. Just last week, the very first one squeaked its way through the office, but it has not started yet. The actual results of this office are that zero projects have been built.

I find it kind of amusing that the solution is another bill. Last year, we had the Building Canada Act. This is the building Canada strong act, and I can only assume that next year we are going to have the building Canada even stronger act to fix all the problems that have not been fixed here. The government is about talk, not results, and Canadians need actual construction jobs, need actual work and need money so they can pay their bills.

As I said, with respect to Bill C-5, there were 500 project applications, and only one cleared. I want to talk about the difference between a Conservative approach and a Liberal approach. The Liberal approach is all about control. The Liberals will not let the private sector do its thing. The Liberals want the private sector to come to them. They want people in the private sector to come begging to their offices, saying, “Please, sir, we would like to build this project.” They like the view of control. They like the ability to say yes and no. They like it when people come to them essentially begging to do things, and they like to be able to say no, yes, no, yes, to basically pick the projects.

The Conservative approach is very different. Our approach is to get government out of the way and level the playing field. We need to let the private sector do what it does best. People in the private sector analyze projects. They look at the benefits, look at the costs and look at the implications on the environment and other things, and they make their decisions. Those decisions actually benefit all Canadians, because they create jobs, they create work and they create paycheques.

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We need to put guardrails in place, obviously, so there have to be environmental protections and there has to be a taxation system that works, but it needs to be predictable, fair and timely. If people meet the standards as laid out by the guardrails, then their project should be approved. They do not need to come begging to the government to get it approved; they can just go ahead and do it. The result of that is that more projects get built.

The Liberals like to pick winners and losers. Conservatives want everyone to win. As a result, the Liberals have one project now slowly moving its way through the system. Conservatives would have hundreds of projects by now that would be moving forward. How would we do that? We have said it many times. We would repeal Bill C-69, the no more pipelines act. We would repeal Bill C-48, the tanker ban. We would repeal the industrial carbon tax and the clean fuel standard. We would establish predictable, time-limited assessment reviews with a one-and-done approach.

The one-and-done approach is really important to this because it is one project, one review. It is a simple application, a firm decision timeline and predictable milestones, with a six-month approval or, in some cases, when there is an extremely complicated case, a one-year approval. We would maintain our safety and environmental standards, but we would put a predictable process in place for businesses so that they know what they are up against.

What we need is private investor confidence. That is what is lacking in our country right now. We need permanent fixes to the bureaucracy and red tape that have been created by this 11-year-old government. We need to create stability and predictability so that investors can make their decisions knowing what the future will hold.

• (1220)

There are potentially billions of dollars in projects waiting to be done in Canada. We need them, and our workers need them. We need our national income to grow so that as the cost of everything goes up, our paycheques rise with it. They have not. We see that. All of us were in our ridings last week. I am sure members talked to many people who struggle from day to day, more people than ever before and people we would not expect.

This is part of the answer, to have construction and have investment, but that is not happening under the government, and it will not happen under Bill C-39. We have capital on the sidelines because of uncertainty. Businesses have money to spend, but they are not spending it in Canada. We also need private proponents for commercially viable projects, and I will talk more about that in a second. We do not need taxpayer subsidies. We need investor confidence.

Let us talk about the Pacific link pipeline announcement. This is the very first project of national interest out of the Major Projects Office. Guess what it does not have. It does not have a private proponent. Who is paying for it? It is the taxpayer. Who is taking the risk on the project? It is the taxpayer. How can it be that the Prime Minister himself has encouraged it to get built and has supposedly cleared the pathway, yet there is no private proponent? That tells us that something is definitely not right in the system, and that the bureaucracy and red tape have not been eliminated. It is government money that is going to be spent on this much-needed project. Do not get me wrong; we need this project for the sake of our country to grow our country, but it is the taxpayers taking all the risks, and that should not be. We need to get government out of the way and let builders do the building.

In Saskatchewan, these impacts are very real. Our economy in Saskatchewan is based on resources. I just want to single out food production. We produce grain and potash in Saskatchewan, and this directly impacts people at the grocery store. It impacts Canadians and people all around the world. What is critical in those two industries, grain and potash, is railways, roads and ports. Any bottlenecks become a problem for our customers.

What is needed in order to make farms, railways, roads and ports work? It is diesel fuel. Diesel fuel is consumed in farming, trucking and railways, in everything. Higher fuel costs result directly in higher costs to the consumer. That is why we have put forward the emergency fuel relief plan. We want to eliminate all federal taxes on diesel sales until at least Canada Day next year. We want to scrap diesel production taxes by permanently eliminating the federal industrial carbon tax and the clean fuel standard. We want to eliminate the diesel price gap between the United States and Canada within five years. We also need to create emergency permits for diesel refineries, storage and transportation. We need to get the industry going. We need to allow businesses to deduct that and build a strategic refined petroleum reserve to protect Canadians during supply reductions.

The strategic fuel reserve is important because as the price of oil skyrockets, we need stability for Canadians. Canada is the only country in the G7 that does not have an oil stockpile to release from. The Prime Minister has explicitly rejected our calls for this. It is funny, because earlier this year, the Liberals promised 23 million additional barrels of oil, but we do not have them to give. We do not have a stockpile. There is no way that we can give that. In fact, Canada's energy production actually dropped by five million barrels after the Prime Minister made that announcement. Now the G7 is going to release another 100 million barrels over the next four months, including diesel, and Canada cannot play. We cannot play in that game, because we do not have the fuel to be able to do that. We should be the solution. We have the third- or fourth-largest oil reserves in the world. We should be the solution to energy instability, not be held victim to it.

I just want to highlight a couple of things. The Liberal plan is bureaucracy and red tape. That is the plan we are seeing here today. There are no tangible results. There is lots of talk about this, that and the other thing, but no actual jobs. Canadians need jobs and paycheques, and they are not getting that from this plan.

The Conservative plan is to have one project, one review and six-month approvals and to eliminate Bill C-69, repeal Bill C-48, end the industrial carbon tax and get rid of the clean fuel standard. These are real, practical solutions that could be made to get government out of the way, eliminate bureaucracy and bring stability back to the private sector. It is investing in war zones right now. It is investing its money elsewhere. It is not coming to Canada. We need that money to come into Canada so that it can take the risks, invest in these projects and create the jobs. Hopefully, in a year we will not be talking about a building Canada even stronger act.

• (1225)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we need to look at the larger picture here. We have seen a great example. Through the relationships of the Prime Minister, along with a very proactive cabinet and caucus colleagues, we are going out there saying that Canada wants to see investment. We want to see major projects developed, to the degree where we got half a trillion dollars on the table in the Toronto conference. That is a historic amount of money. When we take a look at Bill C-39, it is all part of it. Building a stronger and healthier economy is what this Prime Minister and every Liberal member of Parliament is all about.

Does the Conservative Party support Bill C-39?

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to say half a trillion dollars was talked about, but we have lost a trillion dollars. If we lost a trillion and we get a half a trillion back, I do not know if that is a very good deal. I do not think I would want that deal.

I think the proof is in the pudding. The Prime Minister talked about this new pipeline project. The Liberals removed all the barriers. They went to industry and said, "Please come and build this. Put your money on the table. Let's build this project", but it did not happen, because there are still too many barriers.

Sure, there is lots of talk. Of course, people want to do things. I would say to the member that hope is not a strategy. We all want all

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kinds of things, but we only get the things we deserve. With our bureaucracy, with our red tape right now, we are getting what we deserve, and that is a lack of investment.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec has been in the midst of an election campaign these past few weeks. I spent a lot of time on the campaign trail with candidates for the Parti Québécois, the party I support, and people talked to me about federal politics and about the current Prime Minister. I asked everyone who spoke to me about what the Prime Minister has actually done since taking office to make their lives easier and improve their purchasing power. No one was able to give me an answer. No one was able to tell me how their lives have improved since this Prime Minister took office.

What is more, here in Parliament, the Liberals are passing bills that undermine the work of Parliament and its relevance. Bill C-39 is a good example of that. It makes it even easier for the government to implement its major projects, and it erodes workers' rights.

I will cut my question short because I am short on time. Does my colleague not think that this government is going way too far and that it should go back to showing some respect for parliamentary procedure?

[*English*]

Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt, as I have said many times, that this government is all about talk. When we speak with constituents, with regular Canadians, we will, time and again, find that their life is actually worse. If we ask, "Has your life gotten better in the last year?", their answer is, "No." Things are more expensive, their paycheque does not go as far and that is a direct indictment on this 11-year-old government's record.

Also, so much of what is talked about here in Bill C-39 is centralizing power again in Ottawa, centralizing power in the government, rather than creating a level playing field, which would be the way we would want to do this: create the environment so that businesses can do what they want, rather than concentrating all of that power in Ottawa.

• (1230)

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to compare the situation we saw in Canada 12, 15, 18 years ago under the Conservative government when energy companies were building infrastructure, mining companies were building mines and we were employing thousands of Canadians, to now, which is building at speeds, of course, not seen in generations, but apparently not the case.

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Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals thought that building at speeds never seen before was a good thing, but what we have seen is that it is actually a very bad thing. They are correct that these are speeds we have never seen before, but it is a turtle pace.

The best way to answer the member's question about what it was like under the Conservatives, is that, at the time, I was building homes in Saskatchewan. The home building business was booming. There were projects going, people were working hard, paycheques were flowing, jobs were created, and everybody was building and buying houses. The Liberal government got elected, and guess what? The market started to go down and that was the end of the boom times, and we have been in that for the last 11 years.

[Translation]

Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House of Commons. I am proud to rise today to speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

When we talk about building Canada, it is helpful to take a step back. Before we talk about laws, infrastructure, investments or major projects, let us remember one simple truth: Canada was built by people who dared to think big. Through hard work, determination and vision, generations of Canadians built communities, created opportunities and contributed to creating what is now the best country in the world.

[English]

Our history is, in many ways, a story of bringing people together. When Canadians built the railway, they were doing far more than laying tracks across the country; they were connecting communities, creating opportunities and opening new possibilities for future generations. They understood that a strong and united Canada depends on connections between people, regions and ideas. That vision helped transform a vast country into the Canada we proudly call home today. Canadians had a bold vision for their future. They wanted an ambitious country and, through determination and hard work, they built one.

[Translation]

Canada has never been a country that has stood still. Over the years, we have kept on building: ports, roads, transportation networks, and infrastructure like hospitals and community centres. All of this has allowed our communities to grow and prosper. We have invested in developing our natural resources, like hydroelectricity, and built nuclear power plants using CANDU technology. We founded universities, like McGill University, the University of Toronto, Queen's University and the University of Ottawa. We have also become an important ecosystem in the auto sector, particularly here in the beautiful province of Ontario.

As Canadians, we understand that building is not just a matter of concrete and steel. First and foremost, building is about people: the entrepreneurs who create jobs, the workers who contribute to our economy's growth every day, the researchers who push the boundaries of knowledge, and the young people who imagine the Canada of the future, a stable and prosperous Canada that is free to act as it sees fit.

[English]

When I hear the words “building Canada strong”, I think of a Canada that believes in ambition, rewards hard work and creates the conditions for every Canadian to succeed. I think of a Canada that gives its people the opportunity not only to dream big, but to turn those dreams into reality. As I reflect on the many conversations I had this summer with constituents in Orléans, I am reminded that my community is somewhat anxious about the world and about the economy, but my community in Orléans is also optimistic about the new opportunities. They want good jobs. They want growing businesses. They want their children and their grandchildren to be able to successfully live right here in Canada, and they understand that in a rapidly changing world, the status quo is not an option.

• (1235)

[Translation]

Over the decades, the global economy has changed. Technology has advanced and new industries have emerged. Every step of the way, Canada has managed to adapt and make the most of the opportunities that came its way. We know that a strong economy is built not by looking backward, to the past, but by preparing for the future. Canada cannot rely on its past success alone to meet the challenges of the future. Now, our turn has come to build on this legacy by creating the conditions that will allow Canadians to succeed in an ever-changing global economy.

[English]

That is why diversification matters.

Diversification is not about turning away from our long-standing partners. It is about ensuring that Canada is well positioned to compete and succeed in a changing world. It means creating new opportunities for Canadian businesses, opening new markets for Canadian products and strengthening our economic resilience. It means giving our workers, entrepreneurs and innovators more places to sell, invest and grow.

This is also why our government has set an ambitious objective to help Canadian businesses expand into new markets and increase Canada's exports beyond the United States. A resilient economy is one that can adapt, seize opportunities wherever they arise, and continue to create good jobs and prosperity here at home.

[Translation]

Today's global economy is changing fast. Supply chains are being reshaped, and trade structures are transforming. Countries want to secure access to the strategic resources and goods they need for sustained growth. In this context, Canada cannot afford to sit on the sidelines.

We have everything it takes to succeed. We have talented and highly skilled workers, innovative entrepreneurs creating jobs, and coveted natural resources. We also have communities across Canada that are ready to help grow our economy. The question is not whether Canada has the potential to succeed. The question is whether we are ready to seize the opportunities that are ours for the taking. I believe we are.

[English]

The building Canada strong act is about making it easier to get projects moving. It is about giving businesses and investors greater certainty. Our government has created and will continue to create the conditions that allow businesses to invest and grow, and give investors the confidence to invest here in Canada. It is about strengthening the transportation and trade corridors that connect our communities to the rest of the country and to the world. It is about making sure Canadian workers continue to benefit from a growing economy. These are important changes and important changes deserve careful study.

Over the last year, the bill has been shaped by consulting with businesses, investors, unions, employers, other stakeholders and our indigenous partners. The government participated in 30 meetings with indigenous groups. The intent of all these consultations with all these stakeholders was to create a project approval process that is more efficient, more predictable and better coordinated, while maintaining rigorous environmental studies and standards, upholding indigenous rights and ensuring fair treatment for workers.

If we are to build for the future, we must do so in a way that earns public confidence, creates opportunities for Canadians and delivers lasting benefits to communities across the country. That is the balance we must strive to achieve as we consider Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

• (1240)

[Translation]

One aspect of our history that is worth mentioning is our openness to the world. Canada has never built its future alone. We have developed partnerships and welcomed people from all walks of life, whose history and culture enrich our society. By inspiring trust, Canada has built economic and diplomatic relationships that contribute to our prosperity. These relationships are still essential today.

[English]

When I think about the railway, I do not think only about the infrastructure. I also think about a generation of Canadians who chose to invest in the future of this country. When I think about Canada's successes, I do not only think about economic indicators or statistics. I think about the men and the women who had the courage to build, to innovate and to believe in what our country could achieve. When I think about diversifying our economy, I think about our ability to adapt, change and seize new opportunities. I think about the next generation of Canadians. I think about the jobs they will hold, the businesses they will create and the opportunities that will be available to them.

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At the end, our greatest strength has never been a single project, a single industry or a single resource. Our greatest strength has always been our people. Let us be ambitious for our country, let us move forward responsibly and let us make the most of the opportunities before us. If we do so, future generations will be able to look back on this period and say that Canadians saw the challenges before them, rose to meet them and chose to build for the future.

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

Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite talked about the railway and about treating workers fairly, but some workers feel that the government is railroading them, particularly with unilateral changes to section 107 of the Labour Code. I would like to ask the member two questions.

Does she support the government's changes?

Does she support the Minister of Justice tabling a Charter of Rights and Freedoms statement outlining the justice department's views on these changes and workers' rights?

Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I support Bill C-39. I support our workers. I am a former business owner myself. I completely agree that the rights of workers are very important in this country.

This bill is about giving certainty, allowing projects to go forward and seeking the future of our economy. This is very important, and it is why I stand in very strong support of this bill.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Orléans, whom I hold in high regard. She and I have had the opportunity to work together on various files, including the French language file, and I appreciate her co-operation.

She talked about major projects that built the country, particularly the railway. She mentioned various major projects and spoke about the vision that we must have when we want to build a great country. I completely agree with her. However, I would like to add a bit of history. Going back to the construction of the trans-Canada railway, it is important to remember that the workers were forced to endure absolutely appalling conditions. That would never fly today. It is also important to remember the development of airports like the one in Mirabel, which is making the news again because of the high-speed rail project. I will tie that in as well, because the community of Mirabel is still deeply scarred and extremely traumatized by the brutal expropriations in 1969-70.

Now, the government is about to do the same thing with a high-speed rail project. We learned from news reports that Alto has signed confidentiality agreements that prevent farmers from hiring appraisal companies because they are now all tied to that project.

Is that what my colleague thinks it means to go—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Orléans.

Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I also appreciate working collaboratively with my colleague on the francophonie, at the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie and on other such issues.

I would also like to remind the House and my colleague that we can engage in fearmongering or we can talk about the facts, including the investments made in Quebec in recent years, in all sorts of excellent projects that will improve working conditions and boost Canada's economic situation, including in Quebec. I want to talk about that briefly. In recent years, there have been six icebreakers ordered from Davie Canada. There is the big port project in Contrecoeur. There was the designation of Quebec City as a container port.

We need to stop looking backward and start moving forward. It is no longer 1900. It is 2026. I would like to remind my colleague of that.

• (1245)

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limouilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very inspiring speech. I truly enjoyed it. It reminds me of the speech I gave two weeks ago. I particularly liked the part of her speech when she said that the status quo is not an option anymore. I often hear the other parties say that we favour the status quo on all decisions. However, since our new government has been in power, there have been a lot of decisions and a lot of projects.

Can my colleague expand on that? She talked about the Davie icebreakers, which are built in my region. She talked about QSL, which is a container terminal project in Quebec City, and there are many others. Those decisions are more trade related, but some decisions have also been made that affect families.

With that in mind, I would like her to talk to me about what the government has been doing since it was elected in May 2025.

Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member very much for his important question.

The government has promised to keep investing not only in major projects, but also in communities and people.

I just want to make a comment. I know we have been talking about Quebec, but I want to talk about something else. Quite recently, Canada and Ontario agreed to continue supporting our families when it comes to child care fees. Quebec had set an extraordinary example, which we followed. I am proud to see that our government is going to keep investing to help families.

[English]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, build Canada strong and nation building should also be about plugging economic leakages.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada estimates that mental health costs our economy nearly \$200 billion a year. That is roughly 6% of Canada's GDP. The government is promoting its new pipeline as nation building because it could add more than \$20 billion a year to GDP. That is about 0.6% of our GDP.

To be clear, mental illness is imposing an economic burden roughly 10 times larger than the annual GDP benefit the government projects from this pipeline.

If a potential 0.6% increase in GDP warrants nation-building action, why is the Liberal government not dealing with the economic burden approaching 6% of the GDP, namely unaddressed mental illness, that is impacting our economy?

Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, that could be complicated, because this is a very important challenge. As an economy and a society, we are facing mental health issues, which my colleague has been advocating to help.

Mental health is something we are addressing. We are helping provinces with their own responsibility for mental health in our local communities by improving housing, returning dollars and helping families with the cost of living.

We are going to continue to advocate, and I am certainly advocating, for better mental health in this country.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for years, Canadians have been telling the government that projects need to get moving. Canadians desperately need homes, reliable infrastructure, good jobs and a stronger economy. We have enormous potential to attract investment and develop the resources and industries needed to achieve these goals. What we need to know is whether our federal processes are allowing us to take advantage of those opportunities.

For over a year, Canadians have heard the Liberal government talk about building Canada, major projects, infrastructure and economic growth. They heard the same promises 18 months ago, when Bill C-5 was presented as the solution that would speed up approvals and get projects moving. Today, Canadians are still waiting for results, yet the government is once again asking them to trust that this new bill will be different.

Canadians are asking a very simple question: What happened? Canadians are tired of the announcements. They want to see projects built, with shovels in the ground, workers on job sites and investment staying in Canada.

In Cambridge and North Dumfries, people want good jobs, growing businesses and opportunities that allow their children and grandchildren to build their futures here at home. When Ottawa adds uncertainty and delay, it is not just a file sitting on a desk; it affects families, businesses and communities that are counting on those opportunities. It can mean a business deciding not to invest, an expansion being delayed or a job that never gets created.

Instead of making it easier to build, the government seems to have gotten very good at building something else: more bureaucracy, more processes and more layers of red tape. Canada does not need more bureaucracy standing between a good idea and a project that gets built. If Canada is serious about competing for investment, creating jobs and building the infrastructure we need, then projects need to be approved in a reasonable amount of time. The question before us today is whether this bill, Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, would actually help us build, or whether Canadians are once again being asked to trust another Liberal promise to fix the problem the Liberals created over the past 10 years.

That is why Conservatives are looking very closely at Bill C-39. The Conservatives have been clear about what needs to change. We need less red tape, more clear timelines, a true one project, one review system and the repeal of Liberal laws that have made it harder to build.

A project cannot create jobs, grow the economy or make Canada more independent if it is stuck waiting for approval. The Liberals keep saying this bill would establish a one-year timeline for federal reviews and decisions on major projects. On paper, that sounds straightforward, but what does that one-year clock actually mean when it is being managed by the government? In the Liberals' world, that clock can be stopped for several reasons, but time keeps ticking on in the real world. The construction season does not stop, interest payments do not stop and payroll does not stop.

Businesses and investors do not have unlimited time to wait for the government to make a decision. Many businesses are already reaching the point where waiting is no longer an option. That is the problem with measuring time by the government's standards. The government can pause the clock on a piece of paper, but Canadian business owners cannot pause their financing costs, workers cannot pause their mortgage payments and investors cannot infinitely pause their plans while Ottawa works through review after review.

A one-year timeline provides little certainty if Canadians cannot determine when it starts, what circumstances can stop it and when the government is obligated to make a decision, because every time that clock stops in Ottawa, time keeps ticking somewhere else. The clock keeps ticking for the business ready to invest, the worker desperately looking for a job and the community counting on growth, and all the while, other countries are competing for that same investment.

Our Canadian businesses should not have to wonder whether the clock has started, stopped or been reset. They need to be able to plan, invest and create opportunities where Canadian workers can find good jobs. That is why the labour provisions in this bill are so important. Getting projects approved faster is one thing, but protecting the workers who build and operate those projects is equally essential. After all, projects are not built on timelines alone. They are built on stable labour relations, predictable rules and confidence that the process will work as intended. When that confidence begins to erode, the foundation for long-term success erodes with it.

• (1250)

Unfortunately, that is exactly what we have seen in recent years, as the federal government has repeatedly intervened in labour disputes through section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. People can

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have different views about individual disputes. Every time the government intervenes, the question is whether it is helping the parties reach an agreement or gradually becoming part of the bargaining process. Collective bargaining works best when workers and employers sit down at the table and do the challenging work of reaching a mutual agreement. The bargaining clock has to be allowed to run, giving both sides the time and incentive to negotiate, compromise and find solutions. When intervention becomes expected, rather than exceptional, faith in that process starts to slip away.

At the very moment those questions are being debated across the country, the government is proposing significant changes to the Canada Labour Code. These are not technical amendments or housekeeping measures. They could affect workers, unions, employers and federally regulated industries. The government is asking Canadians to accept that these changes will improve the system, but that case has to be made through transparency, accountability and scrutiny, not through assurances alone.

That is why these provisions deserve thorough study at committee. Workers, unions and employers deserve to be heard, and Canadians deserve to know how these changes will affect labour relations in this country. If the government believes these amendments will strengthen labour relations, it should welcome that discussion and be prepared to make its case publicly. Good legislation is strengthened by scrutiny, and if these changes are going to shape labour relations for years to come, Parliament has a responsibility to get them right.

However, building is only one part of the equation. This bill also looks at transportation infrastructure and trade corridors. We need to be able to move what we build. Our farmers need to get grain to market, manufacturers need to move their products and exporters need reliable access to ports. Communities like mine depend on transportation networks that function reliably and efficiently. When those networks fall short, the consequences are felt by businesses, workers and families that are already dealing with rising costs.

These delays come with a price. Every hour a shipment sits waiting is time a business cannot get back, and every delay at a port or along a trade corridor adds costs that do not simply disappear. Those costs are ultimately borne by businesses, workers and consumers.

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The government says this bill will strengthen Canada's trade corridors, improve transportation infrastructure and better coordinate federal approvals. The question is whether Canadians will actually see projects move faster or this will become another government office responsible for reporting on progress, rather than delivering results. Canadians do not need another progress report. They need the project. They need things built.

Time keeps ticking. Canada cannot afford to spend another decade debating whether we should build the infrastructure we already know we need. We have the raw materials, the resources, the skilled workers, the entrepreneurs and the businesses ready to invest. What we need now are decisions. Opportunities do not wait for government processes and neither do our competitors. That is why the Conservatives will continue to advocate for less red tape, faster approvals and greater certainty. We will support a one project, one review approach so that there is one clear decision. We will continue to push for the repeal of laws that have made it harder to build and we will continue to fight for policies that save Canadians money and protect Canadian jobs.

At its core, this is about affordability. It is about whether Canadians can afford to live, work, raise a family and build a future in this country. The people in my community of Cambridge and North Dumfries are not asking for the impossible. They want good jobs, new opportunities and the assurance that when a project makes sense, it will not spend years tied up in process and delay.

While the government is stopping and starting clocks, Canadians cannot put their lives on hold waiting for Ottawa. It is time to make decisions. It is time to get projects moving. It is time to build.

• (1255)

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I know that it can take a long time to prepare a speech for the House.

I thought her speech was extremely interesting, because it really reflected the spirit of Bill C-39. This bill will make it possible to build Canada strong quickly. I think it responds to the wants and needs of her constituents.

In light of what I heard in my colleague's speech, I would like to know if, when the time comes, she plans to vote in favour of the bill so we can act faster for the people in her riding.

[English]

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives do support getting projects built. The question is whether Canadians would actually see better results and more results instead of more bureaucracy.

Eighteen months ago, Canadians were told that Bill C-5 would speed up approvals to get projects moving. Instead of these things moving forward, we are in the House debating Bill C-39. The promises of Bill C-5 still have not materialized. If the Liberals are so confident of Bill C-39, they should be open to having it discussed in committee to provide full transparency and accountability to Canadians. At some point the conversation must shift from promises to results.

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

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 would allow the minister to allow preliminary works on a site to begin, within what the bill calls the public interest. Rather than give industry firm rules so they can clearly present their project and what they want to do for site works, the bill would give complete discretion to the minister. There is no definition of what is in the public interest, other than what the minister would decide.

Does this seem fair to all those hard-working businesses: that one person gets to decide what is in the public interest and that it would just be more red tape?

• (1300)

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely correct. How could one person make a decision like this that would affect so many people?

The strongest message I am hearing right now is that people need a reason to be optimistic again. They want businesses to grow instead of laying people off. They want investment coming into Canada instead of leaving. They want to know that opportunities for their children and grandchildren will still exist here in the years ahead. The concern I am now hearing is not frustration. It is exhaustion. Business owners have spent years adapting to rising costs, supply chain challenges, labour shortages and uncertainty.

That is what the debate comes down to. Canadians want a path forward, and they want decisions that support jobs, investment and opportunity in Canada, by Canadians and for Canadians.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think I know what kind of answer I am going to get, but I would still like the member to share her thoughts on the impartiality of the people who will be assessing certain projects, particularly pipeline projects. We know that it will now be the Canada Energy Regulator and not the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada that will be responsible for conducting those assessments. However, five of the regulator's seven commissioners used to work in the oil industry. The CER's mission is to promote the transmission of electricity and the transportation of oil. It is safe to say that this body is not impartial.

I would like the member to tell us about how important it is to have impartial agencies assess all projects, particularly major projects that are in the so-called national interest.

[English]

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to discuss about who would be involved with the decision-making. We have to think about who cares about whether local businesses stay open and whether children and grandchildren can find opportunities close to home. Those objectives should not be in conflict. Canada has some of the most skilled workers, highest environmental standards and strongest regulatory expertise in the world. Surely we should be capable of conducting a rigorous review process while still providing businesses and workers with certainty. That is why Parliament's responsibility would be not simply to review projects or have specific people assigned to review these projects. It would be to ensure that decisions are made before jobs, investment and opportunities disappear from Canada.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am always surprised when Conservatives agree so readily with Liberal talking points.

The member mentioned that we wanted to have a project that attracted private investors. Does she not agree that a possible 10% from Pembina Pipeline is not a large stake in the project and that the taxpayers are paying for most of it?

Connie Cody: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely correct. I think what we need to do is have the bill brought to committee so we can have further discussions.

Doly Begum (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the good people of Scarborough Southwest, especially when it is to address challenges we are facing not only across my riding but across Canada.

Over the past several years, Canadians have witnessed how quickly events beyond our control and beyond our borders can affect our economy at home. A conflict, a war or atrocities on the other side of the world can disrupt energy markets on this side. A shortage of shipping capacity can increase costs for Canadian businesses. A disruption to rail lines, highways or ports can affect producers and consumers on both ends of the supply chain.

We have heard in the House, even this morning, about the bureaucracy and time constraints related to putting shovels in the ground. We need to ensure that we are addressing those challenges, and doing that fast and efficiently by streamlining the system. Across this country, Canadians are feeling the pressure of what is happening right now, and I am really excited to speak to Bill C-39, because we are addressing those challenges. With higher prices at grocery stores, small businesses having to make very difficult decisions or families having to sacrifice one thing for another just to make ends meet, we must try to ensure that Canadians' paycheques can cover all their costs and that they are able to pay their bills.

In the face of these global realities, our government was elected on a firm commitment to reinforce Canada's economic sovereignty and empower our country to build bigger, stronger and faster. Our supply chain is built from ports, railways, roads and, most important, the great workers who work so hard every single day to keep goods moving. They are the backbone of our economy. Over the past year and a half, our Prime Minister and our Liberal government have been moving at record speed to ensure Canadian economic resilience as the world becomes increasingly volatile.

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Stronger supply chains are imperative to our government's ambitious plan to double non-U.S. exports, build major projects and attract record investments. This is why Bill C-39 is so important. The building Canada stronger act aims to do exactly that: further strengthen our existing supply chains while supporting good-paying jobs, helping Canadian businesses compete and keeping costs down for the hard-working people of our country.

Bill C-39 recognizes that our transportation network does not operate in isolation. Our ports, railways and roads are part of a connected system, and we need to start planning and investing in them that way. That means looking at the movement of goods across an entire corridor, identifying where the delays are and the capacity constraints occur, and measuring how the system is performing. The bill would also create a national trade corridors council to monitor trade disruptions, continuously identify bottlenecks and recommend improvements to the Minister of Transport.

As we invest in our trade infrastructure, these measures would ensure that those investments are directed toward the places where they would have the greatest impact. A congested port can mean additional storage costs. A lack of rail capacity can mean grain sitting in elevators rather than moving to markets. For small businesses, a shipment arriving late can result in loss of revenue, higher costs and a difficult decision-making process. Whether to pass on that cost to the consumers or to maybe lay off employees, it could mean the end of a business. It could be the end for a lot of local small businesses that had been running for 10, 20 or 30 years.

This summer I had an opportunity to visit a local business, Accuenergy, an electrical parts manufacturer in my riding of Scarborough Southwest. It has been run by a father and his son since 1998. Accuenergy supplies its products to over 170 countries around the world, and it employs more than 300 people. I had the opportunity, with the Minister of AI, to talk to some of the employees from my riding and from across Scarborough and the GTA. There are so many businesses like Accuenergy across Canada that are building right here at home, creating good-paying jobs and seeking to compete in markets around the world. As we ask businesses to diversify into new markets beyond the United States, our government has the responsibility of making sure our infrastructure can keep up with that ambition.

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• (1305)

There are other major pieces in the bill that I would have loved to have highlighted, but I wanted to make sure to point out that what we hear in the House, such as the complaints from the other side about putting shovels in the ground and moving things faster, would be addressed by the bill. Bill C-39 would modernize our process to make sure we are able to get shovels in the ground, make decisions faster and get faster approvals so we can address the challenges people across this country are facing.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals talk about building things faster with Bill C-39. Why not get rid of the “no new pipelines” bill that was deemed mostly unconstitutional, Bill C-69, and get rid of the anti-Alberta bill, Bill C-48?

• (1310)

Doly Begum: Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more time to speak to some of the things Bill C-39 would do about exactly some of the complaints we hear from the other side, such as to make sure that, first of all, we are uniting the entire country. Our Prime Minister is going coast to coast to coast to make sure that we are not only addressing challenges in Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec or Alberta but are also addressing challenges across different provinces and uniting the provinces. Another part of our goal has been to make sure we make trade easier between provinces as well.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that she did not have enough time to discuss the bill in its entirety. One might also wonder whether a year is enough time for scientists to properly assess the impact of any projects that might be launched, especially given that this one year allows for 300 days for assessment and reporting, and then 65 days for the minister to make a decision. That does not even allow for the four full seasons that would be needed to determine whether certain projects actually have an impact on the natural environment.

Does my colleague not see the risks involved in moving too quickly?

[English]

Doly Begum: Mr. Speaker, this is why it is so important that we have a timeline. In the past, a lot of infrastructure costs have risen because of delays in our projects due to delays in the decision-making process. There are exceptional circumstances, and this is why the Minister of Transport would have the authority to be able to make those exceptional decisions. It is really important that at this time, a time of crisis, we are focusing on making sure we have a review process that has a timeline and that we get shovels in the ground, and this is exactly why the bill is really important.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very important speech on Bill C-39.

She talked a lot about market diversification. As we know, the government has signed more than 20 agreements over the past year. She also talked about grain, which is actually shipped through my riding. We also heard about the importance of speeding up projects, and she mentioned a company in her riding that does business

around the world. I have noticed the same thing: Some businesses want to invest more and are asking for more predictability. Often, that predictability is measured in time. Bill C-39 will actually help things move faster and will give businesses the predictability they need to invest and attract more investment here.

I would like my colleague to talk about what the government has done over the past year. I would also like to hear her thoughts on what Bill C-39 will enable the government and Canada to do.

[English]

Doly Begum: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is exactly right. The bill would address those challenges, those bottlenecks, that businesses face. Over the past year, previous legislation has also addressed these kinds of issues that we have faced.

An efficient supply chain is one of the key parts of making sure that we are focusing on our economy and strengthening our economy. Canada's long-term economic strength depends on reliable and efficient trade quarters, for example, and making sure that we are making decisions faster and being more effective. That is not just for domestic trades but also for international trade, to be able to attract new investors from across the world.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague from Scarborough Southwest again on her recent election. Knowing she has not read as many bills as I have in this place, I will say that I have never seen a bill drafted to be as deceitful as this one. I want to put it to her that it is odd that in the summary of what we can expect in the bill, page ii notes that division 2 of part 1 would amend the Building Canada Act, Bill C-5, to say, among other things, in section 99, that the sunset clause on bill C-5, the part that says that this bill would not have an effect five years from this date, would be repealed. It lists four things of less consequence than this one it does not mention.

Does my colleague have any comments on the impact of making the draconian power grabs of Bill C-5 permanent?

Doly Begum: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her comments and, of course, for welcoming me to the House. There are a lot of things we agree on and some that, even if we disagree, I feel like we can sit together and come to terms on. We are all here to represent our communities and make sure that the people we represent are well served.

This bill addresses some of the challenges we are facing right now across this country, especially with the trade war with the U.S., but also challenges with the conflicts across the world.

It is important that we recognize the power we hold within this House. There are decisions we make in this House that are changed over time because of the needs coming from changes, which may be necessary in the future, and when that time comes—

• (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Unfortunately, we have run out of time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saint-Jean.

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that Bill C-39 is the perfect example of a saying that often comes up in politics: Never let a good crisis go to waste. That is certainly the impression I am getting from the government side. The Liberals are using the President of the United States, Donald Trump, as a scare tactic—even though he is scary enough on his own—to justify permanent changes to our ways of doing things and our values. When I say “our”, I am referring to both Canada's and Quebec's ways of doing things and our values. Now that I have said that, I will return to the issue of the sunset clause.

A crisis that is already frightening enough for Canadians and Quebecers is being used to justify major legislative changes that will shake the very foundations of the temple of values that we thought were otherwise secure and that took years to build. Now, they could crumble in the blink of an eye.

In a way, I find it hard to believe that people are surprised by this, since it is, after all, part of the DNA of successive governments to use crises to seize power for themselves. We have seen this in the past.

I would now like to take a moment to provide a bit of background.

Crises have often been used to centralize power within the federal government. Let me provide a bit of history. During the First World War, the War Measures Act was enacted, giving Ottawa powers that were otherwise generally reserved for the provinces, such as economic regulation, censorship, detention and internment.

In 1917, the federal government introduced a federal income tax, a measure that was allowed under the Constitution but that had never before been implemented by the federal government. It enacted the Income War Tax Act. It was meant to be a temporary measure, but it never went away. People still have to file two tax returns in Quebec, and one tax return everywhere else, which just goes to show that nothing is more permanent than a temporary solution.

We see this again with the sunset clause in Bill C-5, which called for the measures to expire after five years. Under Bill C-39, they will become permanent.

In 1930, during the Great Depression, the government of Richard Bedford Bennett tried to centralize power even further on the premise that Ottawa needed to have significant economic and social capacity so it could function as a kind of welfare state.

In 1940, after the crisis, the provinces transferred employment insurance to the federal government. During the Second World War,

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Canada managed to persuade the provinces to temporarily surrender more tax room in return for making transfer payments to the provinces to fund the wartime economy. That never went away either, and it eventually became what we now know as the “spending power”.

A bit more recently, and closer to home, was the 2008-09 financial crisis, the infamous asset-backed commercial paper crisis. Once again, the federal government tried to take control of an exclusively provincial jurisdiction, securities regulation, by creating a Canada-wide securities commission, a move firmly opposed by Bloc Québécois. In fact, the Supreme Court later declared it unconstitutional.

Even more recently, during COVID-19, the federal government used its spending power to control, legislate and regulate jurisdictions outside its authority, including standards in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. It wanted to establish national standards that the provinces would have to meet in order to receive transfers, even though the provinces are the ones responsible for delivering care to the public.

As history has shown us, crises have often been used to justify things that would otherwise have been considered unacceptable. Bill C-39 is no exception, particularly when it comes to the environment. I am going to talk a bit about that.

In the past, powers that belonged to the provinces were centralized. Now, however, powers that would otherwise belong to the House or to other ministers and agencies are being centralized and often concentrated in the hands of a single minister, or even the Prime Minister.

All of this is allegedly being done as a way to deal with Donald Trump and the trade war, at a time when Canada wants to attract more investors. The government is saying that we are moving far too slowly, that we need to lower barriers in order to keep the economy healthy, and that this will not start until Donald Trump is gone. The government is therefore implementing measures that will last forever to solve a problem that, basically, is only temporary.

• (1320)

For example, the government is chipping away at certain environmental pillars that we thought were firmly established. It is speeding up project assessment to the extreme, as I mentioned in my questions a little earlier. It is introducing a one-year time frame for granting permits for major projects. One year means 300 days to carry out assessments and draft the reports to be submitted to the minister, who must then make a decision within 65 days.

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I mentioned earlier that when a decision is made to grant a permit for a major project, the assessment of potential environmental impacts will not even cover four full seasons. Compliance with numerous laws is also going to be optional for regions designated as being of national interest. It is not clear exactly what constitutes a region of national interest. Included in those laws are the Fisheries Act; the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994; the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and the Species at Risk Act.

We will also be relying on far fewer impartial experts to decide whether a project will move forward. The government is completely disregarding the expertise of the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada when it comes to pipelines, for example, and will be relying exclusively on the Canada Energy Regulator. However, I would like to remind the House that the CER's mission is to keep energy moving safely and efficiently through this country's pipelines and power lines. Its mandate is to promote energy, not to protect the environment or impartially assess the impact of a project, like the agency did. I should note that five of the CER's seven commissioners used to work for oil companies, so I think it is safe to assume that they will have a definite bias when making decisions.

A lot of decisions that used to be made by the Governor in Council will now be made by a single minister. Changes have been made to what ministers can do. I would like to quickly refer my colleagues to the document that was provided by the government itself, the summary of Bill C-39.

There was a time when the Department of the Environment issued a statement on the decision it was making under the Impact Assessment Act, but the other departments issued the permits. Now, everything is in the hands of the environment minister, who will make a single decision. In the past, work could not begin until the assessments were completed, but now the environment minister will have the power to authorize work to begin in advance, even before the permits are issued. In the past, we have had environment ministers who were staunch supporters of the oil sands, such as Peter Kent. We should therefore not assume that just because someone is an environment minister, they will make decisions that are good for the environment, particularly if those decisions are ultimately made by the Prime Minister.

We know that, previously, the minister could only modify the conditions imposed on a project as long as there was no adverse impact on the environment. Now, however, these kinds of changes can be authorized if the minister decides they are in the public interest. Ministers used to be able to attach conditions to assessment and permit decisions. Now, however, decision-making authorities will have to consider the technical, economic and practical feasibility of any conditions they impose on proponents who want to roll out projects.

This goes to show that the bar has been significantly lowered. The government is basically tearing down the fences around the chicken coop and hoping that the foxes will not attack them. That is what we are hearing from the Liberal benches. The Liberals deny that they are lowering environmental standards. However, certain laws can be circumvented. They say that they simply hope it will not happen.

I could have spoken a lot longer. I am only halfway through the third page of my presentation, and I have not even addressed the labour law issue. The Liberals say that they are going to keep protecting the right to strike, just as they say that they are going to keep protecting freedom of expression, provided that no one hears the protesters protesting. The right to strike will be protected, unless the strike disrupts the national interest. What that is, we do not know. It could simply mean any economic disruption, but a strike without disruption is not a strike.

Since I have only a few seconds left, unfortunately, I must conclude my speech by reiterating that the government wants to speed things up and is using the trade war as a pretext, even though it will be over by the time we see the consequences. At the end of the day, whose interests will this national interest really serve, apart from the Prime Minister's? It is not hard to imagine that the public will suffer many negative consequences in the short, medium and long terms.

• (1325)

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoulu, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, which could be summed up quickly in one phrase: status quo. What is being sought here is the status quo or, as the saying goes, doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

My colleague talked about a crisis. She said it was the crisis that brought this to light. Yes, the crisis may have highlighted the inefficiencies of the construction sector in Canada. Just building has become difficult. Now we want to build faster because, when it comes to predictability in contracts, projects that take eight to 10 years to get off the ground always end up failing. I would perhaps invite my colleague to read an interesting book by Ezra Klein called *Abundance*, which highlights this point.

The question I would like to ask my colleague is this: What would she change? What specific measures would she include in a bill to speed up projects?

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I do not claim to be able to write a 249-page bill on my own, but I am willing to acknowledge that there are some good points in the bill. For example, the unions have acknowledged that there are certain positive measures, such as bargaining unit protection when contractors are replaced. There are some small positive aspects to the bill, but overall, it is a tough pill to swallow.

Again, we are not opposed to the economy performing well or to accelerating certain projects. However, this cannot be done at any cost, and certainly not by trimming all environmental protections, especially when we know from a report by the Institut de recherche en économie contemporaine that groceries are 8.4% more expensive due to climate change, that insurance costs are much higher, that Canada is now paying \$2 billion for insurance in disaster-stricken areas, and that this figure is expected to reach \$15 billion in the future.

Exactly whose interest are the Liberals referring to when they talk about the national interest?

[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague brought up a lot of very valid points. One of them, of course, is that there is not a lot of structure. Despite the bill being 250 pages, there are a lot of areas where it would allow the bureaucracy or the ministers to make additional decisions. What is going to be in the national interest? Someone is going to be allowed to extend this magical one-year permit timeline at any time.

I wonder if my colleague could spend a bit of time explaining the need to have clear direction in the rules and not allow so much leeway for ministers, the government or bureaucrats to mess around with the legislation.

[Translation]

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. In fact, it is something that the President of the United States has been criticized for: governing by executive order by giving himself powers that would otherwise have been counterbalanced by lawmakers.

That is exactly what the government is doing with this bill. To protect ourselves from Donald Trump, we are turning into Donald Trump. That is a terrible idea. The government is doing this under the pretense of boosting the economy and dealing with a situation that is likely to change in the short term, or so we hope. Nevertheless, the government is repealing the five-year sunset clause that was previously put in place. Significant changes are therefore becoming permanent and, to top it all off, the government is making these changes in an omnibus bill that combines environmental law with labour law. All this is being done under the pretense of dealing with a crisis that we hope will soon be over.

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think this historical overview of the situation is essential, and my colleague's speech was very informative.

That said, am I to understand that the democratic, environmental and labour protection rules adopted by the provinces, as well as all our parliamentary bodies and boards, are so detrimental to the Prime Minister's vision of Canada that they need to be scrapped?

Did nothing good come out of all that, really? Do we really need to eliminate everything that has been put in place over the past few decades?

• (1330)

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, the government is scrapping things that took years to build and that are based on values that are dear to Canadian society and to the Quebec nation: protecting the environment and protecting workers' rights.

The government is undermining all that in the name of a trade crisis that is not expected to last, and it is making these measures permanent. Years of hard work that were guided by Canadian and Quebec values are being destroyed. That could all be destroyed in a matter of minutes. It is heartbreaking, to say the least.

Daniel Gobeil (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we debate Bill

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C-39, the building Canada strong act, I want to take this opportunity to deliver my first speech in the House of Commons. My riding, Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, is located in the heart of the industrial region of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and aims to serve as a gateway to the natural resources of Quebec and northern Canada and, of course, as a window to the world to diversify trade, attract investment and help build a strong, more independent and more resilient economy.

Over the past year, Canadians have seen just how quickly events beyond our borders can affect our economy and our wallets. A conflict on the other side of the world can disrupt markets and the energy sector. Just ask farmers right now. A lack of shipping capacity can drive up costs. For a Canadian company, a disruption to a rail line, a highway, or a road can hurt producers and consumers at both ends of the supply chain.

Faced with this global reality, our government was elected on a firm commitment to reinforce Canada's economic sovereignty and to empower our country to build bigger, stronger and faster. The people of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord expressed those same expectations during the August 31 by-election. In the midst of the trade war, it is now time to be masters in our own house, control what we can control and diversify our economies. Our supply chains are built from ports, railways and roads, and the workers who keep them running are the backbone of our economy. Back home in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, we often say we are like beavers: We build roads, dams and large-scale infrastructure, and we are ready to rise to this challenge.

For all these reasons, stronger supply chains are essential to our government's ambitious plan to double exports worldwide—beyond the U.S. market, of course—to build major projects and to attract record levels of investment, as we have seen recently in Toronto. First and foremost, the building Canada strong act aims to strengthen our supply chains. This ambitious legislation creates more robust supply chains by taking steps to treat Canada's transport system as an integrated national commercial network, rather than as a collection of separate, dysfunctional parts.

Under this legislation, the federal government can formally designate national trade corridors and set performance targets for them. That means monitoring the movement of goods across an entire corridor, identifying where delays and capacity constraints are occurring and, of course, measuring how the system is performing. The bill also creates a national trade corridors council. Its role would be to monitor the movement of goods, analyze disruptions affecting trade corridors, of course, identify systems or sectors that are not functioning properly or as they should, and most importantly, provide recommendations to the Minister of Transport.

As we invest in our trade infrastructure, these measures will ensure that those investments are directed to the areas where they will have the greatest impact for Canadians and taxpayers. This is about moving from a fragmented approach to an integrated transportation system.

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The reliability of our trade corridors has a real impact. A congested port can lead to additional storage costs and significant delays. A lack of rail capacity can mean farmers' grain sitting in silos rather than moving to markets. Our government's goal is simple: to strengthen our trade corridors to ensure that Canadians and Canadian products can reach their destinations.

The second major element is our ports. As members know, my riding is home to the Grande-Anse deepwater sea port, an asset to Canada. Canada's port authorities are a vital part of our supply chains. Bill C-39 will, of course, modernize their governance and give them greater trade and financial flexibility to invest, generate revenue and expand the infrastructure needed to support trade. The bill will create new indigenous advisory boards in recognition of the fact that indigenous communities are important partners in the development and operation of Canada's transportation infrastructure and the extraction of our critical minerals.

• (1335)

It is important to note that the bill maintains the role of ports as non-profit organizations and creates more opportunities for partnerships and capital projects through increased flexibility.

However, infrastructure is just one part of the challenge. The other part is the regulatory system that surrounds it. Today, companies may be required to provide similar information to multiple government departments and agencies. That means more forms, more paperwork, more duplication and, of course, higher costs and longer timelines.

Bill C-39 would establish authorities to enable greater information sharing among authorized government agencies, in order to reduce the administrative burden and streamline our processes.

The bill would also support paperless commerce by recognizing electronic records that are transferable in accordance with international standards. This means more efficient information sharing, less duplication and a streamlined approach to documentation.

Bill C-39 also addresses the approvals themselves.

The bill would establish a major projects office within Transport Canada to coordinate federal authorizations and consultations for transportation projects.

The goal is to provide a clearer federal pathway for priority transportation infrastructure and to support the government's broader goal of getting projects from the application phase to the decision phase more efficiently. On that point, the bill is very clear. It is not about eliminating standards. It is about reducing duplication. It is not about removing consultation. Rather, it is about making federal processes more consistent and predictable, while upholding the same high standards that we are proud of, as Canadians and as a government. Canada needs to be able to build faster while continuing to build responsibly.

Lastly, Bill C-39 recognizes that supply chain resilience depends on security. This bill will modernize Canada's framework for transportation security clearances. It will expand the roles and functions to which transportation security clearances could apply. It will improve risk assessments, improve information sharing and strengthen clearances in terms of the granting, refusal, suspension or cancella-

tion of clearances. The goal is to better address complex and evolving threats, because security is a key part of supply chain resilience.

Taken together, these measures offer a practical, coordinated approach to strengthening the infrastructure and systems that keep Canada's economy going. We need to move goods from farms to silos, from mines to ports, from factories to markets and from our communities to customers around the world. We need a transportation system that can keep pace with our investments and with the opportunities available to us.

That means building our capacity, but also making better use of the capacity we already have. It means having the information we need to understand how our trade corridors work. It also means ensuring that our ports have the necessary tools and flexibility to grow. It also means making sure that when we approve and build major transportation projects, we do so with the coordination and predictability that Canadians expect.

That is why strengthening supply chains is fundamentally about strengthening Canada's economy. It is about building the transportation capacity, coordination and resilience that Canada needs for the economy that we are building today and, ultimately, for the economy that we want to build for future generations.

That is how we are going to build Canada strong. As the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, I speak with people involved with aluminum plants, seaports and critical minerals, and I know that all stakeholders agree on the importance of having the government involved in efforts to build Canada strong.

• (1340)

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his first speech in the House. I have a rather special question to ask him.

Through its bill, the government wants to improve the Canadian economy, but why did it wait 11 years before doing something useful for our country? We have been waiting 11 years for a bill to help grow the Canadian economy. What took so long?

Daniel Gobeil: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question the Conservative member asked me.

I am newly elected. As you know, the by-election was held on August 31. Since coming to power last year, Mr. Carney's government has had a plan to build Canada strong.

There is a bill on the table. The business community has been calling for it. We believe it is never too late to act. The point of the bill is to do things right and to move more quickly. Introducing such a bill means aligning with Quebec's demands and ensuring a strong Quebec within a strong Canada.

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Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I see that you are showing our colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord a great deal of generosity and understanding as he delivers his first speech, but I am sure you will have the opportunity to remind him of our customs here.

I want to congratulate him on his first official speech in the House. I too would like to welcome him and congratulate him on his victory in Chicoutimi—Le Fjord in the by-election last August.

I would very much like him to commit to speaking with his constituents and the workers in his riding who do not see the danger that exists in Bill C-39 in terms of workers' rights and the right to strike, among other things. The right to strike is under threat, because the government could step in and put an end to any strike action thought to be a little too disruptive.

There are many aspects of this legislation that represent a step backwards in terms of workers' rights. The Canadian Labour Congress has brought this to our attention on several occasions. I would like the new member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord to commit to telling his constituents the truth and sharing these facts with them, to see what they really think.

Daniel Gobeil: Mr. Speaker, consultations were held regarding the bill. I represented dairy farmers throughout my career. I wanted to protect workers' rights, of course, but especially the right to collective bargaining. This bill would speed up the process. It would also enable workers and businesses to engage in collective bargaining, while ensuring the efficiency of supply chains. I used to work in the dairy industry. Often farmers were held hostage because an essential service was at the mercy of a bargaining process. I will stand up and explain the benefits of this bill for regional economies.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his maiden speech in the House. I know that this is an important moment for him and his family and friends.

In recent months, we have learned that we have several things in common. He comes from a dairy farm, and so do I. I represent the riding of Beauport—Limoilou, which is home to a port and where there are procurement projects happening, and he spoke a lot about supply chains. I am pleased because in order for businesses in a region like Chicoutimi to prosper and, more importantly, invest, they need predictability. From what I can see, Bill C-39 will give them more predictability.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on the importance of the supply chain and supply chain predictability for businesses in his riding. I would like him to tell us how that relates to this bill.

• (1345)

Daniel Gobeil: Mr. Speaker, as far as my region is concerned, it takes a supply chain for production to get where it needs to go. In all my previous occupations, when the supply chain broke down, the entire economy screeched to a halt. Just ask a dairy industry that has no milk, a meat packing plant that has no cull cattle, or aluminum smelters with no bauxite or alumina. There certainly are challenges, in terms of efficiency, for example. We need to invest in a strong Canada. The resources are in place. Canada has lots of railways and great resources. We want to improve efficiency so that we can respond more effectively to the business community.

[English]

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House to represent the good people of Abbotsford—South Langley. Before I begin to speak on this topic, I want to take the time to acknowledge the B.C. truck drivers' protest on rising diesel prices. The cost of these high prices is affecting their day-to-day lives, and for many, it is basically taking away their power to work. My colleagues and I are calling on the government to scrap the full federal fuel excise tax until Canada Day to bring down fuel costs.

I want to take the time to go back to the 44th Parliament, when the Liberals marched into the House and introduced Bill C-69, which was intended to make projects more efficient and timely, but in hindsight, we know that has not been the case. We have not seen a record number of development projects, but we have seen a record number of approvals in waiting. Instead of repealing the anti-development law, the government decided to introduce Bill C-5 to solve timeline issues.

Bill C-5 was supposed to bring quick and effective legislative change and to build at speeds not seen in generations. It has now been 18 months, and we have no new permits that have been passed, no new projects that have been built and no new jobs, other than government jobs, that have been created. Now the government has introduced a 246-page omnibus bill that, in its own explanation, was introduced to tackle the lengthy approval times that create investor uncertainty. The explanation around the necessity seems quite familiar, because it is the same argument that the government used for Bill C-69 and Bill C-5.

The Liberals create the problems, then pass bills trying to fix the problems that they created, which leads to more delays and more bureaucracy, and the cycle continues. That is why I ask today, on behalf of all Canadians, why they should expect anything different this time around. We do not need speeches and summits. We need to build this economy, and there is rhetoric more than facts right now. The reality shows something completely different. We have the slowest-growing economy and the highest food inflation in the entirety of the G7. The members across the aisle have been championing this bill, which would cut bureaucracy and fast-track investment projects. The details of the bill show a different reality.

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I imagine a group of local dairy farmers or blueberry farmers in my neck of the woods, Abbotsford—South Langley, who want to build a state-of-the-art agricultural processing facility. Right now, they would have to pitch this idea to municipal, provincial and federal agencies, all working separately and not coordinating on timelines. It would take the farmers three to five years just to get the permits they need to build. In Bill C-39, the government promises these farmers a one-year federal review of their projects.

While this sounds straightforward, it is far from that. The one-year clock would not start when the farmers bring projects forward. It could take up to six months for planning and then another year to provide studies and information the government requires. The bill even states that the timeline could be extended. Once the minister was satisfied with all the preliminary studies, the actual one-year clock would begin for the farmers, and then the process for the facility would start.

As such, it is not that straightforward. The reality is that the tag line of “one-year approval” is misleading. Potential investors want thorough and straightforward legislation. Instead, misleading tag lines would only lead to more confusion and drag investors away.

I imagine the government missing its own deadline. Common sense would say that the project would be moving forward regardless, but in true Liberal fashion, a missed deadline would lead to more bureaucracy. The minister would have to provide an explanation for the delay and propose another timeline. If the goal is to increase investor certainty and to attract big projects, how is this accomplishing any of those goals, unless the real goal here is to make these big announcements and more empty speeches?

I ask the members across how long it would take an independent agribusiness from my community to even start the process of the application. Would they have to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to navigate through government overlap and to even get to the stage to get permission to apply? Would Bill C-39 simplify those front-end hurdles, or would it hide the bureaucratic delays inside the misleading narrative of a one-year approval?

Worst of all, instead of building a rules-based predictable system that is easy to navigate for every business in Canada, part 1 of Bill C-39 would concentrate permanent power directly within the Prime Minister's cabinet. Businesses in Abbotsford—South Langley do not want to hire a high-priced Ottawa lobbyist just to get their projects noticed by cabinet. My constituents, the community members of Abbotsford—South Langley, and businesses across Canada do not need another Ottawa top-down approach. They need a streamlined system that works for every single project and cuts unnecessary red tape.

• (1350)

This bill proposes making changes to the Canada Energy Regulator as well. Bill C-39 would make the CER the sole assessor for pipelines, designated power lines and offshore renewable energy projects. For new pipelines that are less than 300 kilometres of new right-of-way, the CER would make its final decision itself. Where did this 300-kilometre number even come from? What is the fundamental difference between a pipeline that is 295 kilometres of new right-of-way, which is approved by the CER, and a pipeline at 305 kilometres, which would still require cabinet approval? Are these

thresholds based on environmental risk or project complexity, or is it simply another decision made by the government for where it would draw the line?

The bill proposes to create regions of natural interest for fast-tracking projects. Cabinet could designate an entire region and identify categories of projects that may qualify within it. Something like this could matter greatly in areas full of natural resources and critical minerals where there are currently bureaucracy clogs delaying projects. One of the areas that has potential to be on the national interest region list is the Abbotsford and Sumas Prairie region. This is a critical energy- and agriculture-rich area, and the B.C. NDP government and the federal government signed an MOU this summer, which clearly created a path for the new southern route pipeline. If they were able to bring in this route alongside the existing energy corridor through the Sumas Prairie region, there would also need to be a government project to develop infrastructure for flood protection mitigation as well. The Sumas Prairie region is extremely vulnerable to flooding, and for years farmers in that region have been advocating for adequate infrastructure development to protect their lands in that area. The reason I bring this up is to draw attention to the fact that while we fast-track national interest projects, it is important we keep the development of local infrastructure up to par so families in the area and in the region are not burdened. Implementation would determine whether the creation of natural interest regions would truly make a difference. Given the Liberals' track record, it does not seem that this would be likely.

Our position on this side of the House is simple. Any legislation must save Canadians money and cut red tape to unleash production. This is exactly why we have consistently called to repeal the anti-development law, Bill C-69, and truly release energy in our country. The government has promised Canadians infrastructure development at speeds we have not seen in generations. So far, we have no projects or development to show for it.

Bill C-39 should be judged on one simple standard. Can Canadian companies develop a project and get answers when they want to get to work in any reasonable amount of time? If the goal of this bill is to increase investor security, then the answer to this question is required. We cannot afford to get things wrong. Our country, our future and the prosperity of our nation must come first.

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just for the record since our colleague made an allusion to that, Canada's economy is not the slowest-growing in the G7. In fact, right now we are the second-fastest and inflation in Canada is one of the lowest in the G7. However, I will go back to the issue in question here.

Our colleague spent quite a bit of time on the one-year approval track record, but in fact this bill is one project, one assessment, one year. I would like our colleague to comment on this one assessment part of the bill, which is working collaboratively with the provinces to make sure that we avoid duplication of processes and that the projects can advance much faster than that.

• (1355)

Sukhman Gill: Mr. Speaker, this is simple. The current government has been in power for 10 years. Canadians have been suffering for 10 years. If it were time to get stuff done, it would have been done already. That is what the mis-allusion is. The government keeps alluding to the fact that it is going to be helping everyday Canadians, but it is only cutting them short and shortchanging them. We do not see any projects being pushed to completion. The Liberals are not working with our provinces the way they should be, and streamlining projects the way they should be: efficiently and effectively.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Abbotsford—South Langley for his great presentation today.

In his speech, he talked about the discretion given to the government and how once the clock starts, the authority or regulator can stop that clock if it is told to by the minister. However, proposed subsection 19(4) of the bill allows the authority to say that we need another study and another study, until it deems it as complete. This gives unfettered discretion to the bureaucracy, which could simply keep asking for more information and not deliver the “one year, one review” promise that the government purports to support.

Sukhman Gill: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is completely right. We see again and again that delays are being pushed back. It can be years and years. A one-year project can turn into a five-year project, or a 10-year project, for that matter. This is the problem we see. We do not see the necessities we need to bring forward so that projects can be completed in a streamlined process. That is what we are missing from the government.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He said that no projects have gotten under way since the government came to power. In my region alone, however, Davie Canada started construction on the Polar Max icebreaker last spring. I was there when the first bolt was fastened.

An \$11-billion contract for six icebreakers was also just announced. In my riding, a container ship project was just announced as well. Meetings have already been held.

I would like to know where this information that there have been no projects comes from. Would my colleague like to rephrase his response a little, based on Bill C-39 and the projects ahead?

[English]

Sukhman Gill: Mr. Speaker, the government also claims that it has brought more jobs forward, but the fact of the matter is that they are only government jobs. We do not see this benefiting everyday Canadians. We do not see this benefiting the private sector. We see more complications, and projects being held up and delayed.

Statements by Members

That is the reality. That is what we have seen after 10 years of the Liberal government. That is what Canadians are dealing with right now.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague would like to comment on the implications of the government hand-picking projects for fast-tracking as opposed to opening up and providing certainty with a clear regulatory system for everyone.

Sukhman Gill: Mr. Speaker, that is the reality we see with the government. We do not see the private sector booming, and we do not see private businesses and private entrepreneurs getting involved in Canada. We see our businesses and entrepreneurs going south of the border. We want to make sure that we bring more infrastructure and more projects to Canada.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

LLOYD ROBERTSON

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, Markham—Stouffville lost one of its best-known residents, and our country has lost an extraordinary Canadian.

For more than six decades, Lloyd Robertson was a trusted and reassuring voice through moments that shaped our nation. His career began in 1952 on *Radio CJCS* in his hometown of Stratford, Ontario. He would go on to become one of Canada's best-known and most highly respected television news anchors. He was voted Canada's most trusted news anchor by TV Guide readers 11 years in a row, and his outstanding work was recognized with a myriad of awards and honours, including the Order of Canada.

I had the pleasure of meeting Lloyd Robertson many times, and just a few years ago, he emceed our local Markham District Veterans Association's Remembrance Day ceremony. He was a gentleman, was very kind and was clearly a patriotic Canadian. I know he will be deeply missed.

I offer my sincere condolences to his family and friends.

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THOMAS GRIEVE

Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Saskatchewan cattleman and, more importantly, my friend and mentor, Thomas “Teg” Grieve of Fillmore, who recently passed away at the age of 93.

Teg was a cattleman through and through. For 51 years, he exhibited at Agribition, supported 4H and young cattlemen, and earned the respect of people in the cattle industry across Canada and far beyond. However, that is not why I will remember him. Teg lived by the cowboy code: work hard, keep one's word, help one's neighbour and do the right thing, especially when no one is watching.

Statements by Members

When I was a young man, Teg showed me kindness when there was absolutely nothing in it for him. He encouraged me and guided me in his own quiet way, and was simply there when I needed him. That is integrity.

I thank Karen and the entire Grieve family for sharing Teg with us.

Happy trails, my friend.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL SENIORS DAY

Carlos Leitão (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 1, Canada marked National Seniors Day. The day was centred around the idea of working together for the well-being of seniors.

That theme is particularly appropriate in Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, where we have the Service bénévole d'entraide de Vimont-Auteuil, the Comité d'animation du troisième âge de Laval in Sainte-Rose, and many other community organizations that help seniors feel less isolated, more independent as well as more active and engaged in our community.

In Laval, I would also like to highlight the work of the Laval branch of the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, known as FADOQ; the Table régionale de concertation des aînés de Laval; and the caregivers and the many volunteers who are helping to make a difference in the lives of our seniors.

I want to thank all the seniors in Marc-Aurèle-Fortin and Laval for everything they have built and, above all, for everything they continue to give us.

* * *

[English]

FOOD AFFORDABILITY

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised just last year, “Canadians will hold us to account by their experience at the grocery store”. Now, food is even more expensive since the Prime Minister took office because of diesel prices.

Conservative shadow ministers and I were in the Canadian Arctic this summer. In Inuvik, it costs six dollars for a can of beans, seven dollars for a can of vegetable soup, \$12 for a pound of butter, \$13 for a pound of ground beef and \$18 for a jug of milk. In Tuktoyaktuk, it costs \$7.49 per kilogram for bananas, \$8.69 for a loaf of bread, \$12 for a litre of ketchup, \$20 for a jug of chocolate milk and \$97 for 24 bottles of water. Food is not affordable in the north.

Prime Minister, your promise was to all Canadians, including northerners. Will the Prime Minister support our Conservative plan to eliminate all taxes on diesel so that food is more affordable for northern Canadians?

The Speaker: I am not sure we should be using the first person in any statement in the House.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[Translation]

JEUNE CHAMBRE DE LA MAURICIE

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight a wonderful achievement that raises the profile of Trois-Rivières and the entire Mauricie region.

Last month, the Jeune Chambre de la Mauricie won the award for junior chamber of commerce of the year at the 2026 Grands prix de la relève d'affaires, organized by the Regroupement des jeunes chambres de commerce du Québec. It stood out among 48 finalists from across Quebec thanks to its leadership, dynamic approach, and commitment to the next generation. This award is a mark of recognition for an organization that is making a meaningful contribution to the development of its community. Through its networking activities and its support for young professionals and entrepreneurs, the Jeune Chambre de la Mauricie plays an important role in the economic vitality of our region.

I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to its members, its board of directors, the volunteers and its president, Jean-Russ Dufour, who was also recognized as volunteer of the year for his commitment to the business community.

On behalf of the people of Trois-Rivières, I say bravo to the entire team at the Jeune Chambre de la Mauricie for this monumental achievement.

* * *

• (1405)

[English]

ALBERTA REFERENDUM

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 19, Albertans will vote on the future of our province and our country. Alberta absolutely deserves better from the Liberal government, but separation is not the solution to our problems.

Edmonton Manning is full of proud Canadians, and I count myself as one of them. We are Canadians first, seeking a stronger Alberta in a united Canada. As Sir John A. Macdonald said, we are “One people, great in territory, great in resources, great in enterprise, great in credit, great in capital.”

Now is the time to unite for our future and show that we will not be divided. On October 19, I encourage all Albertans to get out, vote and stand for Canada.

* * *

RECOGNITION OF LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize Paula Lukey, founder of Havyn, a woman-owned business in my riding of Spadina—Harbourfront. When the economy weakens, it is often small businesses that feel it the most. They carry the pressure of high costs and decisions that are far beyond their control. Despite this, it is the small businesses in our communities that are leading the way.

In August, Paula and the team at Havyn began selling Lake Ontario T-shirts, an expression of Canadian pride at a moment when supporting Canada matters so much. For my constituents, Lake Ontario is our waterfront and our backyard. It is where we live, gather, work and raise our families. Our parks, islands and beaches are part of what makes this community home. Toronto's waterfront belongs to all of us, and we have a responsibility to protect it for generations to come.

I want to thank Paula for her work in creating Canadian products, supporting local jobs and reminding us that it will always be Lake Ontario.

* * *

JANICE LAKING

Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the passing of former Barrie mayor Janice Laking, a true community champion who passed away last week at the age of 96.

Janice devoted her life to serving our community, first as a high school teacher and guidance councillor at Barrie North Collegiate Institute, then as a Barrie city councillor, and later as Barrie mayor from 1988 to 2000. As mayor, she led Barrie through a period of extraordinary growth. Janice spearheaded the transformation of the former Royal Victoria Hospital into Victoria Village, and played a key role in preserving the CN Rail corridor in Barrie.

Janice remained deeply involved in our community long after her time as mayor. She was a steadfast supporter of the MacLaren Art Centre and the YMCA. She also served as an honorary colonel of the CFB Borden 16 Wing unit and was a citizenship court judge.

While her contributions to our community will be long remembered, her most enduring legacy is the loving family she leaves behind: her seven children and 11 grandchildren. I would like to extend my sincere condolences to her family, friends and all those who had the privilege of knowing Janice Laking.

Please join me in honouring the life and legacy of service of a truly great Canadian.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC ELECTION

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is a great day for Quebec democracy.

Today, October 5, Quebecers are being asked to vote on who they trust to govern our nation. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I urge all Quebecers to get out and vote. Voting is about more than having a right to complain, and it even goes beyond our civic duty. It is a small, simple act we can do that will have a decisive impact on the future of our nation. It is also a way to honour our ancestors, whether their names were “Papineau” or “Casgrain”, who fought hard for our right to vote and to make our own choices as a society. It also means ensuring that the party of our choice receives financial support, regardless of whether it wins or loses the election.

Statements by Members

I want to remind Quebecers that they can find their polling station on the card they received in the mail or on the website of Elections Québec.

The citizens of the Quebec nation have until eight o'clock tonight to help shape our national destiny.

I urge everyone to go vote. Long live Quebec.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS

Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week on September 30, millions of Canadians observed national truth and reconciliation day. Unfortunately, three days before that, in the city of Kamloops in the Tkemlúps te Secwépemc territory, a group organized and demonstrated in front of and mere steps away from the residential school. These people wanted to intimidate and strike fear in residential school survivors.

We stand with residential school survivors. We stand with their truths, and we want them to know that we stand with them every single day. To the residential school survivors and their families who are still here, the next time those people come out of their mothers' basements and march in an unorganized way, know that they are not strong, that they are not courageous. Survivors have more strength and more courage in their pinky fingers than each and every one of them does.

We stand with survivors. We stand with them every day, not just on September 30, but every day of the year.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN OIL

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I used to have a red tractor, but I sold it because diesel got too expensive. The “reds” and the economy do not go well together.

With the fourth-largest oil reserves in the world, there is no reason why Canadians should be paying so much for fuel. For the past 11 years, Liberal taxes have been holding back projects that would enable us to refine and transport Canadian fuel across the country. When our farmers, truck drivers and contractors have to pay more to do their jobs, every family ends up paying the price. Our pressure on the Liberal government has already led to the suspension of the federal excise tax on fuel and the extension of that tax relief.

We will continue to fight for all Canadians. Our Conservative plan is clear: Eliminate taxes on diesel until 2027, remove taxes that penalize diesel production, speed up approvals, offer a 100% deduction for energy investments and create a strategic reserve of refined fuel.

We need to produce fuel at home, be self-sufficient and make our country more affordable.

*Statements by Members**[English]***BYRON SPRINGBANK VETERANS MONUMENT**

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Springbank Park, 14 life-sized steel figures now stand in a circle, soldiers and peacekeepers, side by side. We can walk around them, and they almost seem to move. People can scan a QR code and learn the stories of those who have served, and serve, our great country. This is the Byron Springbank Veterans Monument, designed by artist Kay Jang. Nearly 20 years in the making, it started as Reverend Frank Mantz's dream. The Byron-Springbank Legion Branch 533, with the whole community behind it, made it real. The Legion now has a permanent home for Remembrance Day, and every Londoner has a daily reminder of what we owe to those who served for our freedoms.

I was proud to join the dedication on October 3. To the Legion, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Byron Springbank Veterans Monument consortium, every volunteer, every donor, every family and every member of the Canadian Armed Forces who serves, who has served and who will serve in the future, we want to take this moment to thank them, with the monument and with every single action that we take in this country. We owe it to them for our freedoms.

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FUEL PRICES

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my region, people often ask me how our country, with the fourth-largest oil reserves on earth, pays such high prices at the pump. A lost Liberal decade of high taxes and red tape has held back Canadian energy projects to process more Canadian-made fuel. We cannot control the global price of diesel, but we can reduce the costs that Ottawa adds.

Our Conservative emergency fuel relief plan would eliminate all federal taxes on diesel sales until at least Canada Day, eliminate red tape on diesel production and bolster the production of Canadian-made diesel. Our plan would immediately reduce the cost for members of my community to drive, ship, log and farm, while creating more Canadian jobs down the line.

Will the Liberals support our Conservative plan to give relief to Canadians?

* * *

COPS FOR CANCER

Ernie Klassen (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of recognizing the incredible efforts of those involved in the Cops for Cancer tour as bike riders made their way through White Rock and South Surrey. For nearly 30 years, participants have cycled, raising funds for childhood cancer research and support programs. Students from Peace Arch Elementary and White Rock Elementary came out in full force, lining the route with cheers, signs and high fives to welcome the cyclists. Their enthusiasm was a powerful reminder of the strength of community when we come together for a cause greater than ourselves.

White Rock RCMP Constable Carly Godlien rode in support of Caitlyn Sears, a courageous young girl undergoing treatment for leukemia.

Thanks to the dedication of riders, volunteers, sponsors, educators, students and community supporters, more than \$270,000 was raised to help those affected by cancer. I ask members to join me in thanking everyone who participated and supported this event.

* * *

● (1415)

ENERGY RESOURCES

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the world's fourth-largest proven oil reserves. We have the resources to fuel our country, and yet Canadians are paying more at the pump. We cannot control everything that drives up energy prices around the world, but we can control the barriers that we put in our own way. After 11 years, Liberal taxes and red tape have made it harder to build the projects that turn Canadian resources into Canadian fuel, jobs and opportunity. It does not have to be that way. Canadian workers should be turning Canadian resources into Canadian prosperity. Conservatives have a plan to move Canada forward, cut taxes, remove unnecessary barriers and get Canadian resources to market.

Diesel is not a luxury. It fuels our farms, our trucks and the equipment that keeps the country moving. When diesel costs more, Canadians pay more. Canada has the resources. We have the workers. We have the opportunity. What Canadians need is for government to get out of the way and to allow resource development, with Canadian resources, by Canadian workers and for Canadian prosperity.

* * *

*[Translation]***ACADÉMIE STE-THÉRÈSE**

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to welcome to Parliament students from Académie Ste-Thérèse, an institution that has been deeply rooted in our community for over 40 years now. Académie Ste-Thérèse supports young people aged five to 17 from more than 1,000 families in the Laurentians and Laval, with a mission that perfectly sums up its ambition: to create a bright future for its students.

Their learning continues right here and now, at the heart of our democracy. I hope this visit will give them a better understanding of the work we do here and, above all, show them that politics and the institutions around us belong to their generation, too. I hope they have a wonderful visit, and my colleagues and I are delighted to welcome them to Ottawa today. Welcome, everyone.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made a big show about promising to buy and build Canadian, yet an analysis by the Toronto Star demonstrated that since he made that promise, government purchases from American companies have increased and the share of money destined for American companies has increased by 50% to \$7.8 billion.

Why does the Prime Minister say one thing, do the opposite and force workers who lost their jobs to send their cheques to the United States?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has put the buy Canadian policy in place, and with it comes major projects, major investments, including \$2 billion in General Dynamics Systems, in London, and \$100 billion in TKMS for submarines. It is legal for half of the investments to be made here in Canada.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made a big show of promising to buy and build Canadian, but it was all talk and no results. Today, an analysis by the Toronto Star demonstrated that he increased the amount destined for American companies to \$7.8 billion. The share of the money for government contracts that goes to the U.S. is up 50%.

Why did the Prime Minister put on a big show of theatrics with elbows up, break his promise and force Canadian workers to send more of their tax dollars south?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has put in place “buy Canada”, and with buy Canada, we have \$2 billion invested in General Dynamics in London, and we have over \$100 billion coming up in submarines, to be invested in Canada, across this country.

The Leader of the Opposition may have been sleeping, but last week the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada and Pembina announced the largest pipeline in Canada.

• (1420)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after announcements and promises, today we found the results. The Prime Minister promised, just like he is promising today, that he would repatriate production and Canadian purchases to this country. Instead, he has actually increased the dollar value and the share of federal government purchases that go to the United States of America. While Canadians are out of a job because tariffs have

Oral Questions

prevented them from working, the Prime Minister forces them to send their tax dollars to the same American companies we are competing with.

Why is the Prime Minister sending our money south?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition is sleeping, this government is acting.

I am going to give him a little geography lesson. At the Matawinie mine in Quebec, we have shovels in the ground. At the Contrecoeur terminal at the port of Montreal, we have shovels in the ground. At the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, we have shovels in the ground. At the north coast transmission line in British Columbia, we have shovels in the ground. For the Darlington project, which is in Ontario, we have shovels in the ground.

We are building Canada strong.

* * *

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister loves to take credit for projects that were approved before he ever became Prime Minister. Soon enough, he is going to be announcing that he is granting a permit for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Speaking of those projects, not only has he failed to buy Canadian; he now cannot build Canadian. Just after the announcement that, after a 10-year delay, LNG phase two is going ahead, we now learn that the steel will not come from the out-of-work Hamilton steelworkers. It will come from China.

Why is the Prime Minister sending our steel jobs to Beijing?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Leader of the Opposition has brought up the second-largest private sector investment in Canadian history, an LNG Canada success story that will make this country more independent and more prosperous. It is a project that will have 15,000 tonnes of Canadian steel in the broader ecosystem.

This government is building Canada strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the principal supplier of steel for the project will, again, be China. That is something we found out the very week the legendary company Stelco announced it was going to be laying off 350 people and idling its plant in Hamilton.

The Prime Minister puts Canadian steelworkers out of a job and grants a permit for Beijing to dump its artificially subsidized steel on Canadian soil.

Why can we not build Canadian with Canadian steel?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a chance to build with Canadian steel. It is called the Pacific link pipeline. The Leader of the Opposition might be sleeping and he might be in the ground, but we are putting Canadian steel in the ground with the Pacific link pipeline.

The workers of Stelco deserve better from their American-owned parent, which made representations. This government will pursue it to the full force of the law to honour those commitments.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course they deserve better from their American owner. Canadians deserve better than a Prime Minister who sends their tax dollars down to reward those same companies with purchases up 50% as a share of government purchases.

We then have LNG phase two. It took the Liberals 10 years to get it going. Those steelworkers, who thought they might have a hope to supply the bones of that project, learned that the Prime Minister has sold them out and granted a permit for that steel to come from China.

Why will he not put Canadians first, with Canadian steel in Canadian projects?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is 15,000 tonnes of Canadian steel in Coastal GasLink for LNG phase two. LNG phase two was approved less than two years from the start of LNG phase one.

The Leader of the Opposition and all of the members of his party have a chance to stand up for Bill C-39 to get Canada building strong right across this country. That is what this government is doing.

* * *

• (1425)

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, the Prime Minister announced that his new western pipeline will be a project of national interest. His concept of the “national interest” is pretty odd. He thinks that the national interest means getting taxpayers to pay for a pipeline that will cost at least \$40 billion, without any impact assessments and without complying with environmental laws. That is \$40 billion, at a minimum, of our money for a pipeline that the private sector refuses to invest in because it is so unappealing.

How is bleeding Quebecers dry during an economic crisis in the national interest?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this pipeline is in the national interest because it will make Canada more independent, more prosperous and more inclusive. It is a pipeline that will support indigenous peoples, British Columbia and Alberta.

There is another project, but I will describe it after the next question.

THE ECONOMY

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, making Quebecers pay for a pipeline is not in the national interest.

Things that we do believe are in Canada's national interest are things like tackling climate change, protecting our culture from the web giants and supporting our forestry industry and our processors in the face of the tariffs. We also believe that it is not up to the Prime Minister alone to define what is in the national interest.

Who does the Prime Minister think he is, to place his projects—which he chooses all by himself, in his office and according to his own personal definition of the national interest—above the law?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to this specific issue, we are following Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

The other major project I wanted to mention is the Churchill Falls project, which is in the interests of both Quebecers and Canadians.

The Government of Canada is making this project possible. It is the largest investment in clean energy in history—not just in Canada, not just in Mexico, not just in the United States, but in the history of North America.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the case of Bill C-39, the Prime Minister is using the crisis with Donald Trump to adopt permanent changes that would otherwise be unacceptable. He is circumventing laws with his new pipeline, which he will personally select based on his own criteria.

The proof that Donald Trump is an excuse is that the Prime Minister is repealing a provision of Bill C-5 that limited its emergency powers to five years. Donald Trump will no longer be around in five years, but the Prime Minister will be able to continue suspending environmental laws indefinitely.

What is that if not an abuse of power?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to maintain all laws, standards and environmental rules with Bill C-39. It is a question of government efficiency, not a question of standards. We can and will maintain high Canadian standards, but decisions will be made within one year, with “one project, one review”.

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

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised that he would double homebuilding, but once again, it was all talk and no results. In fact, homebuilding is down, and today, Habitat for Humanity International published a report showing that 56% of Canadians who do not own homes believe they never will. That is the highest number out of 22 surveyed countries. Also, two-thirds of Canadians have skipped other payments so that they can pay for their housing.

Canadians are paying for this costly Prime Minister. When will he adopt our plan to build homes and not bureaucracy?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, this summer, when asked what he would do about building housing, said absolutely nothing. That was his response. Leave it to the market to solve all our housing woes.

We have established Build Canada Homes to build affordable non-market housing. We have over 19,000 homes under way right now. We are building Canada strong and we are offering Canadians in Ontario up to \$200,000 off the price of a new home. This is leadership. We are delivering that. We are delivering the homes that Canadians need.

• (1430)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I said I would do nothing to bail out Liberal, condo-owning insiders.

The Prime Minister wants to force hard-working young people who cannot afford a home to pay taxes to bail out multi-millionaire investors who speculated and lost. Maybe that is why 56% of those who do not own a home revealed in a survey to Habitat for Humanity International that they never will.

Again, the question is for the Prime Minister. If he cares enough about those aspiring young people, when will he get government taxes and red tape out of the way so that youth can afford homes?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only are we cutting red tape, working with local governments to make it faster to build and reducing development charges dramatically, we have also had a first-time homebuyer break on the GST. The Conservatives fought it all last year. They fought against giving first-time homebuyers an opportunity to save on their first home purchase. We went to the next step with a GST break for all Canadians on new homes. Did this have support from the other side? No.

Again and again, they say one thing. One might think they care about affordable housing, but they do not give a hoot about it. They never vote for it.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister cared about it, he would stand up and answer the question himself. Instead, he is worried that he might accidentally say affordability is the best it has been in over a decade. He is totally out of touch, while Canadians are out of money.

As the MNP report that was released today said, more than two in five Canadians report being \$200 or less away from insolvency, more than half say they do not have enough savings to support themselves if they are unemployed for six months and a third believe they would not be able to cope financially for three months if they had an unexpected event.

Will the Prime Minister look them in the eye and say affordability is the best it has been in over a decade?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member of Parliament is now an Albertan MP, but in Ontario, I was so excited to announce with Minister Calandra the extension of the Ontario early learning and child care agreement with Canada that will retain child care at an average of \$19 a day per child in Ontario for the next four years. That is a savings of \$9,000 per child per year for families.

That is the kind of affordability that families are looking for. This is a reliable affordability partnership at all levels of government. It is something I think the member of Parliament just does not understand.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an article in *Le Journal de Montréal* entitled “The rising price of diesel costs him an extra \$2,000 a day to run his machines” reports that one Quebec farmer is expecting to pay \$200,000. Consumers who buy food will be paying that cost as well. No one is blaming the Prime Minister for global oil prices, but here in Canada, we pay 24¢ a litre more than in the United States and 32¢ more than the global price.

Is the Prime Minister going to vote for our Conservative plan to lower costs today and become more self-sufficient in the future?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the real question is this: When he was the member for Carleton, why did he vote against 13,513 of his former constituents who were receiving the dental benefit and against 21,600 children?

Oral Questions

In his new riding, why does he oppose allowing 27,320 children to receive the Canada child benefit or allowing 17,380 of his constituents to use the Canadian dental care plan?

My colleague talks loudly here in the House, but when the time comes to vote on the right side and for his constituents, he stays seated.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are as totally out of touch as Canadians are totally out of money. That is why the Prime Minister cannot answer questions from the Canadian people.

For example, diesel prices have hit record highs. Nobody blames the Prime Minister for the war in Iran or the war between Ukraine and Russia. However, what we blame him for is the fact that diesel is 24¢ a litre more expensive in Canada than in the U.S. and 32¢ more expensive than the worldwide average.

Will the Prime Minister vote for our plan this Wednesday to save Canadians on fuel and make us self-sufficient at home?

• (1435)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we work with our allies to try to bring diesel prices down. Diesel prices have gone down 6% over the last three days because of coordinated ally action.

While the Conservatives talk down things, they are apparently sleeping. We are building 6,000 new jobs in LNG Canada phase one. We are building 140,000 new jobs from the new Pacific link pipeline. Maybe they should wake up and start to build with us.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he says there is coordinated action to bring down global energy prices. It turns out that he has not been able to take any action at all, despite wrongly telling the media he would release 24 million barrels of oil. It turns out he does not have 24 billion barrels of oil. He does not have one barrel of oil, because Canada is the only G7 country without an above-ground strategic oil reserve.

We have a plan, though, to take all tax off diesel, to produce more of it here at home and to store up a strategic reserve so that we can actually profit from reducing prices around the world. Will the government adopt our plan?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he asked us to wake him up, so I will give him a bit of good news. Diesel production in Canada is up 16% this year. We are operating at maximum capacity. We export diesel.

Why do they not start trying to help build Canada instead of talking Canada down?

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that there are very large markets in Canada where people cannot get Canadian-made diesel. That is why, particularly in the Lower Mainland of B.C., Canadians have to pay the premium of buying back Canadian petroleum products from the

U.S. that are marked up at higher prices. Add to that the dozens of cents of taxes the government imposes, and Canadians are paying among the highest prices in the world for diesel.

Will the government accept our plan to get rid of those taxes, incentivize diesel production here at home and become energy self-reliant?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is time to wake up the Leader of the Opposition and let him know we are building energy self-sufficiency. It is called LNG Canada phase two. It is called the Pacific link. It is called the sunrise expansion. It is creating thousands and thousands of jobs in Canada and improving our energy self-sufficiency.

Why do the Conservatives not stop talking Canada down and start trying to help us build?

[Translation]

SENIORS

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are in a new parliamentary session, but the same old problem with the Cúram software persists. Today we learned that there is still a backlog of nearly 33,000 old age pension claims from seniors. There is a backlog of 33,000 claims, even though the Bloc Québécois and the media have been questioning the government about this for more than eight months. Some 33,000 seniors are still caught up in this IT fiasco.

How many more cases will it take before the government finally launches an independent public inquiry into Cúram?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the benefits delivery modernization program is the largest IT transformation ever undertaken by the Government of Canada. It aims to provide Canadians with a modern, seamless experience when it comes to old age security, the Canada pension plan and employment insurance.

[English]

The member of Parliament is correct. The numbers are going down, and we continue to work to make sure that every senior can get their benefits in a timely fashion.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are refusing to answer and refusing to launch an inquiry on Cúram, even though the project has already racked up \$5 billion in cost overruns and there are still more to come since there is still a backlog of 33,000 old age security files. The Liberals are not only refusing to be transparent but they also have the nerve to call this a success story and they want to use this same software for employment insurance.

Before they get tens of thousands more people involved in this IT fiasco, will the Liberals finally realize that an inquiry is needed?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those numbers are way off base. That is not at all what it cost to implement this old age security software, which serves 7.7 million seniors. It works.

It is true, however, that there is a backlog, but it has been reduced by more than half in recent months. Every effort is being made to ensure that seniors who are entitled to old age security are getting the correct amount of benefits on time. We will continue this very important work for Quebec seniors.

* * *

• (1440)

[English]

JUSTICE

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Shane Ertmoed killed 10-year-old Heather Thomas about 26 years ago. Her family continues to serve a psychological life sentence, while Mr. Ertmoed himself gets a 60-day temporary, unescorted absence in order to take cooking classes, cooking classes that Heather will not get to take.

I am going to look right at the Prime Minister and ask this: Will he commit to repealing, to removing, Liberal parole so this cannot happen again, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the incident that my friend opposite speaks about is abhorrent, and we condemn it in all possible terms, but let me just be clear: The Parole Board of Canada makes decisions independently. We as a government have made significant changes to the criminal justice system, and we will continue to listen to victims and ensure that the right changes are in place. We will continue to work with survivors, victims and the organizations that work with them in order to strengthen our parole system.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Prime Minister, yet the public safety minister answered. This is all talk and no results. I am meeting with Heather's mom and her counsel on Thursday.

If the Prime Minister believes in what the public safety minister just said, will he meet with Heather's mom and her counsel this Thursday and say what the minister just said? Does the Prime Minister have the guts to stand up and say it, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, issues around public safety should not be politicized. What is important is that every member of the House, every single one of us elected to office, has a responsibility to ensure that we support victims. That is exactly what our government has been doing. We are working with representatives of survivor groups, with survivors and with their family members to ensure that we have the right changes to the criminal justice system, including parole. That is the commitment we make today, and that is the commitment that every single one of us on this side of the aisle makes to Canadians.

Oral Questions

Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Tim and Mona Deslippe lost their son Nathan to a brutal murder in London, Ontario, in 2016. Nathan's killer beat him to death in what the courts say was a prolonged and violent attack before the murderer dragged his body to the bathtub, took a shower and a selfie as well. The killer was sentenced to life with no parole for 14 years, yet Tim and Mona have already had to respond to multiple requests for escorted temporary leave, which have revictimized the family over and over again.

When will the government fix its broken Liberal parole system and, after 11 long years, put victims first?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Public Safety has said, we are open to reform. We have made more reforms to the Criminal Code of Canada than any government has.

The act that the members were speaking of was last changed by the Conservative government, so it is not a Liberal act. In fact, it is a Conservative one.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, media in the Quebec City region have reported that, in the past month alone, more than 10 cars and six residential buildings have been set on fire, possibly by organized crime, in a bid to gain control of the drug market. Even in my riding of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, a teenager allegedly stole a vehicle before attempting to ram police officers in order to escape.

Since the Liberals took office, criminals no longer fear the consequences of their crimes. Our Conservative action plan aims to keep Canadians safe.

Will the Liberals adopt it?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I answer, I would like to thank my colleague for this question.

It is very important to recognize that we need to implement the new legislation that the House passed during the last parliamentary session.

[English]

We have put forward a series of different laws that tackle, very specifically, crimes such as arson and violent crimes involving auto theft. We are seeing nationally the rate of crime actually coming down. We have worked very carefully with our partners, with the province and with law enforcement, and we are going to continue to do so.

Oral Questions

The only body that seems not to be collaborating in the effort to adopt stronger laws to produce safer communities is the Conservative Party of Canada. If Conservatives would like to collaborate with us—

• (1445)

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

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the minister should acknowledge that the Liberals are the ones who created the problem we are currently experiencing. They are the ones who introduced the laws that have led to these issues with crime.

Today, we are seeing crimes becoming more brazen, with car thefts happening in broad daylight, jewellery store robberies being carried out with axes, shootings, armed home invasions, and offences committed by individuals who are already subject to legal conditions. The Liberals are all talk, but we could be moving faster.

Will the Liberals agree to adopt our Conservative proposals and our plan to keep Canadians safe?

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to admit that it was this side of the House that adopted laws that actually made stronger penalties be put in place for serious crimes. Those laws were developed in collaboration with law enforcement, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Every regional police organization not only fed into the process but endorsed the measures that we implemented after the fact.

The hon. member is not correct. As a matter of fact, while he says that crime is somehow increasing, the stats show, nationally and in virtually every region of this country, that crime, including auto theft, is coming down.

We are going to put forward a plan that is based on science, facts and evidence. We will incorporate the perspective of those who—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Brampton Centre.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Amandeep Sodhi (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the world economy has been disrupted by rising protectionism, global conflicts and a reshaping of the international order. As a result, the cost of living for Canadians has taken a hit. In response, we are focusing on what we can control, by putting money back into their pockets.

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, my constituents want to know what steps the government has taken to make their lives more affordable.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a great question.

From the middle-class tax cut to the pause in the excise fuel tax, we are delivering affordability for Canadians. Today, millions of Canadians are going to receive the groceries and essentials benefit, meaning up to \$170 for an individual and up to \$340 for a family of four. That will bring 77,000 Canadians out of poverty.

On this side of the House, we are going to focus on affordability for Canadians. The other side can continue with the rhetoric.

* * *

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was devastating news last week. Chris, a Stelco employee, called me to say that he and 350 of his fellow union Local 1005 steelworkers are out of a job. This is the human cost of the Prime Minister's failed attempts to get a tariff deal, the same deal he promised Canadians over a year and a half ago. Now the tariffs are still here, bigger than before, and Hamilton steelworkers are paying the price.

When will the Prime Minister turn rhetoric into reality to protect Canadian jobs and Hamilton workers?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the news at Stelco was a gut punch to the workers, their families and the entire community of Hamilton, and our government stands with them.

I had personal conversations with the owner of Stelco, Lourenco Goncalves, who owns Cleveland-Cliffs. We offered the company support, and notwithstanding the fact that we were at the table until the last minute, it decided to turn it down. Now we know also that the CEO of Cleveland-Cliffs has been in favour of tariffs against steelworkers—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have talked about holding the company accountable, but I am going to do my job and hold the government accountable. The Prime Minister's duty is to keep Canada in a competitive business climate, but he has failed. I have stood in the House multiple times to warn the Prime Minister this was coming. The out-of-touch Liberals need to understand we cannot build without protecting the people who actually build Canada. With the Prime Minister, it is all talk and no results.

Again, how many more families must lose their livelihood before the Prime Minister protects Canadian—

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Industry.

[English]

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been there for steelworkers and will continue to be, and we will work together, along with the member, because we believe in Stelco and its workers. That being said, at the same time, Cleveland-Cliffs and Stelco have obligations under the Investment Canada Act, and we will make sure that we use the full force of the law.

• (1450)

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reannouncement of LNG Canada phase two is old news, but we now know that steel being used for that project is from China. The Prime Minister promised Canadians he would buy Canadian and use Canadian-made steel for major projects. Instead, he is allowing companies to use foreign steel while Canadian steelworkers are facing layoffs.

We have seen the government buy American, and now we are seeing it buy Chinese. When is it time to buy Canadian?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe it is time for the Conservatives to get behind 6,000 new jobs in Canada for LNG Canada. Maybe it is time for them to get behind 180,000 new jobs for the Pacific link pipeline. Maybe it is time for them to get behind 2,000 new jobs for the Sunrise pipeline. How about getting on team Canada?

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 350 Canadian steelworkers are losing their job at Stelco, all while the government knew and allowed LNG Canada phase two to use Chinese steel. The Liberal government granted a remission order on anti-dumping duties in phase one, so it cannot claim ignorance.

Why did the Liberals not fight for Canadian-made steel, for Canadian jobs and for Canadian businesses?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we look at the type of steel that is made at Stelco, we see that it is for the auto sector right now. It is almost always sent to the U.S. The type of steel at Stelco needs to be changed, and we need to build the type of steel for Canada. That is exactly what we are doing elsewhere in the country. There are 200 new jobs at Tenaris in Sault Ste. Marie, building steel for pipelines, and it is exactly because of our plan that it is hiring.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers in my community are worried about the increasing cost of diesel. Now, many are spending thousands of dollars every single day just to keep their operations running. One farmer put it very plainly. He said that when fuel prices rise, so do grocery prices for every single Canadian.

For 11 years, Liberal policies have driven up the cost of fuel and made life more expensive for Canadian families. Tomorrow, Conservatives will put forward a common-sense motion calling on the House to adopt our emergency fuel relief plan. The question is very

Oral Questions

simple. Will the government vote in favour of Canadians and vote in favour of saving them money?

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members of the chamber are well aware today that this is a global issue. It is caused by a geopolitical situation. Farmers are on the front line, and we sympathize with them. That is why we brought in the reduction of the excise tax. That is why we are seeing all the countries around the world working together to reduce the cost of diesel. We will continue to work with our farmers. We will continue to support them through programs, and we appreciate everything they do.

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Liberals are completely out of touch, because the cost of diesel in Canada is far more than the cost of diesel in the United States of America, which has been equally impacted by global markets. That argument just does not work. At the end of the day, farmers have a job to do, and it is to produce food, but that means being able to take the crop off the field, and it means being able to get commodity to market and ultimately to get food on store shelves. That all takes money because of diesel costs. At the end of the day, it is the consumer who pays those costs. It is Canadian families.

We as Conservatives have a plan. We are putting it on the table. We are bringing it forward tomorrow. We would love to work with the government on it. Will it vote yes—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seeing as the member opposite is from Alberta, she would be very excited and would want to support projects like Imperial Strathcona, creating renewable diesel right here at home using Canadian canola from Alberta. Fifty per cent of canola from Alberta would go toward the feedstock for the renewable diesel at Imperial Strathcona.

I will ask her this question: Will she continue to support the CFRs and continue to take action so that we can make renewable diesel here at home?

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one farmer is sounding the alarm: Rising diesel prices are forcing him to pay an extra \$2,000 a day to run his equipment. When our business owners pay more because of Liberal taxes, families everywhere feel the pinch at the grocery store. Everyone knows that. Canada has the fourth-largest oil reserves in the world, yet Canadians pay more per litre of diesel than the global average.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals adopt our emergency plan to bring down prices at the pump?

• (1455)

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have suspended the excise tax on gasoline to bring down prices at the pump. We have cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. My colleague voted against that. We increased the Canada child benefit, which helps millions of children across the country. The same applies to the Canadian dental care plan.

I am pleased to tell my colleague that today, the Canada groceries and essentials benefit is being paid into the bank accounts of hundreds of thousands of Quebecers, including people in her constituency. I would also point out that, yes, affordability is important to us, but so is creating good jobs. She need only look to the Davie shipyard, where 5,000 good jobs are being created in her constituency.

* * *

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister failed in the trade talks with the Americans. The Liberals have completely abandoned Canada's steel industry. Today, steel is being hit with tariffs of up to 100%. In Beauce alone, that represents over 3,000 jobs that are at risk. Just ask the 350 Stelco employees who lost their jobs. We are talking about 350 jobs that have been lost. That is the result of Liberal inaction. Steel workers and their families are worried.

When will the Prime Minister reassure them by taking action rather than making empty promises?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking action. We are in contact with several companies in my colleague's riding of Beauce, including Canam, because we believe it is important to support our businesses. We have a wide range of support programs for businesses and we have already provided funding to various businesses. In the meantime, we have changed our procurement policies to say that domestically sourced steel must be used in all of our defence contracts and in all the support we provide to various companies, whether in the auto or aerospace sectors.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, businesses in the Beauce region have nothing to learn from Liberal ministers. The only thing more costly than a tariff is a Liberal minister who thinks they know more about business than entrepreneurs do. That is what is really costly. While they do nothing more than talk, operating costs are skyrocketing. Take Structure SBL, for example, which is facing an additional \$4 million in costs. Camnor is facing an additional \$1.5 million in costs per month.

Conservatives want to help companies save money. Why are the Liberals doing the opposite?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while my colleague is busy playing politics and grandstanding, I am looking forward to working with him

and getting down to business. The reality is that there are people right now who are being affected by the tariffs.

First of all, it would be tremendously helpful if my colleague would speak out against the tariffs, because the tariffs are being imposed by the U.S. government. Unfortunately, he seems to be overlooking that fact. Second, we are going to work on projects in his riding, because, of course, we will be there for the people of Beauce.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Thanksgiving is fast approaching. As families in Longueuil—Saint-Hubert head to the grocery store to prepare for large family gatherings, they are looking for extra support to help them cope with the cost of food and other everyday essentials. As Canadians and Quebecers, we have many reasons to be grateful.

As families across the country prepare to celebrate, what measures is our government taking to make life more affordable?

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

It is true that one of the government's key roles is to ensure that each and every citizen can reach their full potential. The government can help the people, whether it is through social housing, the suspension of the gas tax, the Canada child benefit or the Canadian dental care plan.

Today, on October 5, the Canada groceries and essentials benefit that we introduced is being deposited into the accounts of 12 million Canadians. This amounts to \$340 for a family of four. This measure reduces poverty for 67,000 Canadians, lifting them out of poverty.

This is essential, and I thank my colleague for his work and support.

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[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have even more proof that the Prime Minister is all talk and no results. Just over a year after he announced his own government's buy Canadian policy, we now learn that the government has spent \$7.8 billion enriching American corporations. A Prime Minister who says that we are "at war" with the United States is padding the bottom lines of American companies.

He told Canadians to buy Canadian. Why is he not?

• (1500)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just last month, I was honoured to stand with the Minister of Transport and the Prime Minister in Thunder Bay, Ontario, at the Alstom plant as we announced support for Via to purchase its new fleet of cars using Canadian talent in a Canadian plant. That will benefit workers in La Pocatière and in Thunder Bay.

This is the announcement of a generation for my riding, with 10 years of solid work. Congratulations to the members of Unifor and Alstom for bringing it home.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I apologize, but I believe the minister got her talking points mixed up, because that had nothing to do with the question I asked.

The Prime Minister looked at Canadians and said that he was going to lead by example and his government was going to buy Canadian. Instead, he has increased, in the time he has been Prime Minister, the number of government contracts going to American companies from one-fifth to one-third. Perhaps it is because 90% of his investments are wrapped up in American corporations.

Here is a very easy question for the Prime Minister: What is up, his elbows or his stock portfolio?

[Translation]

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud that the buy Canadian policy has been in place since December for procurement in Canada. More than \$22 billion in contracts are either in progress or have been awarded under the buy Canadian policy.

This policy aims to encourage the use of Canadian suppliers, but also, and especially, Canadian content. According to the article so frequently quoted since this morning, many companies employ thousands of Canadians across the country.

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[English]

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Kathy Borrelli (Windsor—Tecumseh—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to stand up for Canadian workers. Back in Windsor, we are still waiting.

Last week's layoffs at Stelco are just the latest warning. Last October, Windsor workers called out the use of foreign steel on the Banwell-E.C. Row project, even though Canadian producers were ready to compete for the work. Canadian projects should use Canadian steel and Canadian workers.

When will the Liberals stop the rhetoric and actually deliver the results they promised Canadian workers?

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are defending Canada's steel industry. We are de-

fending the auto industry. We are investing in businesses, including in the member's riding.

We have delivered \$7.5 billion in support to businesses and workers across the country, including steel companies. I was at Daybar, which uses Hamilton steel for doors and frames that it can export, and there are many other companies.

The Conservatives should get on board and start building this country up, not tearing it down.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since Russia began its brutal invasion in 2022, more than 20,000 Ukrainian children have been unlawfully deported or forcibly transferred. These children must be brought home. Last week, in Toronto, I was pleased to join representatives from around the world who came together to advance that goal.

Canada has long been known for pairing strength with compassion. Can the minister explain how Canada is leading international efforts to bring these children home, reunite families and hold those responsible to account?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the abduction of Ukrainian children is one of the most illegal and egregious aspects of Russia's illegal and unjustifiable war. Last week, we brought together 70 countries to work toward the return of Ukrainian children, prisoners of war and detained civilians. We put on the table \$7 million, including for grassroots organizations, to bring these children home.

Putin must be stopped. This war is illegal, and we will stand with Ukraine in the short and the long term.

Slava Ukraini.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 1992, Canadian soldiers deployed to war-torn Somalia were ordered to take mefloquine, an anti-malarial drug developed by the U.S. military and unlicensed in Canada. The Canadian government knew that the side effects included anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations and psychotic behaviour, yet did not follow trial safety protocols. For many, those side effects never stopped.

Routine Proceedings

For 25 years, they have been fighting in court for the truth, yet in June, government lawyers moved to shut the case down. Will the Prime Minister immediately settle the court case, reopen the Somalia inquiry and apologize to Canadian veterans?

• (1505)

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that this case remains under litigation, it is inappropriate for the government to involve itself in the matter. I have taken due note of the member's concerns, and I will take them back to my office.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the October 1 press release from the Prime Minister says that the pipeline will follow a southern route that “avoids highly sensitive ecosystems”. Is the government actually unaware that the pipeline route plows through the most sensitive marine areas on the B.C. coast: the Salish Sea, the Gulf Islands marine national park, the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, the Boundary Bay protected Ramsar site, Roberts Bank and on and on, the most sensitive Fraser River salmon habitat? Did the government talk to any scientists before making this flawed decision?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight that our government takes the protection of oceans and nature very seriously. Earlier this year, I was able to attend, with six first nations, the establishment of the Great Bear Sea national marine conservation area reserve, an area of 6,700 kilometres. We are in the process of establishing further ocean protections, many of which were announced just last week. The tanker ban remains in place. Our nature protections and ocean protections continue. In fact, we are only getting started.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. R. J. Simpson, Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF LOBBYING OF CANADA

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay before the House, pursuant to subsection 94(2) of the Access to Information Act and subsection 72(2) of the Privacy Act, the reports of the Commissioner of Lobbying on the administration of these acts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), these reports are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-224, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, regarding natural health products. Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(1), the committee requests a 30-day extension to consider it.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a), a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put, and the recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, October 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

• (1510)

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-238, an act to amend the Criminal Code, regarding restitution orders. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, the House shall continue to sit until midnight, on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, and Wednesday, October 7, 2026, provided that,

(a) on these sitting days, after 7 p.m., no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair, except for a unanimous consent motion to see the clock; and

(b) on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, proceedings on any opposition motion pursuant to Standing Order 81 (16) shall be interrupted no later than 5:30 p.m. and all questions necessary to dispose of the said proceedings shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

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

There being no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

SERGEI MAGNITSKY INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all parties for the following unanimous consent motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, in relation to Bill C-219, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), the Special Economic Measures Act and the Broadcasting Act, as amended by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development,

(a) Motions No. 1 and 2, standing in the name of the Member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman on today's Notice Paper, be deemed adopted; and

(b) the bill be ordered to be reprinted, as further amended, for the use of the House at the report stage.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

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PETITIONS

DAY OF APPRECIATION FOR THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition brought forth by Raksha Bhayana and the Bhayana Family Foundation, supported by the philanthropic and charitable sector, and signed by 1,377 Canadians from across all provinces.

The petitioners ask our government and the House to officially recognize the third Thursday of February as the day of appreciation for the non-profit sector. The petitioners would like to bring to the attention of the House the fact that 170,000 organizations work in the non-profit space, that the non-profit sector contributes over 8% to our GDP, employs 2.7 million Canadians and engages millions of volunteers. This includes non-profits in the arts, food security, mental health, faith organizations, sports, environment, seniors, youth and all other community charities.

The petitioners believe that the non-profit sector should get more credit for being a bedrock for our society and for ensuring the well-being and vitality of communities across Canada.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today and present a petition in the people's House in regard to the upcoming private member's bill, Bill C-218, an act to amend the Criminal Code, medical assistance in dying.

The Government of Canada intends to expand medical assistance in dying to individuals whose only medical condition is a mental illness. Mental illness is treatable and recovery is possible. Experts agree it is currently impossible to predict when mental illness is truly irremediable. Expanding MAID in this way risks suggesting that

Routine Proceedings

some lives are beyond saving, while many Canadians still struggle to access timely and effective mental health care.

Public concern is high, with many Canadians believing that treatment options should come before MAID and fearing that vulnerable individuals may seek MAID due to a lack of care. Families and communities are concerned that people who could recover through treatment and support may instead lose their lives.

That is why Bill C-218, the right to recover act, would amend the Criminal Code to ensure that mental illness alone is not considered a grievous and irremediable condition for the purposes of MAID.

Therefore, petitioners have signed this petition, and it is an honour for me to present it.

● (1515)

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in just two days, members of the House of Commons will vote on Bill C-218, whether or not to end the incoming expansion of MAID for people with only a mental illness.

It is in that spirit that I have the great honour to present a petition from Canadians who are alarmed by the fact that in just a few months, people with no physical conditions whatsoever, with only a mental illness, would be eligible for MAID.

Canadians are calling on members of this House to adopt the direct and clear path forward to fulfilling the committee recommendation from the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying. The petitioners call on all members of this chamber, and particularly the Liberal government, to vote for Bill C-218, the right to recover act.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that according to our rules, commentaries are not necessary when members present a petition. Given the fact that there are so many people wanting to present today, they might want to keep their comments short, concise and to the point.

The Speaker: Indeed.

RED BRIDGE

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

I have a petition on a matter that I am rising on for the second time. It is for federal funding to rebuild and fast-track the rebuilding of the Red Bridge. This is a cultural monument. It has been in Kamloops for over 100 years. It is time for federal money to go to that, according to the petitioners.

Routine Proceedings

BC FERRIES

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour to table e-petition 7474 that is signed by over 7,700 Vancouver Islanders and coastal residents.

They cite that ferries are essential marine highways connecting coastal communities, workers, families, businesses and supply chains to the rest of Canada. Vancouver Island is approaching one million residents and BC Ferries carries more than 22 million passengers annually. According to an analysis prepared by the Library of Parliament, BC Ferries received approximately \$1.63 in federal operational support per passenger in 2024-25, compared to approximately \$291 for federally funded east coast ferry operations.

Petitioners say that Canadians in Atlantic Canada and British Columbia both deserve strong federal ferry support because these services are essential national transportation infrastructure. Current federal ferry funding agreements rely on outdated constitutional arrangements and formulas created decades ago when Vancouver Island had roughly half its current population. Vancouver Island and coastal communities should not have to become separate provinces in order to receive fair federal ferry support. Lastly, the petitioners highlight it is no longer suitable to operate one of the world's largest ferry systems without stable, long-term federal support.

The petitioners are calling on the federal government to modernize federal ferry funding policies and provide fair, stable, long-term federal operational support to BC Ferries as essential national transportation infrastructure.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand here today to present this petition in support of Bill C-218, an act to amend the Criminal Code, medical assistance in dying. Mental illness is treatable and experts agree. Families and communities are concerned that people who could recover through treatment and support may instead lose their lives.

The people are calling upon the Government of Canada to pass Bill C-218 to stop the expansion of MAID to those whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness.

• (1520)

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too want to rise with a petition from Canadians asking the government to consider supporting Bill C-218.

The petitioners recognize that the expansion of MAID is being discussed in this House and will be voted on later this week. The expansion would include individuals who would be eligible for MAID on the basis of mental illness as their sole medical condition. Experts agree that people can recover from mental illness; it is treatable and they cannot predict when it is irremediable.

Petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to support Bill C-218 and make sure that MAID is not extended to people whose sole underlying condition is mental illness.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today in support of Bill C-218, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to medical assistance in dying.

In particular, petitioners note that the Government of Canada intends to expand medical assistance in dying, or euthanasia as it is otherwise known, to individuals whose only medical condition is a mental illness. Petitioners note that mental illness is treatable, recovery is possible and experts agree that it is impossible to predict if someone with mental illness will get better or not, and therefore whether it is truly irremediable or not. Expanding MAID to people with mental illness as their only underlying condition suggests that some lives are beyond saving.

Therefore, petitioners are asking the government to pass Bill C-218 to stop the expansion of MAID to those whose sole underlying condition is mental illness.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too am rising today to present a petition. The petitioners from across Canada are supportive of Bill C-218. This bill would make it so that MAID for mental illness as the sole underlying condition would not come into force in 2027. The people who signed this petition noted that mental illness is treatable and recovery is possible. They worry about the fact that if MAID is offered to these people, we would be muddying the waters around suicide prevention.

Therefore, the people who have signed this petition are calling for the government to pass Bill C-218 to stop euthanasia from being offered to those with mental illness.

[Translation]

TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY

Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present more signatures on a petition calling for the federal government to recognize Trans-Canada Highway 11 as a project of national interest.

[English]

These signatures were collected at the White Birch General Store, one of many local businesses helping people across northern Ontario add their voices to this important cause. Every signature matters. It shows the continued support from our communities for a safer and more reliable Highway 11. I will continue bringing their voices to this House.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petition e-7205 on behalf of the well over 1,000 Canadians who signed it. They are calling upon the House of Commons to act without delay to strengthen Canada's criminal justice system and better protect children by amending the Criminal Code to require the imposition of the maximum available sentence for individuals convicted of sexual offences against children, by removing the sentencing discretion that permits reduced penalties for first-time offenders who sexually predate on children, by mandating automatic and immediate custodial consequences for any breach of the court-ordered conditions for these sexual predators and by reforming federal legislation to provide meaningful public access to the national sex offender registry, with community safety being the paramount consideration.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Dan Muys (Flamorough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present this petition on behalf of constituents concerned about the expansion of MAID, medical assistance in dying, to Canadians whose sole underlying condition is mental illness. They urge every member of this House to support Bill C-218, because people with mental illness deserve our love and support and the right to recover, not an option for dying.

HEALTH CARE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I recently held a round of town hall meetings in all the communities in my riding, and this issue came up at every one. The issue is simple. The petitioners are concerned that not only is there a crisis in access to family doctors across Canada, as approximately 4.8 million Canadians do not have a family doctor, but it is specifically acute in areas like the region I represent, rural areas. It is the case that in places like Victoria, B.C., which is not rural, obviously, and Sidney, where I live, average wait times for walk-in clinics are 92 minutes and 180 minutes, respectively.

There is an acute need for action to ensure that there is access to medical care for every Canadian, including in our rural areas. The petitioners ask the government to work with all provinces and territories to come to a holistic and fair solution to Canada's family doctor shortage.

* * *

● (1525)

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING
BILL C-39

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, October 1, 2026, representatives of the Government of Canada held a technical briefing for the media, under embargo, to provide an update on the west coast oil pipeline, now known as "Pacific Link".

Despite our request, no technical briefings were offered to members. According to multiple Speakers' rulings, when embargoed technical briefings on bills introduced in the House are arranged for journalists, the government is required to do the same for parlia-

Privilege

mentarians. At some point in their tenure, all Speakers have ruled on closed-door briefings, embargoed matters, media leaks or disclosures concerning bills not yet tabled in the House.

The Speaker has ruled on several occasions that providing legislative information to the media before it has been tabled in the House constitutes a contempt of Parliament. For example, the fourth edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, published in 2025, states in footnote 125 that, during the debates of March 19, 2021:

...a question of privilege was raised regarding a briefing the Department of Justice held for members of the media on a bill not yet introduced in the House, while denying Members access to the same information. Speaker Milliken ruled that the provision of information concerning legislation to the media without any effective measures to secure the rights of the House constituted a *prima facie* case of contempt.

However, what about a case such as this, where there were closed-door technical briefings that provided privileged information to members of the media? Information was shared regarding proposals and policies about which the opposition will be asked to give its views.

We understand that the government can make announcements outside Parliament Hill, but the fact remains that this approach prevents opposition members from obtaining the same information as the media and, as a result, from informing members of changes in government policies that have an impact on the government's budget.

The October 1 announcement will have a major impact on taxpayers' wallets. We need to ensure that the opposition's role in the House, which is to demand transparency and accountability, is upheld. We understand that in the context of the changes made under Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act, and Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, several projects will be fast-tracked by invoking the concept of a project of national interest, which will require more detailed explanations from the government and its officials, both on Parliament Hill and beyond.

Under the circumstances, it is critical that opposition members have access to briefings, as journalists do, before any projects are announced, out of respect for the primacy of the House of Commons. Chances are good that this way of doing this will become the norm and that Bill C-39 will centralize power in the government's hands by bypassing the House of Commons.

It is time for the Speaker to look into this issue and find a way for the opposition to obtain essential information in a timely manner.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member. The Chair will take the matter under advisement.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we reserve the right to speak to the issue raised by my Bloc Québécois colleague.

S. O. 52

• (1530)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reserve the opportunity to come back with respect to the privilege issue.

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats would also like to reserve the right to intervene on the question of privilege at a later date, please.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL DENIALISM

The Speaker: There is a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52(2), I am requesting an emergency debate regarding Canada's failure to prevent and respond to residential school denialism, in response to the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal ruling from September 30, 2026, and the white nationalist demonstration that occurred on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc reserve on September 27, 2026.

Days before the sixth annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, an all-white nationalist hate group gathered on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc reserve. The Kamloops RCMP stated this in a news release:

The posting of a banner bearing the words "got bones," combined with the use of masks to conceal their identities while making such public statements is a cowardly attempt to avoid accountability for actions and messages that are clearly intended to intimidate, provoke fear and division.

The statement on the banner is in reference to the mass grave hoax conspiracy, an overt form of residential school denialism seeking to dismiss a genocide that was recognized unanimously in the House of Commons in 2022.

Just last week, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, an international court, ruled that Canada committed the international crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity against indigenous peoples and that these crimes continue to be present. The ruling also stated that Canada continues to fail to comply with its international legal obligations to respond to these crimes and has been reluctant to counter denialist misinformation.

Under resolutions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, states have a duty to restore and guarantee the fundamental

rights of indigenous peoples after systemic human rights violations. This includes residential school denialism through the mass spreading of disinformation, which the tribunal called on Canada to criminalize.

The tribunal also ruled that Canada is failing to provide remedies to restore the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples and guarantee the non-reoccurrence of these abuses. It says, "Canada is compromising the future."

The failure to address these matters reflects poorly on Canada in the international community. However, the escalation of hate by white nationalist groups in Canada that led to the violent demonstration last week underscores the direct risk that residential school denialism poses to the safety of indigenous peoples. It is classified as an emergency and a matter of urgent consideration for Parliament.

SPEAKER'S RULING

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

ALLEGED FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN THE ALBERTA REFERENDUM

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking an emergency debate today because Canada is facing a serious threat to our democracy and our sovereignty, and that is happening right now.

In just two weeks from today, Albertans will vote in a referendum on the future of our country. The Globe and Mail revealed this past weekend the extent of co-operation, maybe even collusion, between Alberta's separatist movement and extremist Republican political operatives connected to the Trump administration. There are credible reports that these separatist leaders are using American political technology to target, identify and mobilize voters. There is talk of a \$500-million slush fund, and the separatists have reportedly offered access to Alberta's oil and water in exchange for assistance.

Let us be absolutely clear about what that means. These are not simply Albertans having a political disagreement with Ottawa. These are extremists seeking foreign assistance to break up Canada. There is a word for people who put foreign interests ahead of their own country: traitors. Under Canadian law, they would be investigated, and if convicted, they should face the full force of the law.

However, this goes even further. Nearly 2.9 million Albertans had their personal information exposed after the provincial list of electors was improperly obtained. That information does not simply disappear. We now have legitimate questions about whether Albertans' data could be used as part of political targeting and foreign influence operations.

Who is the foreign political figure at the centre of all this? It is Donald Trump, a man who has repeatedly threatened Canada's sovereignty and talked about making Canada the 51st state.

American Republican operatives are now showing an interest in an Alberta separatist movement that could fundamentally weaken this country. That should alarm every Canadian from every political party. This is precisely why we need an emergency debate right now, not after October 19, not after foreign actors have had another two weeks to manipulate Canadians, not after Albertans have cast their ballots, but now.

Parliament must demand answers about foreign interference, foreign political financing, the use of Alberta's personal information and involvement of American political operatives in Canada's constitutional future. Albertans have every right to debate their future, but that future must be decided by Albertans, not by Donald Trump, Republicans, Russians or malignant foreign interests.

This is an emergency. Canadian sovereignty is at stake, and the people trying to trade it away for foreign political support should understand how seriously Canadians take this threat. Canada is worth fighting for. We need to have a debate in this House now.

● (1535)

SPEAKER'S RULING

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUILDING CANADA STRONG ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-39, An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by sharing that—

Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I think I had four minutes left to answer questions from last Friday.

The Speaker: From last Friday?

[Translation]

Debate resumed this morning. I apologize to the hon. member.

[English]

We will go back to the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by sharing that I joined the PSAC security workers' picket line at the Bank of Canada this morning. They are on day 105 of their strike as the government refuses to give them a fair deal and, meanwhile, enforce the NDP anti-scab legislation. It is essential, as I begin this debate, to remember that Bill C-39 seeks to undermine the rights of workers even further, like those who have been on strike for 105 days. It is a dangerous trend that the Liberal government has been participating in, violating the charter-protected right to strike at a time when workers need fair deals more than ever.

Government Orders

I would like to tell members that Bill C-39 has drawn severe criticism from all over the country, including from indigenous peoples, environmental organizations, activists, unions and civil liberty groups. In fact, according to the Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement, Bill C-39 proposes to impose a fixed one-year deadline between the submission of studies by the project proponent and the final decision. Such a rigid timeline would be incompatible with the assessment of complex, large-scale projects, which often involve significant risks and which require studies spanning multiple seasons, analysis of cumulative impacts, meaningful public participation and genuine consultation with indigenous peoples.

The NDP absolutely supports the need to build a strong economy, but we are very clear that this cannot be done by violating the constitutional rights of workers and indigenous peoples or violating the human right to a healthy environment, and that is exactly what Bill C-39 would do. Bill C-39 proposes sweeping changes to the federal review process, fast-tracking all processes of reviews and even letting one Liberal minister override these processes whenever they think it is inconvenient. Only one minister could make a decision, on a whim, without even consulting their colleagues, overriding any environmental assessment or constitutional obligation.

I have to ask. Does the Liberal government think it is above our Constitution and rule of law? We already saw these violations of the Constitution and attacks on the democratic process in Bill C-5 last year, but Bill C-39 would eliminate even previous time limits on Bill C-5, making these constitutional violations permanent. I could not imagine anything worse than Bill C-5, but now we have permanent constitutional violations that this Carney Liberal government is trying to ram through.

● (1540)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I would just remind the member not to use the name of an hon. member. The hon. member may continue.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, we are not going to build Canada strong with this legislation. We would be building, in fact, a pipeline to the courts. For example, Bill C-39 would limit project review times to an arbitrary timeline of just one year, restricting time and resources for indigenous peoples to exercise their right to consultation and accommodation, as enshrined in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. As AFN National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak has stated, "Any predetermined timeline principally designed to attract investment subordinates the honor of the Crown to commercial imperatives."

Government Orders

Moreover, in reaction to the publication of Bill C-39, vice-chief Michael Smithers of Coldwater Indian Band said, “There is anger in our community today, as we hear that Canada has given the green light to a third Trans Mountain pipeline through the Coldwater Valley.... The Crown’s duty to consult and accommodate Coldwater remains unfilled and Canada and Trans Mountain are not legally or respectfully operating in our reserve.”

It is a pipeline to the courts. Nowhere in Bill C-39 is the right of accommodation mentioned, which would allow regulators to ignore what they learn in consultations about potential impacts to indigenous and first nations communities and to move forward.

Bill C-39 also does not contain any reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly the obligation to seek and obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples. That is the right to say yes, no, yes with conditions or maybe later. This is despite, through Bill C-15, the government’s being legally obliged to align all past and future legislation with UNDRIP.

I would like to remind the Liberal government that the critical purposes of UNDRIP are found in article 5, that the UN declaration is a human rights instrument with application in Canadian law and that the government must take all measures necessary to ensure its laws are consistent with UNDRIP. Moreover, as of right now, Bill C-39 repeatedly talks about indigenous groups while, in fact, “indigenous groups” is not defined within the legislation, nor in international law, which recognizes the rights of indigenous nations as “peoples”, not groups.

The question can legitimately be asked: Is Bill C-39 consistent with UNDRIP? The answer is a very clear no. This raises the question of who exactly the bill is referring to, even in the case of indigenous peoples, when it talks about consultation with indigenous “groups” instead. Why is the government trying to use vague language to avoid the clear terminology in constitutional and international law?

In November 2024, Bill S-13 was adopted to add to the federal Interpretation Act a safeguard provision, a non-derogation clause, to protect indigenous peoples’ section 35 constitutional rights. I question today whether any measures in Bill C-39 are inconsistent with this non-derogation clause of Bill S-13. If so, which would take precedent? Indigenous peoples’ constitutional rights are being attacked, a clear sign of the government once again ignoring the rule of law.

Concerning these dangerous anti-indigenous measures in Bill C-39, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation said, “Our Chiefs are watching the Carney government’s legislative agenda with growing alarm. Bill C-5 was a direct attack on our rights, and Bill C-39 elevates this to an unprecedented level. This government is making clear and deliberate choices to accelerate development at the expense of the rights of our Nations and our leaders”.

The bill would also establish whole so-called regions of national interest, which experts have likened to special economic zones in Doug Ford’s anti-indigenous, anti-environment Bill 5.

• (1545)

Bill C-39 would also impose arbitrary review deadlines for complex, large-scale projects with multi-faceted environmental and species risks. In fact, it would give the minister of the One Canadian Economy Act the power to ignore critical species protection laws, and we know why. The government is trying to turn a blind eye to species at risk, like the southern resident orcas, whose population has been reduced to 73 adults and whose survival is jeopardized by the government’s careless plans for major projects.

According to Charlie Hatt, the director of climate at Ecojustice, “The oil and gas lobby has gotten what it has long wanted, but it does not have to be this way. We can strengthen environmental safeguards while securing our economy by investing in clean energy”.

Let us talk about water. Bill C-39 would allow ministers to exempt whole bodies of water from protective regulations and legislation, and to unilaterally permit companies to dump waste water. I am going to be keeping an eye out this Friday, when the government introduces Bill C-37, which would take away the human right to clean drinking water for first nations. The NDP is watching this bill closely.

The NDP will always stand side by side to protect the rule of law and protect our Constitution.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the issue of labour. I would like to get her to think about essential services.

The Manitoba government actually asked the Manitoba Labour Board to order striking Dynacare employees back to work. It used the mechanism of the labour board, and the labour board agreed that Dynacare is an essential service.

Whether it is an NDP government in Manitoba or Conservatives in other jurisdictions, they seem to recognize essential services. Does this particular member or the federal NDP recognize essential services?

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I respect the charter. That means the right to strike and the right to free collective bargaining.

The minister is talking about how they consulted with labour, but I think labour is experiencing what indigenous people in Canada have experienced since time immemorial: The government says it consults, and then it violates the Constitution and does what it wants.

Government Orders

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the member's last answer, she talked about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and how she believes in it.

The last I checked, the Liberals like to say all the time that they are the party of the charter. Given that the section 107 provision in the Canada Labour Code raises questions around the right to strike, does the member support the Minister of Justice tabling a charter statement so that we can see whether or not the justice department believes the bill has captured and balanced those rights correctly?

• (1550)

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. I would just say this government totally lacks transparency about everything.

I certainly support that.

Once again, the Liberals are trying to fast-track legislation.

Actually, the NDP is going further than that. I put forward a private member's bill to totally repeal section 107 of the Canada Labour Code because of the Liberal government's abuse of section 107, including the Air Canada workers', port workers' and CN workers' right to strike. I hope the Conservatives will support my private member's bill.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and for her staunch defence of indigenous rights. She has done so eloquently once again.

As an aside, I would like to thank Idriss, the good Samaritan who came to my rescue when I got a flat tire in La Vérendrye Park. Without his help, I would not be here today. I would also like to thank the Carquest garage in Gracefield that fixed my tire. It is thanks to their help that I am able to be here today.

That said, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the potential for authoritarian abuse of power with Bill C-39. This expression was thrown around rather freely during the election campaign, as I am sure the member will agree. At times, during the election campaign, close ties to certain individuals, their spouses or their relatives led organizations like Amnistie internationale Canada francophone to raise concerns about it based on their assumptions.

However, in this case, we have an actual example. After Bill C-5, Bill C-15 and now Bill C-39, the government wants to give itself powers with no consultations required. This affects first nations, environmental laws and social licence in particular. Is there a risk of authoritarian abuse of power here?

[English]

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, all the government is building is a pipeline to the courts. Whether it is with workers or indigenous peoples, there are already court challenges starting to brew from the legislation.

The government, time and time again, puts forward legislation that violates the Constitution and violates the charter. This is the latest and greatest.

In fact, the bill would violate section 35 rights. The bill would not only violate section 35 rights; it also talks about indigenous

groups without definition. It does not even have a definition in international law.

I am calling this out for what it is. It is paving a way for the Liberals' corporate buddies on the backs of the charter rights and constitutional rights of Canadians.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House, on behalf of the incredible people of Long Range Mountains and as the shadow minister for energy and natural resources, to speak to Bill C-39.

I think most Canadians would agree on one thing, which is that we need to get this country building. We need mines, pipelines, LNG facilities, transmission lines, ports and the infrastructure that would allow Canadian resources to get to market.

Canada has the resources, workers and expertise the world needs, but for the past 11 years, major projects have been stalled and delayed by an uncertain federal regulatory system, driving investment out of Canada and, in too many cases, leaving projects abandoned altogether. That is really what I want to focus on today, along with another part of this bill, which is the changes to the Canada Labour Code.

We have heard promises about faster approvals before. When Bill C-5 was introduced, Canadians were told the federal government was going to speed up major projects and give proponents more certainty. Conservatives supported that goal of getting projects moving, because we have been calling for faster approval for years.

The Liberal government then created the Major Projects Office and said it would help coordinate projects and provide proponents with a clearer path through the federal system. More than a year later, we are back here in the House, debating yet another bill that is supposed to make it easier to build.

I think the question most Canadians are asking is quite simple: Will this actually help to get major projects built?

Given the track record of the Liberal government for the last 11 years, Canadians are certainly not going to measure success by how many offices are created or how many announcements are made. They are going to measure success by whether projects actually move forward, whether investment comes back or stays in Canada, whether shovels are in the ground and whether people actually get hired. This is especially important for resource-rich provinces like mine, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Government Orders

I know the importance of responsible resource development and what it means for our communities. It means good jobs and profitable local businesses but, more importantly, it means the ability to live and thrive at home. For generations, too many of our young people have had to leave home to find work somewhere else. Families watch their children finish school and learn a trade or earn a degree, only to leave because the opportunities they are looking for are somewhere else.

I know that experience personally, because I had to leave the province I love under those exact circumstances, just as my parents did when I was a young girl. Now I look at my four children and all of the young people in the communities I represent who want the opportunity to stay home. That is why this issue is especially important to me, to the people I represent and to Canadians right across this country.

Even small projects can transform communities. A mine, a sawmill expansion, an energy project or a major piece of infrastructure can mean that a young person can stay home, start a small business, build a career, raise a family and stay in the community they grew up in. These projects provide work for local contractors and suppliers and investment in communities that already have the people, the resources and the experience to contribute to Canada's economy, which is exactly why Conservatives have been calling on the Prime Minister to approve the 500 projects that are caught up in federal review.

Population growth and workforce retention are such important issues in my province, where we have a declining population and high levels of out-migration, but those challenges cannot be overcome and opportunities cannot become reality if any project, big or small, spends years sitting in the federal process waiting for approval.

Bill C-39 is the government's newest answer to years of Liberal delays in the federal permitting system. The government is presenting this legislation as a one-year timeline, but let us break that down. The clock would only begin once all of the required information and studies have been provided and accepted. That is not the same thing as saying a project would receive a federal decision one year after it first enters the process. This is simply because there is no limit to the number of things that the bureaucracy would consider and ask for before a project was approved and the time actually starts.

● (1555)

In addition, the process could be delayed, extended or suspended; and, if the government misses its timeline, it is only required to give an explanation and a new proposed timeline. A company deciding to invest billions of dollars in Canada needs to know with certainty how long the process will take from start to finish, especially given the track record of the current Liberal government. That certainty matters even more when cabinet retains the ability to extend or suspend the process, not to mention that workers want to know when the projects will begin and communities want to know when the jobs and investment will follow.

I want to bring some real-life context to this and explain why this is so important. During one of my commutes back and forth to Ottawa, I spoke to a young man named Justin. Justin is a dad of three

and a tradesperson working in Ontario. He told me, "I just want to work close to my family so I can pick up my kids after school and take them to hockey. If we could get some work in Newfoundland, I could do that." Justin is one of the people I think about when we talk about getting projects moving. Trades NL states that currently the unemployment rate among its members is about 70% and people are looking for work everywhere across the country except in the province. That is why we need these projects now, not when Justin's kids are grown up and that opportunity no longer exists for him. That is why the timelines in this legislation matter so much. What Canada needs is a system in which proponents know what is expected of them; from the start, the process is clear; and government's decisions are made within a reasonable time frame.

Timelines are only a part of the problem. The government keeps making changes around the edges while refusing to address the root of the problem: the regulatory and tax policies that continue to hold projects and investment back. Conservatives have consistently called for the repeal of antidevelopment laws like Bill C-69 and Bill C-48 because Canada needs a regulatory system that gives investors certainty across the board, not a government deciding project by project which ones get special treatment. We have called to remove the federal industrial carbon tax to make Canada more competitive and bring investment back.

There are roughly 500 projects waiting in the federal approval system. Conservatives have called on the Liberal government to approve them, remove the barriers holding back investment and give investors the certainty that they need to put their capital to work in Canada. Newfoundland and Labrador has tremendous offshore energy, hydroelectricity, mining and critical minerals potential. Those resources should be creating well-paying jobs, attracting private investment and giving young people a reason to build their future at home. The same is true across Canada where our energy and natural resources are in demand around the world, but having those resources means very little if the regulatory system makes it unnecessarily difficult to develop them and get them to market. The answer cannot be to leave those laws in place and then have Ottawa decide which individual projects deserve an accelerated path.

While much of this bill deals with major projects and approvals, it also would make significant changes to the Canada Labour Code. I recently met with the Newfoundland and Labrador regional representative of the Canadian Labour Congress. We had a good discussion about the issues facing workers in organized labour and their deep concerns with this legislation. One of the things that I took away from that conversation was how important it is that the workers who would be affected by these changes have a meaningful opportunity to come before Parliament and explain their concerns. There would be substantial changes to federal labour law and they should not be rushed through simply because they are part of a much larger bill. Union members should have enough time to appear before a committee and make their case for why they believe the changes being made are a problem.

Canada is not short on potential. We have the resources, the skilled workers and the communities ready to build. What Canada needs is the certainty to turn that potential into projects, investment and well-paying jobs. Business managers need certainty about the rules and the timelines, workers need confidence that they will be heard and provincial leaders need to know that their jurisdiction will be respected. Canadians should be able to expect that when Ottawa promises faster approvals, those promises lead to projects moving forward.

• (1600)

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague certainly represents a beautiful part of the country. I had the privilege of being in her riding four times in the last year.

The member talks about the work that is needed to help drive the economy of the country forward. I would submit to her that this is exactly what is in this bill, this build Canada strong act, which is all about moving faster on timelines and creating the certainty that businesses need.

When I look at what this government has done for Newfoundland and Labrador, whether it is Churchill Falls and helping to support Premier Wakeham and the Government of Quebec; whether it is the fifth Marine Atlantic ferry, which is crucial for her riding; \$30 million and I was part of an announcement in Corner Brook in her riding; or whether it is Corner Brook Pulp and Paper expansion project, Bay du Nord, the mining sector opportunities or tourism, there certainly have been some good things that I have been a part of that have been announced in her riding.

I am wondering whether she would acknowledge that the government has put forward things that are making a difference in western Newfoundland.

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for visiting my beautiful riding. As I alluded to in my speech, I absolutely want to see construction move forward. I am happy that the member talked about Churchill Falls. This sort of gives me the opportunity to break down some of the components of that. This is a large announcement and complex.

One of the things the government announced in this large project was the Churchill Falls expansion. We have been talking about the Churchill Falls expansion for a very long time. The government's commitment is only to study the Churchill Falls expansion. In the

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previous MOU, there was a commitment on construction. On the wind project, there is no proponent or route proposed. Once again, we need the projects now, not commitments to study, but for construction of the projects.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if parliamentarians from the governing party here are aware of this omnibus bill. Earlier, during question period, I got the impression that they were saying yes because it will save us from Donald Trump. In fact, they are not even listening to me. Perhaps it is because I am speaking in French. I get the feeling they are under a spell. As we take a closer look at the bill and focus on strengthening democracy and the rule of law, in all seriousness, I would take a moment and go read all 250 pages. No one can tell me otherwise. I want to know whether my colleague agrees that Bill C-39 weakens democracy.

[*English*]

Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, as I alluded to in my speech, specifically around the changes to labour laws, one of the concerns I certainly heard from constituents in my riding is that this is being put in this massive piece of legislation and being pushed through in majority committees. There will not be time to talk properly about the repercussions for people who will be impacted by this piece of legislation.

I would agree with the member that we need to have that time, especially on that piece of legislation.

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague talked about timelines. A Liberal government member spoke earlier in the debate today and talked about the need for diversification of our trade. I think we would all agree, as I certainly do, we need to do that, but that particular member was part of a government that said no to Japan and Germany that wanted our LNG. That would have been an incredible opportunity to diversify our trade. Germany, in fact, went to Qatar, that built them the intake facility in six and a half months. The Netherlands has built an LNG intake facility in six months. Finland has built an LNG intake facility in four months.

Why is it that these countries can build a facility in four to six months and we cannot in Canada? Maybe the member can expand on that. It is probably a lot of talk and no—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Long Range Mountains.

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Carol Anstey: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with my colleague that the time is now. Canadians need results. We do not need another office and bureaucratic process. What we need is action, commitment to construction, projects moving forward and shovels in the ground. Canadians will hold the government to account based on that.

Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today after a busy summer in my riding of Milton East—Halton Hills South to speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, and to the important balance this legislation seeks to strike between economic growth, business investment and the protection of Canadian workers.

This legislation recognizes something that I believe is fundamental to Canada's economic future: We cannot build a stronger economy without stronger business and we cannot build stronger business without an equally strong workforce. These two things should never be competing goals, because they vitally depend on one another.

I was raised in a blue-collar, working-class home. My mom was a long-term care nurse for over three decades, and my father learned the carpentry trade after immigrating from Italy, before working as a truck driver. I learned from my parents that work can be hard, but it can be meaningful when properly recognized and supported.

Canada faces a rapidly changing global economy and we have an opportunity to meet the moment and attract new investment, expand Canadian businesses, strengthen our domestic supply chains and build major projects that create good jobs. However, as we do that, we also have a responsibility to ensure that workers have safe workplaces, fair wages, meaningful collective bargaining agreements and the protections they need to succeed. That balance is particularly important in critical sectors like aviation, ports, railways and logistics, industries that Canadians rely on every day.

Bill C-39 would require earlier bargaining in higher-risk situations with the goal of preventing labour disruptions before they occur, and its measures are designed to strengthen the collective bargaining process. For example, parties in high-risk relationships would need to begin the bargaining process at least six months before the current CBA expires, and the conciliation period would be extended from 60 days to 90 days, giving both sides more time to negotiate before a dispute escalates. Accordingly, a key part of our labour reform is the introduction of a special mediator, who would have a defined 21-day mandate to work with both parties during the conciliation period.

Most importantly, this process would not eliminate the right to strike. I believe that collective bargaining should remain the foundation of Canada's labour relations system. Workers and employers should be able to negotiate their own agreements, and government intervention should not become a substitution for bargaining. That being said, there are exceptional circumstances where a labour dispute can have consequences that extend well beyond the parties at the bargaining table.

This brings me to section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. Section 107 gives the Minister of Labour the authority to take measures considered necessary to maintain or secure industrial peace

and promote conditions favourable to the settlement of industrial disputes.

Members may remember the dispute between flight attendants and a national airline in August last year. I have many flight attendants and airport workers who live in my riding, just a short drive from Toronto Pearson Airport, and many of them contacted my office to explain the conditions of their work. Likewise, I received calls from those impacted by the unexpected cancelling of flights, about families who were stranded, cargo that was delayed and businesses that were affected.

Many will say that labour strikes are supposed to be painful and disruptive, and those people are right. That is how we experience just how crucial the role of the striking worker is. We all profoundly feel the absence of their work. It impacts our lives and it impacts their lives. That particular strike was ended using section 107. Our government ordered an inquiry into the very valid grievances of the attendants. I publicly responded at that time, acknowledging the crucial work that flight attendants provide to keep our economy moving, and I expressed my disappointment that more time was not available for meaningful bargaining between the parties.

We know that the best, fairest and most comprehensive deals are the ones made at the bargaining table by the parties themselves. Bill C-39 is our government's response to this. It proposes a clearer framework for when those powers can be used, providing greater protections for collective bargaining. Section 107 should always be a genuine last resort, not something that is used simply because of a strike or lockout being inconvenient.

Bill C-39 introduces clear guardrails and greater accountability by requiring a special mediator to investigate and provide a public report to the minister outlining the following: firstly, the issues in dispute; secondly, the parties' positions on those issues; thirdly, the extent of the parties' participation in the process; and lastly, the likelihood of reaching a negotiated settlement. Only after considering this new report would the minister be able to consider invoking section 107.

We must recognize that federally regulated industries are essential to maintaining our economy and protecting Canadians. That is why there needs to be a clear and transparent process for responding to disputes at major ports, railways and other critical infrastructure. Bill C-39 attempts to establish that process, while maintaining collective bargaining as the primary means of resolving disputes.

• (1610)

Our country needs a system that provides balance between protecting our economy and protecting our workers, which is why Bill C-39 proposes several other labour protections regarding worker misclassification, wage theft, workplace safety and stronger support through the wage earner protection program.

Over the summer, I spoke with many union leaders, including from the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, who represent airline workers in my riding. They expressed concerns over what they call “contract flipping”, where contracts are retendered and subcontractors are switched, which can negatively affect workers and their wages. This bill would extend successor rights in certain contract retendering situations in airports and air transportation, helping preserve union representation and collective agreements when a contract moves from one contractor to another.

I will speak a little about business investment as well. Not only do workers deserve certainty, but businesses do too. For businesses considering whether to expand, invest, hire or build new facilities in Canada, uncertainty is very costly. If approvals take years longer than anticipated, investment can and often does move elsewhere. I have heard many similar stories from businesses in my riding.

Canada is competing for investment with countries around the world. Our system must be rigorous but also predictable. This bill proposes a more coordinated federal approval process, with the goal of one project, one review, one year, but we do not need to choose between upholding Canada's strong environmental protections and streamlining project reviews. We can do both and must do both.

Businesses need to know what the rules are, and workers need to know that those rules will protect them. Communities need to know that projects will be properly assessed, and indigenous communities must continue to have meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their rights and interests. A modern economy should be capable of doing all these things at the same time.

Bill C-39 also recognizes that expanding Canadian businesses requires more than just approving individual projects. We need stronger transportation corridors. We need reliable ports and railways. We need efficient supply chains, and we need to reduce unnecessary duplication for businesses. This is particularly important at a time when Canada is working to diversify its trade relationships and strengthen the economy.

We cannot control what other nations do, but we can control whether Canada is prepared to compete. We can make it easier for businesses to invest and easier to build. We can strengthen our infrastructure and protect Canadian workers, and we can create a labour relations system that encourages employers and unions to reach agreements together.

That is the balance that I see reflected in Bill C-39. It is about recognizing that Canada's economic success depends on both workers and business. We need a framework that encourages investment while maintaining strong standards, and we need collective bargaining that really works. We need safe workplaces. We need fair

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treatment for workers. We need an approval system that gives businesses the confidence to put capital to work in Canada.

Canada has tremendous economic potential. We have skilled workers, entrepreneurs who want to grow, natural resources, manufacturing capacity, infrastructure, and communities ready to build, but potential alone is just not enough. We need to create the conditions for Canadians to turn that potential into investment, jobs, innovation and long-term economic security, while ensuring that the workers who make growth possible are protected and have meaningful voices.

Bill C-39 would bring these objectives together to make our economy more competitive, protect workers, make the regulatory process more predictable and uphold environmental protections and indigenous consultation requirements. It seeks to ensure that when labour disputes become particularly serious, there is a transparent and structured process before exceptional government authority is used as a last resort.

What I and I expect many Canadians want to see is more investment, more businesses expanding, more projects getting built, more Canadians working good, well-paying jobs and stronger protections for those workers. That is the balance we should continue working toward.

• (1615)

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

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite used the term “workers” several times throughout her speech and also talked about the changes to collective bargaining, particularly the need to have a transparent process. I take it that the member is in favour of Bill C-39 and the changes to the Labour Code, particularly to section 107.

Does the member believe that the government should be transparent and submit to the House, through the Minister of Justice, a charter statement outlining the impacts on the charter rights of the workers she says she wants to protect?

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked a question about section 107. I will note that 95% of collective agreements in federally regulated sectors are reached without a work stoppage. It is a very rare incident when this happens. Certainly I am in favour of transparency and accountability, as is our government, which is why this legislation is being presented.

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All of our legislation goes through rigorous charter testing. The last thing the government wants is to be brought into court on a charter challenge. I would rely on the work that has been done by the drafters of the legislation and by the minister in making sure that all legislation is charter-compliant when it comes to the House.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Milton East—Halton Hills South for her comments.

She mentioned her concern about workers in particular. Bill C-39 creates a situation that is really a form of abuse that will take away workers' rights. It will skew negotiations in the employer's favour. In my view, this poses a huge risk because it could cause workers to lose the gains they have achieved over the past few decades.

I will draw a parallel. Right now, the member should be at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, where a debate is taking place on the Cúram software. Mr. Ostrander is there testifying about problems caused by a computer program. Here is the connection I am making. In both cases, there has been a lack of transparency, and the government has not fulfilled its obligation to be accountable to the public.

Is the member concerned about this lack of transparency? Is she really going to vote in favour of this bill?

• (1620)

[English]

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I sat together at the public accounts committee, and I learned a lot from him.

The issue of transparency and accountability is coming up, and it is one of the reasons we have included the special mediator piece. As to what the special mediator would do, the report they would present would hold employers to account. What employer is going to want a report that shows it was not bargaining in good faith?

I would refer again to the thoroughness and thoughtfulness that have been put into this legislation with respect to accountability and transparency.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague can provide her thoughts on the more holistic approach the government has taken with respect to building Canada healthier and stronger. For example, if we look at the trade file, there are 20-plus security and trade agreements, with more to come. We can talk about the half a trillion dollars being talked about for potential investments in Canada. Then this legislation was brought forward, with the theme or common thread being to build a stronger and healthier Canada.

I would ask for the member's overview on that, please.

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Mr. Speaker, there are two underlying themes here: funding growth in the economy and doubling our non-U.S. trade over the next 10 years. There are questions we have to ask ourselves: Are we supporting a growing economy? Are we putting enough effort into diversifying our trade? That is the way we are going to be successful in the future.

The holistic approach that my colleague references is really about balance. It is about making sure that businesses have certainty because they see legislation clearly and are able to proceed with predictability. It makes us a reliable trading partner for international capital as well, and it balances the very important rights of workers and of the indigenous people in our country. This is about balance and striking the right balance.

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the CLC did a legal analysis and found that Bill C-39 would give the Liberal government wider, broader and more unilateral control over labour negotiations than any other country in the G7, including the United States. While the Liberals are using Donald Trump as coverage to bring in the most egregious labour restrictions and are saying it is because of Trump, we do not fix our problems with Donald Trump by becoming Donald Trump.

Would the member not agree that the Canadian Labour Congress, Unifor, CUPE, the United Steelworkers, all of these labour unions, know a bit about the right to strike?

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Mr. Speaker, certainly no one, I believe, in this chamber wants to be more like Donald Trump. We are trying to strike a balance so that workers feel protected and are protected, that there is certainty in business and that employers know they are going to be held to account as well.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand in this place for the first time in the fall session of Parliament to speak to a piece of the government's legislation, Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. I spoke to Bill C-5 a year ago, which was the Building Canada Act. I am probably going to speak 12 months from now to the building Canada very strong act, and then 12 months after that, it will be the building Canada very, very strong act, but we will see how this goes.

It has taken a year and a half, but we are finally here. We have finally made it to the Prime Minister's legislative calling card, where he finally plans to deliver on a promise he made a year and a half ago to build Canada strong. Many of my colleagues have now spoken to the bill, pointing out faults and shortcomings, of which there are many. However, over these next 10 minutes, I would like to focus on a very tiny part of the bill that I do not think has gotten a lot of attention. It has big implications on conservation in Canada, primarily through changes made to the Fisheries Act.

As the bill reads, division 7 of part 1 would amend the Fisheries Act to do the following:

- (a) modify the fish habitat bank regime to allow for the use of habitat credits by third parties;

Have we ever heard of habitat credits? Have the folks watching at home heard of carbon credits? Have we heard of biodiversity credits? This is what I am going to talk about.

The bill continues:

(b) authorize the making of regulations respecting the circumstances in which a person who is authorized to carry on a work, undertaking or activity may pay a fee to offset adverse effects on fish and fish habitat and provide for these fees to be credited to the Environmental Damages Fund; and

(c) transfer certain regulation-making powers from the Governor in Council to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

I want to be clear that as Conservatives, we totally believe in conservation. We totally believe in protecting our biodiversity. We agree wholeheartedly with these notions and premises of clean air, clean land and clean water for current generations and generations to come, but I want to talk a bit about the new way that I think things will be going in the environmental world. I am going to talk about biodiversity credits, or habitat credits, which is what the government calls them in the legislation.

Division 7 would allow the use of habitat credits by third parties. Let us dive into that. Habitat credits, or biodiversity credits, are a market-based approach to conservation. If a landowner or an organization restores, creates, enhances or protects a habitat area, they have effectively created a habitat bank. Under division 7, this would allow the owner to earn credits for the ecological value that the bank creates. These credits could then be sold to others, who must compensate for any number of unrelated environmental impacts elsewhere in Canada. This sounds good. If a bit of activity over here wrecks something, a bit of habitat banking over there would offset it. It sounds good, but the devil is in the details.

The idea for this model is that it would allow conservation to be funded up front and would ensure that habitat is protected before impacts occur. I do not disagree with the idea of biodiversity credits as a method of conservation, but given the Prime Minister's affinity for global asset management groups, I am concerned about who really benefits from these credits.

In fact, I do not even know who is going to own some of these credits. Is it the government? It is, after all, the body that appears to provide the credit to the landowner in the first place. Is it the landowners? Are they the owners of the land in which the habitat bank has been licensed and organized? What if a landowner sells that credit? Do the credits transfer from the seller to the buyer? Are there any oversight bodies? Who defines the value of a habitat credit? It is easy to measure a tonne of CO₂. How do we measure a credit on biodiversity, and who gets to make that decision? Would it be, perhaps, an asset manager running a global company out of, say, New York City?

What happens when the asset manager wants to increase the value of their assets? Does the asset manager have to advocate for zero fishing to make the value of these fish habitat banks worth more? This is happening now. If members do not believe me, they can look it up.

In August, the government launched its new expert task force on natural capital accounting and nature financing, which seeks to impact climate regulation and biodiversity conservation. Is this yet another

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carbon credit system? After all, the last one, with the Net-Zero Banking Alliance, worked out so well, did it not?

This task force is made up entirely of big NGOs, corporations and academics. There is no one from Nature Canada, Ducks Unlimited or any type of local conservation group. There are just bureaucrats in Toronto and Ottawa boardrooms dictating how farmers, ranchers and acreage owners need to operate on their own private land. The government is making these decisions, but landowners, frankly, I do not think know much about it at all.

Why are government bureaucrats running this agenda while local conservationists, guides and outfitters, salmon enhancement organizations, and conservation authorities are seemingly sidelined and marginalized when it comes to defining how these credits are actually applied? Are the Liberals contracting this work out to the Prime Minister's global asset management friends at BlackRock and Brookfield, headquartered out of Donald Trump's New York City? It looks that way.

I am not opposed to conservation. I am actually the shadow minister for conservation, but conservation is done best by local groups on the ground that understand the practicality of the environment in which everything lives, not unelected international bureaucrats who are lining their pockets. Conservation needs to be done practically, not ideologically. Ideological decisions bring around the concept of preservation, which is sometimes masked and sold as conservation. Preservation brings sterilization. It is conservation that actually works. It is conservation that we as Conservatives support.

● (1625)

There are so many questions introduced in the bill, yet there are few, if any, answers at all, so let us try to find answers on our own.

On the 30 by 30 and 50 by 50 agendas and the land sterilization, my suspicion is that the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act play into the Liberals' plans. As many members know, in 2022, the Liberals signed Canada onto the 30 by 30 and 50 by 50 initiative at COP15 in Montreal, which seeks to preserve up to half of Canada's terrestrial and marine environments by 2050. By the way, half of Canada's land mass is bigger than 187 of the 196 countries in the world.

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The rationale is to ensure habitat protection to maintain biological diversity. That sounds good. I think everybody wants biodiversity and habitat protection. It is not just a random percentage of Canada. This also applies to each ecological zone. This means mountain areas, Canadian Shield, prairie grasslands where all the farms and ranches are, parkland forest, Arctic tundra and so on. In much of these areas, significant portions of the land are privately owned or privately held property, which is where biodiversity credits in Bill C-39 would come into play. The government needs a mechanism to turn this privately owned land into recognizable conservation land.

By the way, 89% of Canada is Crown land. Of the other 11%, 7% is agricultural land and the other 4% is what the rest of us live on. The government needs a mechanism to turn this privately owned land, which is the vast minority of the land in Canada, into recognizable conservation land with rules and all kinds of regulations on it. Amending the Fisheries Act to include biodiversity credits is the mechanism for how they would get that kind of control. It remains a stumbling point because the Liberals just signed Canada onto 30 by 30 and 50 by 50, and the House has never actually voted to approve the agenda that Canada signed onto at COP15. We have not even had the debate in the House of Commons.

In the previous Parliament, the minister of environment, who has since resigned due to the MOU signed between Canada and Alberta, tried to table a bill to give the government a mechanism to implement this preservationist agenda, but that bill never passed, and there was no vote. The government simply signed on and has begun implementation without consulting Canadians. Now it would be implementing a biodiversity credit mechanism without consulting landowners. The Liberals would be doing so through the Fisheries Act powers, national park creation and agreements with first nations called indigenous protected and conserved areas.

The whole point of this particular speech is this: What would they be doing with the Fisheries Act? The Fisheries Act is one of the most powerful pieces of legislation we have in Canada, the same Fisheries Act that would be amended by this very bill, Bill C-39, to offer biodiversity credit for fish habitat. This would suggest to me that my assertion at the beginning of the speech is correct: The Liberals would use these habitat and biodiversity credits as they relate to fish banking as a way of expediting their global 30 by 30 and 50 by 50 agenda.

How would these habitat banks fall into part of the government's conservation plan? We know that its \$3.8 billion nature announcement in March is what it says it is going to take, or require, to get to the 30% preservation target. Are these proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act intended to bring Canada closer to its 50% goal? Why are the Liberals so hell-bent on preserving Canada as a national park? This is not conservation. It is preservation: preservation from hunting, fishing, angling, trapping, guiding, outfitting, recreational sports, hiking, energy development and resource development. Is sterilizing half of Canada's land and water really considered building Canada strong? I do not think so.

These policies would lock up land and water, and throw away the key. It is all about actual control, central control for a central banker, for a government that the Toronto Star has now indicated is

all centralized in the Prime Minister's Office. Last week, the Prime Minister made the west coast pipeline, now Pacific link, a project of national importance. I strongly echo the thoughts and concerns of my leader, who told the National Post last week, "Wake me up when there's a steel pipe going in the dirt."

Why are Conservatives doubtful? It is because of preservation policies such as this. How can the Liberals build a pipeline when they have sterilized so much of our Crown land and are now offering incentives to sterilize even more of that land and the water? How can we build Canada strong if 50% of Canada's land and water is cordoned off under conservation easements or a protected status? If we cannot access the land and cannot access the water, then we sure cannot build energy infrastructure on the land or sail ships through the water. The world needs Canadian energy and natural resources. Sterilizing Canada and turning it into a park would mean that these resources would stay in the ground.

The Prime Minister said something last week at the Pacific link announcement: "The Canadian taxpayer is going to make a lot of money off this pipeline." Well, that is good. I want that. Conservatives want that. However, we cannot build a pipeline or a shipping lane, much less a profitable one, if we cordon off our land and water. It is completely unrealistic and irresponsible to say that we can. Are we building Canada, or are we sectioning off? We cannot do both.

• (1630)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would disagree with the member opposite. There is no surprise there. At the end of the day, conservation and having environmentally sound policies is something that we can in fact do while developing Canada's economy. There are ample types of examples one could cite.

One thing, based on the comments by the member for Winnipeg Centre with respect to indigenous people, is that we could take a look at the port of Churchill and its surroundings. There are indigenous-led businesses and indigenous communities getting behind an Arctic gateway through that point.

Does the member not agree that we can in fact do both and advance the economy in major projects?

Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between conservation and preservation. If we look at the definitions of what the 30 by 30 agenda and the 50 by 50 agenda are trying to achieve, we see that it is preservation status. That is a national park level of status. It basically eliminates virtually all forms of use except for maybe visiting and taking pictures. If we were able to do the things on the preserved lands and waters that are coming through the legislative steps and the agenda the government currently has, we would have been able to build fire breaks in Jasper National Park to protect that community. Instead, the preservationist philosophy, which the member is masquerading as conservation, required that the Liberals let it sit, go through the natural process and let those houses burn. That is on him.

• (1635)

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, under Bill C-39, the government can approve projects before they are even assessed. If the assessment shows that the project poses a risk to public health or that the disadvantages outweigh the benefits, it will be too late. The project will already have started.

What does my colleague think about that?

[English]

Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I hope I understood the gist of the question from my colleague from Quebec. He should have thanked me, as an MP from Alberta, for all the money that has been transferred that is helping his community and his province. Albertans understand that we can do projects that create wealth and prosperity for Canadians. We are not an unsophisticated society. When we have wealth and prosperity, we can have better environmental outcomes, we can have better health outcomes and we can have better educational outcomes. However, we cannot have a situation where we pretend we are going to build things and tie up the rest of the country and our water areas under protected zones that limit and scare away investment.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the speech by my colleague from Ponoka—Didsbury was excellent. I learned a lot from it. He is a past conservation officer, and I certainly appreciate the points he made.

The Liberal government previously stated that there would be no more omnibus bills because they were an undemocratic practice. I am wondering if, considering that the bill is a massive omnibus bill that would change the Labour Code and quite a few other things, including conservation, the colleague thinks that perhaps the bill should be broken out and not delivered to Canadians as an omnibus bill.

Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, for the last 10 years, I have sat in the House and warned the Liberals about everything they were going to do. We as Conservatives all warned them what would happen if they passed the “no more pipelines” bill and they passed the legislation on the tanker ban. We warned them what would happen if they ran continuous deficits. We warned them what would happen if they weakened our justice system.

All the things we said would come to pass have come to pass. Now they are eating themselves whole trying to run away from the agenda they were just voting for during three parliaments prior to

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this one. The hypocrisy is astounding. My colleague from Edmonton West is absolutely right. The same members who are right now arguing in favour of this bill were saying the exact opposite about the very same issues in previous parliaments for 10 years.

I think Canadians are waking up to the reality that the government is all talk and no action. The Liberals do not mean the things they say. They will say anything to anyone anywhere as long as they get their votes. That is how the members across the room operate.

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is an urgent fight over what kind of country we want to build.

As a member of Parliament and as a Canadian, I want to build a stronger, more resilient country. I think that the majority of members of the House right now want that. We want good unionized jobs. We want a country where a family can afford to pay its rent or its mortgage, can afford to buy groceries, can afford to send its kids to school and can access health care services that it needs. That is what we all want. That is the Canada we are trying to build. Canadians are being told that Bill C-39 is about building Canada strong, but let us look at what the government would actually be doing.

The bill would make it easier to shut down a legal strike. The bill would put enormous environmental decisions on reckless and dangerous timelines. It would create new ways to pre-approve development without proper consultation or review, and it would concentrate more and more decision-making power in the hands of ministers and cabinet. This would not be building Canada strong. This would be taking power away from workers, from communities, from indigenous peoples and from independent experts, and putting more of it in the hands of Liberal ministers.

Canadians are being told that we need to move faster because Donald Trump is threatening Canada, and I agree. Canada needs to move with urgency. We need to diversify our trade. We need to build. We need good union jobs. We need energy security. We need need to stand up to Donald Trump, but we do not stand up to Donald Trump by becoming Donald Trump.

The Canadian Labour Congress commissioned a comparative legal analysis of strike intervention powers across the G7, and the finding is extraordinary. With Bill C-39, the Liberal government would give itself broader unilateral government power to end a strike than any other country in the G7. France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain and even the United States respect a worker's right to strike more than the Liberal government does.

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Even in Donald Trump's America, the president cannot simply decide that a legal strike is inconvenient, order workers back to work and impose a binding settlement. There are legal thresholds, there is judicial oversight and there are limits on the duration of intervention. The Liberal government wants to give one Canadian minister extraordinary powers to decide that a legal strike is in the national interest, and then have workers ordered back to work. Canada would go further than every other G7 country. Think about that. At a moment when Canadians are looking south at Donald Trump's attacks on democratic institutions, the government is proposing a labour regime that would give a Canadian minister powers that even the American president does not have.

Why would workers trust the government with that power? Let us look at what the government has already done with Air Canada. Who remembers, in 2025, when it took mere hours for the government to order Air Canada flight attendants back to work because they wanted to get paid for the hours they worked? In fact, this government has used section 107 within the Labour Code 10 times, more than any other government.

Bill C-39 would make the kind of intervention of section 107 explicit in the Labour Code. If economic disruption is the reason we end a strike, what happens to the right to strike? A strike is supposed to create economic pressure. That is the point. Workers have very little power individually. They have power collectively. They have the power of withholding their labour, and the consequence of that is that this is where their voice comes from. The scales are not equal, but that is the power that workers have, and Bill C-39 would take that power away from workers.

● (1640)

What happened with Air Canada was not an isolated incident. The government's own documents tell us that since 2023, nine of the 10 interventions under section 107 involved ending or temporarily suspending strikes or lockouts or imposing arbitration. With Canada Post, the west coast ports, the port of Montreal, the port of Quebec, CN, Canadian Pacific and of course Air Canada, the government has reached to take away the rights of workers time and time again. When the government says to trust it, that it will use these powers responsibly, my question is very simple: Why? Why should workers trust the government? The government has repeatedly intervened to end legal strikes.

One labour expert described what Bill C-39 does as "section 107 on steroids". That is exactly what the government is doing. The government is not removing the power it has been criticized for using. It is taking that controversial power and writing it more explicitly into law. It is putting a government escape hatch into every difficult bargaining relationship, and it is telling workers they can strike, they can exercise their constitutional rights, they can bargain and they can withhold their labour, as is their right, but if their strike becomes too "effective", a minister can decide that it is in the national interest to end it.

What did workers tell the government during its sham consultation? The government's own consultation report says that nearly all unions and labour organizations called for section 107 to be repealed or amended. They warned that government intervention removes union leverage. They warned that it encourages employers

to hold out for government intervention. One union participant put it bluntly: Frequent use of section 107 can disincentivize employers from coming to the table because they know the government will intervene and bail them out.

These are unions that represent millions of workers in this country. I am talking about the Canadian Labour Congress, CUPE, Unifor, USW, ILWU, PSAC and every one of the federations of labour across this country. The government heard that, knew that and then did the opposite of what labour asked for.

Canada should not be the G7 country where workers have the weakest protections against government intervention in a legal strike. We should not be competing with Donald Trump to see who can put more power in the hands of one executive. We should be competing with the world to build the strongest democracy, the strongest labour rights and the strongest working class in the world. We should be building a strong Canada with workers, for workers, by workers.

I am going to end with a quote from Gil McGowan, the head of the Alberta Federation of Labour:

...you cannot build Canada strong by weakening the right to strike, worker bargaining power, wages and living standards. That's the opposite of what Canadian citizens, including workers, voted for in the last election when they supported...elbows up to defend Canada.

● (1645)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to have the member reflect on the issue of essential services, because it is important for us to recognize that governments of all political stripes have used labour boards in order to end strikes. If we take a look at my home province of Manitoba, very recently, back in September, the provincial government asked the Manitoba Labour Board to in essence end the strike of Dynacare employees and ultimately made them go back to work.

I am wondering if the member opposite would recognize that at least at the provincial level, where the NDP has governed, and at the federal level, labour boards have been used to end strikes. Does she believe in any—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

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Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, the member should know very well that they have used the essential services provision for section 107 to undermine workers' ability to bargain in good faith with their employers more than any other government has ever done before. To not bring it to Parliament for a vote, to not debate it within the House of Commons and to give unilateral power to one minister is the opposite of what we should be doing. It is undermining workers' rights in this country. He can try to find some ways of saying there is a rationale for it, but what this does is it allows any minister to order workers back to work. The minute employers know that power exists, they do not bargain in good faith.

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member can comment on the fact that the pattern under the Prime Minister has been to introduce bills, not just Bill C-39, that have sweeping powers for ministers. There is not a lot of detail in this bill, and it is undermining many things.

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, to be honest, the Prime Minister has shown a shocking dismissal of Parliament and a dismissal of the value of Parliament to debate bills and bring them forward.

This is an omnibus bill. One thing I will say to the member is that the champion of omnibus bills was Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party. I would also say that I think his party's members were falling over themselves to support another massive piece of legislation, Bill C-5, which took away indigenous and environmental rights in this country.

However, the member is right. This is not the way we are supposed to bring legislation forward. It does not give us adequate time to debate it. Omnibus bills are always a way for governments to bring forward bad legislation that they do not want to have scrutinized. Even the media got a 250-page bill half an hour before they were meant to discuss it.

This is not good legislation.

• (1650)

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would really like to get inside the heads of everyone in the Prime Minister's Office to find out what they think about a system where we can unravel everything, choose whatever we want, and then, ultimately, make decisions as if it were our own money.

I am an entrepreneur and a lawmaker. When I make decisions involving taxpayer money, there is a democratic process. When it comes to my private interests, though, I can do whatever I want with my money.

I would like my colleague to tell me what on earth the cabinet members think of the Prime Minister overhauling and dismantling everything.

[English]

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with my colleague on one thing. I do not want to be in the hands of cabinet. That seems like a dangerous place to be.

I think the Liberals are not interested in listening. There was a consultation process. Labour unions representing millions of Cana-

dians were very clear on what they needed to see from this legislation. Instead of actually listening to labour experts, the labour unions and the workers from across this country, they made a choice to stand with corporate interests and to stand with big business against workers in this country.

It is workers who build our economy. It is workers who pay taxes. It is workers who contribute to our communities. It is workers we need to be protecting.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac, Correctional Service of Canada; the hon. member for Riding Mountain, Health; the hon. member for Kitchener South—Hespeler, Health.

[English]

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski (Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

Before turning to the legislation, I want to reflect on the responsibility the people of Edmonton Centre entrusted to me. Last year, they put their trust in me and the Prime Minister's vision for Alberta and for our country. At a critical moment in Canada's history, they chose strong leadership and a clear direction for our future.

The Prime Minister committed to a federal government that would work as a genuine partner with Alberta. As a lifelong Albertan, I am so proud to help deliver on that commitment.

Alberta is front and centre to our economic vision and our plan for Canada. Back home, my discussions with my constituents remind me of what that means for the people we serve: young women and men preparing to enter the trades, business owners in our downtown core looking to expand and parents in Woodcroft or Westwood thinking about their children building a better life in the community they call home. Their ambitions give purpose to our work here.

I take pride in what Albertans across our province have built and in the ingenuity and determination that continue to shape our future. No story defines Alberta's innovation and dedication like the oil sands. For generations, that potential presented a formidable challenge. The bitumen was thick and much of it lay deep underground. Turning that resource into a viable industry required breakthroughs in science, engineering and construction.

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Today, Alberta's next chapter is taking shape in our classrooms, laboratories, businesses and workplaces. It will draw on energy, agriculture, manufacturing, technology and ideas whose full potential we are only starting to understand. Our responsibility is to help make those possibilities become real, and that work has taken on a new urgency.

The unjustified and unprovoked trade war with the U.S. has put Canadian livelihoods under pressure. It has reinforced the importance of building strength at home and expanding our relationships around the world. For Alberta, reaching more customers means greater choice, stronger opportunities for producers and more security for workers. We have the resources the world needs and the expertise the world values. Governments have to work together to connect those strengths to new markets and to new investment. Our partnership with Alberta is producing concrete results. This legislation would help us continue to deliver not just for our province but for all Canadians.

I was just in Calgary to announce how our government and the Province of Alberta will work together to advance the vision of high-speed rail connecting Calgary and Edmonton. By referring the high-speed rail strategy to the Major Projects Office, we are bringing federal expertise and coordination to a provincial vision that will connect businesses, people and opportunities along this very important corridor.

Last week, I joined the Prime Minister and the Premier of Alberta in Fort McMurray as our government listed Pacific link, the proposed west coast pipeline, as the first project of national interest under the Building Canada Act. Canada and Alberta will share equal ownership, and indigenous communities will be offered a minimum of 10%. The proposed pipeline will connect Alberta's industrial heartland just outside of Edmonton with the west coast and with growing markets in Asia. For the people I represent, that connection is close to home. It links the skills and industries of our region to customers around the world. Pacific link will advance the Pathways carbon capture project, which will target 16 million tonnes of annual emissions while building Canadian expertise in carbon capture.

These projects, Pacific link and Pathways, have the potential to support about 180,000 jobs. These projects demonstrate what governments can do when they work together. We have to bring that coordination now to more investments across the country. Bill C-39 would carry that work forward.

• (1655)

For a business preparing to invest, clarity about the federal process matters. It helps companies plan, secure financing and commit to the workers and suppliers who will build new projects. The bill would bring greater coordination to federal assessments and permitting. Departments could work in parallel with clearer responsibilities and a more predictable path to a decision. Also, decisions would take one year from when the required information has been provided with provision for additional time, if necessary, and permits could be issued alongside that decision-making.

These connections matter across Alberta's economy. A growing manufacturer needs reliable electricity. An agricultural producer needs dependable transportation. An exporter needs a route to the

customer who wants to buy their product. Opening new markets requires the capacity to reach them, and this bill would help strengthen the infrastructure, the trade corridors and the processes that make that happen.

Building successfully also requires public confidence. Assessments have to be rigorous. Conditions have to be enforceable. The Crown's duty to consult indigenous peoples must be fulfilled with time needed for meaningful consultation. Coordinating that work, as this bill is intended to do, can support earlier participation and clearer decisions.

Respecting rights and supporting indigenous ownership are responsibilities that we have to carry forward together. First nations and Métis communities are already taking ownership stakes in major infrastructure supported by provincial and federal loan guarantee programs. These can create lasting revenues and great opportunity. That same spirit guides our work with provinces, respecting their responsibilities while fulfilling our own and delivering on shared commitments.

The people who helped build Alberta invested in a future they would never really fully see, and their work gave the generations that followed more opportunity to earn a living, raise a family and contribute to their communities. Now, that responsibility belongs to us. I think of residents in my riding, such as a young person entering the trades to build new projects, the business owner ready to fill new orders from customers overseas and parents celebrating the fact that their children can build a life, a good life, close to home. The decisions we make here should give them confidence in that future.

Our workers and researchers, businesses and communities are ready to build, and Bill C-39 would help the government do its part. Together, we can turn Alberta's ambition into greater Canadian strength and create opportunities that will endure for generations.

I urge all members to support Bill C-39.

• (1700)

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me just say at the outset that, having lived and worked in Alberta for 10 years in my private sector career prior to this place and my wife being born and raised in southern Alberta, all Conservatives certainly support a strong Alberta within a united Canada, and I thank the member for her comments.

We on this side of the House stood and supported Bill C-5. I am on the transport and infrastructure committee. We supported the passage of that bill in an expeditious fashion. However, there have been 500 projects brought forward to the Major Projects Office, and very few have inched along. In fact, there are none where we see any shovels in the ground. I would ask the minister to give an exact date when we will see a project from the Major Projects Office with a shovel in the ground.

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski: Mr. Speaker, we have seen with the MOU with Alberta how quickly we can collaborate and work with other provinces to make sure that, through the Major Projects Office, projects can go through to fruition.

Just as an example, the Pacific link project is a very complicated megaproject. In a very short period of time, relatively speaking, that project has moved through five or six different agreements with the Province of Alberta, culminating in the announcement on October 1 with the conditions that will be attached to that project to be put in place a year from now, which is actually an incredible timeline.

You asked the question with respect to which projects have shovels in the ground already, and certainly Contrecoeur and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I would remind members to address questions and comments through the Chair.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech by the member for Edmonton Centre, and I have serious doubts about the notion of people power, particularly when looking at her title.

She is the Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, fair enough, but she is also the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience. We can all agree there is no real emergency here though, because Donald Trump's presidency is likely to have been long over before a single drop flows from the new pipeline. As for the "community resilience" part, that really fascinates me. It is like an *honoris causa* for someone honourable. I do not understand the point of it, especially if the aim of the bill is to steamroll these communities, whether in terms of environmental rights, indigenous peoples' rights, workers' rights or the people's right to be consulted.

If a region is declared to be of national interest, the authorities can steamroll anything they want. What, then, is the point of a Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience?

[English]

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski: Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

[Translation]

Sorry, my French is quite poor.

[English]

Therefore, I will answer in English.

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This bill would in no way detract from our obligation to consult with indigenous peoples, nor would it change anything about environmental laws and protections. What it would do is remove duplication and a series of permitting, regulations and processes that do not proceed concurrently but sequentially. Projects in this country cannot take 10 to 15 years for there to be a decision because no one will ever want to invest in this country or in any project at all.

• (1705)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, about a year ago, the government established and opened the Major Projects Office, which is located in the minister's home province. I think a couple of dozen projects that have already been forwarded to the Major Projects Office.

I would ask the minister to provide her thoughts on the importance of having it in Alberta and on the projects themselves.

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski: Mr. Speaker, with respect to projects moving forward through the Major Projects Office, I believe the number at the present time is 27, and that includes projects from not just Alberta but all across the country. As a government, and we have heard the Prime Minister say this from day one when he was elected, we are committed to building Canada strong and making sure that all regions across the country can have economic prosperity, but to do so while respecting indigenous rights and environmental rules.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to add my comments on this very important piece of legislation today. As we reach a point where we would be moving forward on it, I am glad to have a chance to participate. As I indicated, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-39, the one Canadian economy act. At a time when Canadians are facing profound economic uncertainty, this legislation represents a critical step towards building a stronger, more resilient and more prosperous Canada.

The world is changing rapidly. Long-standing assumptions about global trade, supply chains and economic partnerships can no longer be taken for granted. Around the world, countries are reassessing their economic security, looking for reliable partners and working to strengthen their ability to weather external shocks that we hear about every day. In this new environment, Canada has a unique opportunity and it is imperative that we do not allow it to slip away. We are one of the very few countries in the world that possess all the ingredients necessary to succeed in this emerging economic reality. We have abundant natural resources. We have a highly skilled workforce. We have world-class innovators, researchers and entrepreneurs. We have strong democratic institutions, the rule of law and a culture of co-operation that is respected around the world everywhere, including in this House. Most important, we have the capacity not only to build a stronger future for ourselves, but to serve as a trusted partner to other nations that are seeking stable and reliable economic relationships, given the current situation with our partner to the south.

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As countries look to diversify supply chains and reduce vulnerabilities, Canada can help lead that way. We can strengthen our economic independence while deepening partnerships with like-minded nations. We can help build an international economy rooted in stability, integrity, prosperity and mutual respect. To seize that opportunity, we must be prepared to build. We must be able to develop our resources responsibly. We must be able to construct major infrastructure. We must be able to connect our producers to new markets and we also have to be able to do so at a pace that reflects the urgency of the moment. This is where Bill C-39 comes in.

A critical component of this legislation would address one of Canada's long-standing challenges: our ability to move important projects from proposals to construction in a timely and predictable manner. Canadians rightly expect strong oversight of major projects. They expect rigorous environmental assessments, which we intend to see continue. They expect meaningful consultation and partnership with indigenous communities, something that is very important to all of us here in the House. They expect transparency, accountability and responsible governance. These are not obstacles to progress. They are reflections of the values that define us all as Canadians. The challenge is not that Canada reviews projects. The challenge is that our review processes have too often become fragmented, duplicative and unpredictable. Projects that would create jobs, strengthen supply chains and improve Canada's competitiveness have too frequently encountered delays that discourage investment and cause opportunities to be lost. Bill C-39 would address that challenge.

Our government is creating a faster, more predictable and more coordinated system for project reviews, while fully maintaining the high standards that Canadians expect. The legislation would establish clearer, simpler and more predictable processes for project proponents and indigenous groups participating in consultations. It would provide investors with the certainty they need to put capital to work and have confidence to build in Canada. Through a more coordinated approach to federal approvals and a commitment to timely decisions, we would improve the efficiency of our diligence without compromising the values and protections that Canadians have entrusted us to uphold. That balance is essential.

• (1710)

Investors need certainty, workers are looking for opportunity, and communities are looking for growth. Indigenous partners deserve meaningful engagement. Canadians need confidence that important projects can be built responsibly and efficiently. Bill C-39 attempts to strike that balance.

At the heart of every major project, every transportation corridor and every new economic opportunity are Canadian workers. Building a stronger Canada is not simply a matter of policy. It depends on the people who design, construct, operate and maintain the infrastructure that powers our economy. That is why our government would also be modernizing Canada's labour framework and strengthening protections for workers in federally regulated industries.

Changes to the Canada Labour Code would strengthen collective bargaining by helping parties address issues earlier, reach negotiated agreements and resolve disputes, while fully protecting the right

to strike that we all respect and acknowledge. Additional measures would modernize labour protections to keep pace with the changing economy. The government would also add 100 new health and safety officers to increase inspection capacity, additional staff to help address complaints before the Canada Industrial Relations Board, and enhanced enforcement measures to crack down on worker misclassification. Together, these improvements would help build a modern, resilient and fair labour relations system that supports good jobs, stable workplaces and a stronger economy.

Just as workers are essential to Canada's future, so too are the transportation networks that connect our products, businesses and communities. Canada's long-term economic strength depends on efficient trade corridors that link our producers to domestic and international markets.

Bill C-39 would help strengthen Canada's trade corridors and their ports, move Canadian goods more efficiently, unlock new opportunities and build more resilient supply chains. The legislation would support the designation of strategic trade corridors, reduce bottlenecks, improve coordination of federal permitting and advance priority transportation projects, something that is way overdue. It would also modernize port governance, promote the digitization of trade processes, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and create clearer and more predictable conditions for investment. These measures would help Canadian businesses grow, reach new markets and compete successfully in the global economy while maintaining high standards of safety, security and sustainability.

Bill C-39 is about more than reducing red tape. It is about ensuring that Canada is ready for the realities of a changing world. It is about building infrastructure, supply chains, workforce, and regulatory systems that are needed to support the next generation of Canadian prosperity.

At a time when nations around the world are searching for stability and reliable partners, Canada has an opportunity to lead. We have the resources. We have the talent. We have the expertise. We have the institutions. What is required now is the determination to act. That is what Bill C-39 is about.

• (1715)

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my focus over the last 15 years has always been about indigenous consultation and the accommodation of aboriginal rights and title. The original Trans Mountain pipeline did not get 100% consent from all participating first nations, but the project still went ahead. For the Pacific link pipeline, will the government be pursuing 100% consent from all participating first nations?

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Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concerns. I believe that every member of the House shares the member's concerns about ensuring that indigenous communities are at the table 100% of the time. Those discussions are heartfelt. The decisions that will be made should ultimately be made with all of them as a group, and as Canadians together.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-5 allowed the government to circumvent at least 12 laws and seven environmental regulations. It had discretionary power to do so, which was limited to five years. Bill C-39 removes that limit and makes permanent the ability to circumvent environmental laws.

Does my colleague not agree that, at this stage, given that we are experiencing a climate emergency, this would lead to even more climate disasters, which would bring with it an enormous cost for public services?

[English]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I believe that all of us have mutual concerns about protecting the environment regarding Bill C-5, Bill C-39 or any other legislation that goes forward that is expedited. However, at the same time, there are different ways of doing things, and I think a lot of the protections we have around the environment remain there and move forward.

I am very confident, in hearing the Minister of the Environment, who is very keen on protecting the environment, that the things that would protect the environment as we move forward are in the bill.

Hon. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I were seatmates for almost a year and a half, and because of that, I know how experienced she is. In fact, she is one of the most experienced members of the House.

We are in unprecedented times. I would like to hear the member's reflections on something, given the vastness of her experience. If we talk about the speed at which the government is moving, the focus that we have in creating prosperity and creating good, high-paying jobs, what is the importance of that as it relates to this legislation?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, let me say very clearly that I am so happy that Bill C-39 is moving forward. It will be 26 years next month that I have been here as a member of Parliament, and it takes forever to get anything done. There can be many great intentions, but it takes 10 years to get anything done here, and that is not the way we build a country.

If I were to invest somewhere, I would want to invest somewhere where I know things are going to move along quickly. In past practice, over 26 years, everything that I thought would happen quickly, in one year, two years or three years, has taken years. It is overdiscussed and overprocessed.

I am very glad that Bill C-39 is moving forward. We have to make sure we do things right, protect our interests and protect the environment, but I believe we can do it all at the same time.

• (1720)

Ellis Ross: Mr. Speaker, in talking about indigenous consultation, there was a story that came out that said that the consultation

for the Pacific link pipeline to Vancouver was going to be two months long. Does that reflect meaningful consultation of aboriginal rights and title?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I just have to say to the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley that I was used to seeing someone else when the riding of Skeena—Bulkley Valley was mentioned, so it is nice to see the new member there.

Two months is not sufficient. I also do not believe three-quarters to 90% of what I read in newspapers or on social media, because there is so much disinformation and wrong information that unless I know something 100%, I just dismiss it.

Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of the good people of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner on an issue that greatly affects them as proud Canadians, as Albertans and certainly as concerned citizens.

Bill C-39 is the latest attempt by the Liberal government to deliver on its promises to build the nation-building projects Canada desperately needs. We face an unpredictable trade situation abroad and an even less hospitable environment for our resources here at home.

My constituents deserve certainty that the projects the Prime Minister promised, along with the jobs and economic opportunities they represent, will be given the green light without further delay or red tape. Conservatives have been taking the time to carefully examine this extensive bill. However, like most of the government's legislation, its sweeping powers and lofty promises are overshadowed by a critical lack of results. Actions really do speak louder than words, as the government has yet to demonstrate that it can deliver on the commitments it has already made. Canadians are left, therefore, to wonder if Bill C-39 would actually create the change we have been patiently waiting for.

The bill claims to address long-standing structural barriers that are impeding investment and productivity. It also purports to increase our capacity to meet the demands of new and expanding trade opportunities. In preparation for this bill, the government said, it conducted a series of consultations from April to August of this year. It met with indigenous Canadians, the provinces and territories, and other key stakeholders. The Liberals claim that it drafted Bill C-39 in line with the priorities their consultations identified. Those consultations revealed several priorities that Conservatives have actually long championed.

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Canadians support stronger trade corridors while keeping safeguards in place. This would include a stronger hand for indigenous communities in governing trade corridors, protecting the environment, reducing barriers for indigenous employment and speeding up approvals. They also want one-year approval time limits through coordinated project reviews, one Crown consultation process, the designation of regions of national interest, and one final ministerial decision, all while maintaining environmental standards and indigenous rights.

This has largely been the Conservative plan since before the escalation of the current trade war. While we are thankful that the government has so frequently stolen our ideas, all is not what it seems. As with much of the government's legislation, what may appear to be common sense comes with strings attached. In the case of Bill C-39, the pattern is no different. The Liberals have chosen to inject an unhealthy dose of red tape and bureaucracy into a process that should be industry-led and results-driven. Like Bill C-5 before it, Bill C-39 would do absolutely nothing to repeal the "no more pipelines" bill, Bill C-69; the west coast tanker ban, Bill C-48; the industrial carbon tax; and other federal obstacles that block or penalize development.

Let us examine the proposed creation of the so-called national trade corridor council, for instance. While the government presents it as a mechanism for improving coordination between ports, railways, trucking, airports and other transportation providers, the Railway Association of Canada has raised concerns that the council could introduce unnecessary bureaucracy and government interference in supply chain operations.

Let us think about that. At a time when the government says it wants to reduce red tape, attract investment and get goods moving faster, it is proposing a new layer of government oversight through yet another federal council. The question is not whether Canada needs more efficient trade corridors. Of course it does. The question is whether creating another advisory body is the answer, when it would have no direct authority to resolve the problems it has identified. Canadians have heard those promises before. They deserve results, not another announcement of a committee that would study the problems everybody already knows exist.

The Leader of the Opposition likened the bill to a case of déjà vu, and for good reason. Just over a year ago, we debated Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act. The Prime Minister told Canadians that this legislation would cut through red tape, accelerate approvals and allow us to build major projects at speeds not seen in generations, yet here we are, debating another sweeping piece of legislation promising to deliver what the last one failed to achieve.

Canadians are asking a simple question: If the government already had the tools to build the projects through Bill C-5, why has it accomplished so little, and why is it back in Parliament asking for further powers through Bill C-39?

• (1725)

As with its predecessor, we have every reason to believe this bill will do little to move the needle. Its promise of one project, one decision in one year is not as advertised. The clock only starts once the proponent has completed the work necessary to satisfy the government's requirements. The time spent preparing that application,

navigating preliminary requirements and addressing outstanding information requests is not captured in the one-year promise. Even when the clock starts, the legislation provides mechanisms for timelines to be paused or extended, including when additional information or consultation is required. In effect, the one-year timeline does not necessarily represent the total time a project will spend navigating the federal approval process.

Canadians should not assume that the one-year promise means that a project will receive a decision within one year of entering the federal system, and the government should not advertise it as such either. It may even result in serious ramifications. When a company cannot obtain timely decisions in Canada, it does not necessarily wait indefinitely. It may invest elsewhere. The jobs, tax revenue, supply chain opportunities and economic activity that would have accompanied that investment can go, along with that company, and once those opportunities are lost, no amount of legislation can guarantee that they will return.

We have seen the real-world effects of a persistent antidevelopment posture in Ottawa. The government turned away \$70 billion in investment from the UAE because Canada supposedly has a lack of projects available for investment. Even with the powers at its disposal to approve national projects, a decade of Liberal antidevelopment laws, delays and uncertainty has severely damaged our ability to get shovels in the ground so that Canadians can benefit from investment in our country.

Canada can get nation building right. Conservatives have done it before and know what it takes. Through a one-and-done plan involving one project, a one-page application form and one approval, the previous Conservative government saw 23,500 projects through from concept to completion in under two years, with no environmental mishaps and no public safety issues. That is what decisive leadership and a results-driven approach can accomplish.

Canadians know the Conservative position has been consistent. Through our economic action plan, we would green-light the 500 projects awaiting federal permits, end the industrial carbon tax and repeal the job-killing antidevelopment laws that have hampered our country for years.

Our approach is simple. We are considering Bill C-39 and every other piece of legislation in the context of whether it builds a country that is affordable, delivers stronger paycheques and supports an economy that protects jobs and rewards hard work. Bill C-39 may contain measures worthy of consideration. Conservatives will examine those measures carefully, because our objective has not changed. We want to see projects approved, shovels in the ground and Canadians at work.

Our economy cannot rely on a continuous cycle of announcements, empty promises and disappointments. Canada has an abundance of the resources the world needs. We have the expertise to develop them responsibly, the workforce to build the infrastructure and the geographic advantages to serve markets around the globe. What we need is a federal government that can translate those advantages into results. The government has already had the opportunity to deliver on the promise of Bill C-5. Until Canadians see those results, they are entitled to question whether Bill C-39 represents a genuine change in direction or simply another chapter in the same story.

• (1730)

Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I was at the port of Thunder Bay and saw these giant windmill blades that were on their way to Alberta through the port of Thunder Bay. However, the port of Thunder Bay is underutilized and the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway is functioning at only 50% capacity.

Alberta grain has long gone through Thunder Bay, but there is basically no container traffic on the Great Lakes. Does the member think some attention to the national trade corridors would be to the benefit of Alberta and the people of Thunder Bay in Ontario?

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. We have been saying for years that the trade corridors are critical. The rail lines are backed up. The ports are backed up. Vancouver's is, especially. Improving access to markets for our producers, farmers and manufacturers is critical. The issue is whether it will happen.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's remarks. I wonder, does he see any value in environmental assessments or does he think it is just a way of delaying projects?

[English]

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question. The whole idea behind an environmental assessment is to ensure that the proponent in a project takes into equal consideration not only the impact that project will have on the environment immediately, but the long-term impacts it might have on the environment. My assumption is that those assessments are absolutely necessary. They should not be shortchanged. However, they can be done with more speed to them and without causing a significant impact on the environment, if any.

I cannot speak for the government. I will not speak for the government. I do not know how it assesses its environmental impacts, but I am left to wonder whether they actually get done in a timely manner as well as they could or should.

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Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member raising the tens of thousands of projects that were done under the Harper government's economic action plan, considering that the environment commissioner actually did a review of all of them and found that there were no issues whatsoever environmentally. I wanted to reiterate that.

The member has also spoken about the red tape and the top-down bureaucracy the Liberal government seems to always be attracted to. The national trade office, which is optional in Bill C-39, has no formal authority, yet it is supposed to somehow facilitate discussions within the same department of Transport Canada.

Does the member not think this is a real lost opportunity to have a single window that can actually get things done? Are the Liberals just creating more bureaucracy?

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, what has been troubling in the years I have been here is that the good intentions of any government get bogged down in bureaucracy, and this is a prime example.

Look at the national trade corridor council. I do not see any value in this council adding to the speed of projects or getting any projects completed at all. There are mechanisms in place already. How can a council speed things up when it adds another layer to go through and has more questions, delaying projects further? How it is advantageous to our Canadian economy and to getting projects built is beyond me. I think it is a colossal failure, again.

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's public service and I appreciated our constructive discussions on lawful access last year.

We share the goals of getting projects done fast, building Canada strong and reducing unnecessary delays. Bill C-5 established a framework for designated national interest projects, while Bill C-39 would also improve coordination across the broader federal review and permitting systems.

Setting aside our differences on other policies, does the member agree that running reviews concurrently and reducing duplication between departments would benefit Canadian businesses? If he doubts the process timelines, what specific changes would he recommend to make them achievable?

• (1735)

Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, what I am having trouble with, and what I think Canadians are going to have trouble with, is how we can improve the speed to get projects approved if we add a third layer of bureaucracy, because that is exactly what this bill would do. It troubles me that Bill C-5 did not seem to get it done, so let us add another layer in Bill C-39.

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This is what I believe is happening here. I am hopeful that it will work, but the results are in the pudding, and right now, the pudding is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): We will have to leave the pudding there.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brampton South.

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to stand in the House to represent my residents of Brampton South and speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, introduced by my colleague, the member for Gatineau.

Canada has what the world wants. We are a global leader in both clean and conventional energy, with minerals and natural resources. We are among the world's most trade-connected economies, with free trade agreements providing access to approximately 1.5 billion consumers. Canada now has the lowest marginal effective tax rate on new business investment among the G7 countries.

Across the world, we are seeing changes in supply chains, trade disruptions, geopolitical tensions and tariff pressures. We must use this time to build on our strengths and ensure that we have the infrastructure, transportation network and workers to support growth.

In the past year, we have already taken action to build Canada strong. Last month, we acquired nearly \$500 billion in new investment commitments to Canada to support pension funds, financing for Canadian businesses and capital to grow Canadian sectors.

In light of recent unjustified U.S. tariffs, we are taking action to support families, workers and industries. To date, we have provided nearly \$32.5 billion in tariff relief support to industries across Canada, including a \$7.5-billion relief package this past August.

Last week, I joined the hon. Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the FedDev Ontario to announce \$26 million in funding to support 31 GTA businesses in expanding production and diversifying into new markets. In Brampton, Daybar Industries received support, along with other companies, to expand production capacity, strengthen competitiveness and diversify into new markets.

Building Canada strong means investing in our communities, supporting Canadian businesses and creating the right conditions for our communities to succeed. Bill C-39 builds on this work through three important pillars: building Canada strong, keeping Canada moving and making Canada strong for all.

This bill is about strengthening our trade corridors and ports, getting infrastructure projects built faster and supporting workers and fair workplaces. It would create a more integrated process for Canada to deliver on major initiatives, including a clearer timeline for federal reviews and decisions. This greater certainty for businesses and organizations would make sure that they spend more time investing in our communities and creating good jobs, instead of worrying about regulatory burdens and unnecessary red tape. These measures would make Canada a more attractive place to invest while still maintaining our strong standard for environmental protection and sustainability.

The bill is about making sure that we can continue to build at the pace our economy and communities need us to in order to thrive. It

would also reduce duplication between federal departments and agencies in reviews and approving permits.

The second pillar, keeping Canada moving, focuses on ensuring that our transportation network can remain the backbone of our country. We are a trading nation. Our roads, railways, ports, airports and other trade networks are critical infrastructure that all Canadians rely on for work and to get the goods they need every day. This bill would ensure that our transportation systems remain reliable and can move goods efficiently from coast to coast to coast while still delivering our trade.

My community of Brampton is one example of the scale of our transportation sector. Over 2,000 trucks move through Brampton every single day. We have more than 11,000 transportation employers that support approximately 24,000 jobs. In Canada as a whole, this sector contributes around \$2 billion to our GDP.

● (1740)

The bill would ensure that Canadian farmers, manufacturers, workers, employers and industries can continue to rely on the transportation networks that connect every region of our country and build a more reliable supply chain. The bill would also heavily support our trade diversification efforts.

Around 85% of Canada's non-U.S. trade moves through our marine ports. The bill would ensure that our ports have the support and infrastructure needed to continue helping businesses and industries access new markets around the world. To support these efforts, we also need to ensure that we continue to modernize our trade system. Many businesses still rely on manual processes and legacy systems, which may very well be the cause of shipment slowdowns and added costs and which create further challenges for Canadian businesses to compete in global markets.

Bill C-39 would move forward with measures intended to modernize these systems and move them toward digitization. These changes would ensure that there is better coordination between industries and the federal government so that Canadian businesses can get their products to global markets quickly.

In the face of these global uncertainties, we must ensure that our nation is prepared to respond by strengthening our domestic economy, supporting Canadian businesses, building new trade relationships and ensuring that our transportation networks are ready as we continue to grow.

Lastly, the third pillar of the bill, “Canada Strong For All”, focuses on making sure that all Canadians have the opportunity to benefit from growth. As we build new infrastructure and strengthen our economy, we must also make sure that we support Canadian workers, protect their rights and create fair and safe workplaces. Canada's economy relies on the people who build, transport, manufacture and deliver the goods that Canadians rely on every day.

In Brampton, manufacturing is nearly one-quarter of our workforce. These are good, stable jobs that support thousands of families, individuals and livelihoods. Across Canada, over one million workers are covered by the federal labour framework, including workers in transportation, rail, air and telecommunications. That is why the bill includes new measures to strengthen Canada's labour framework and would give both employers and unions more tools to resolve disputes and agreements.

These measures would bring federal mediators into difficult bargaining relationships earlier, would extend the conciliation period from 60 to 90 days to give both sides more time to reach a fair agreement and would create a special mediator process for more complex issues at the bargaining table. Bill C-39 would also ensure that workers maintain their protected right to strike. These changes are intended to support more stable labour relations and more reliable supply chains while still protecting workers' rights.

“Canada Strong For All” also means making sure that we continue protecting the environment and indigenous self-determination as we grow our economy. With the bill, Canada would also continue to uphold our responsibility to indigenous communities, invest in sustainability efforts and maintain the high standards that Canadians expect from major federal investments. These measures would make sure that Canada is prepared to respond to opportunities and challenges in the future. We cannot wait for these challenges to arrive. We must prepare now and build for the future. It is about building the infrastructure that Canadians need, keeping our supply chains moving effectively and efficiently, supporting our workers and making sure that all communities across the nation benefit from Canada's growth.

From the financing commitments secured at the Canada investment summit to increased tariff relief support for workers and businesses, we have already taken significant action to build a more resilient economy. Bill C-39 builds on this work.

• (1745)

For communities like mine and for every community across Canada, this improved coordination matters. It means stronger infrastructure to support major construction projects, more resilient supply chains to support Canadian industry, greater opportunities for businesses to enter different markets, and good jobs for Canadians to grow.

Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hear a lot about freight, transportation, sea-

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ports and a strong Canada, but the spine of Canada is the Trans-Canada Highway. If we cannot move all these products, we are in trouble.

How do you feel about Trans-Canada Highway 11 being part of the projects of national interest to build all this?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I will remind the member to address his questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Brampton South.

Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his passion. It is an important question.

The world is changing rapidly, as we all know. That is why this government is focused on what it can control. There are three themes to building Canada now: creating a more efficient and predictable coordination framework to attract more investment without delay, moving with speed, and expanding our trading relationship with reliable partners. We are not just paying attention to trade. We are also centred on workers and how we can move Canada forward for all collectively so we can thrive within our communities.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with Bill C-39, the Liberal government wants to shorten the time frames for environmental assessments, particularly for oil projects. To achieve that, we either have to provide these agencies with more resources so they can conduct their assessments more quickly, or change their mandate. Rather than working with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, this task is being entrusted to other agencies that lack the same expertise and have different objectives.

Ultimately, will we not end up with sloppy assessments? Will we not be contributing to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions? Who will pay for the environmental disasters we are going to face?

[English]

Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, the environment sector is very important in Bill C-39. It is about building faster, but the bill would not remove any environmental assessment permits or protections. Environmental health and social impacts would continue to be reviewed, and the scientific evidence would continue to guide decisions, but new processes would reduce duplication and improve coordination so that projects can move forward more efficiently. There is more transparency in that too.

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for highlighting the support to help Brampton businesses expand their production and reach new markets.

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With my background in industrial automation and robotics, I know how investing in technology can improve productivity and help Canadian manufacturers compete on the global stage. Those gains go further when businesses can move their goods efficiently and reliably.

Could the member explain how the measures in Bill C-39 to strengthen trade corridors and modernize our ports would complement these business investments and help manufacturers like Daybar turn greater production capacity into export growth and good Canadian jobs?

• (1750)

Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, to my friend and colleague from Oakville West, thank you for your passion about industries. I worked in the nuclear caucus with you and I know how passionate you are.

I was at Daybar last week with the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and colleagues. When Canadian manufacturers expand production, they need to know they have a transportation-reliable sector and a reliable method of digitalization, which I mentioned in my speech, so that they know their products are getting to consumers. This is very important for any business or manufacturer. Giving access to digitalization and sustainability to manufacturers strengthens trade corridors and reduces delays, and this bill would do exactly that. It would also create good jobs in my—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The time has expired.

This is just a friendly reminder to address questions and comments through the Chair.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley.

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

I want to start off my speech by saying a big thanks to all the farmers across Saskatchewan and back home for all the work they have put in this year through seeding, through summer and now through harvest. Quite a few farmers are done for the season, but there are still some who have a little way to go thanks to the late rains we had. We will never say no to rain. We will always take more of it. It would have been nice if it had come earlier in the year. Nevertheless, we will take it whenever we get it. It did cause a bit of a delay, but I want to say, again, a big thanks to the farmers for all the hard work they do.

That provides a bit of context to the bill we have here today. We have heard the government talk about how it would improve trade corridors. The Liberals talk about how the bill would improve labour relations. Especially in the spirit of the harvest happening and it wrapping up back home, I am hearing that people are concerned that the bill would anger the people who are responsible for making sure that our farmers get their product out to the coast and to market. If the government was truly trying to do something to help our farmers, it could have chosen to use the bill as a means to improve port infrastructure.

For example, the Liberals could have had covered grain loading or expanded rail capacity to make sure we could get more railcars out to the ports in a timely manner. That way, farmers would not have to face the merge and issues with boats waiting in water, things that are completely out of their control but that they have to pay for, causing headaches for them. A lot of people are skeptical about what the bill would do for the labour side of things.

The government calls this omnibus legislation the building Canada strong act, and I forgive people for wondering if they have heard this before, because the Liberals have used it in their campaign slogans. They have used it for Liberal Party fundraising. I see it on TV in the Government of Canada ads that are going on. In fact, the government also used it in last year's budget. It also had the Building Canada Act, Bill C-5, which was one of the first government bills introduced.

The budget was a year ago, and Bill C-5 was passed a year and a half ago, and here we are again with yet another bill with basically the same name trying to accomplish the same thing. Canadians are left wondering what exactly the bill would do. Canadians are starting to wonder and rightly ask the question, "What have the Liberals built and what are they going to get built?" Without seeing results, it seems more and more like the government keeps making empty promises to Canadians that they either cannot keep or do not even bother trying to keep.

As I said, we have already had the Building Canada Act and now we have the building Canada strong act. As time goes on, it has started to sound like we are going back to square one. The Liberals have another slogan that they love to use, and that is, "We are just getting started." It has been 11 years of just getting started, with nothing happening except for the destruction of industry.

What do we have to show for fast-tracking Bill C-5 in the first place? This was the bill the government said it needed, with urgency, to get things going. It was introduced last year. It was supposed to be a quick fix, by creating a new bureaucracy for major projects to circumvent the laws the Liberals had put in place previously. At the time, Conservatives questioned how effective it would turn out to be, and we pointed out that instead they needed to do a lot more to repeal many of the disastrous policies from under Justin Trudeau. However, they were unwilling to go that far and admit that they needed to deal with the deeper issues they had created.

Here we are, close to the end of 2026, and nothing has been built. Construction has not started. Instead, we see the government bring forward yet another bill with its favourite slogan: "build Canada strong". No matter who is prime minister, it is the same Liberal Party running the government, and Liberals always love to play political games. They did not stop playing games after Justin Trudeau left, but they are playing a different game now.

For a long time, the Liberals decided to use Canadian oil and gas as a political scapegoat. They were constantly looking for ways to treat development as a wedge issue for electoral gain. All of this caused deep division between different regions of Canada, but things have gotten so bad that the government cannot get away with doing that anymore. Now the Liberals see public opinion and tell people what they want to hear. They are saying some of the right things and pretending the last decade never happened.

Meanwhile, Canadians know that we desperately need to rebuild our economy, and they strongly support building major projects. This means they expect new projects to actually get started if they have not been built already. After losing an entire decade, there is no time left to waste, but the Liberals did not understand that before, and apparently they still do not understand it now.

• (1755)

As our debate continues on Bill C-39, it will become pretty clear that this bill is overhyped. The Liberals are caught in a bind because they have to deal with the consequences of the regulatory mess they created, but they are only willing to make some small tweaks to their own flawed system rather than do what is necessary to deliver substantive and structural change that would benefit every Canadian business.

Despite the Liberal attempts to phase it out, our Canadian oil and gas sector has always been a leading contributor to our national economy as a whole. More than anything, regulatory uncertainty has been absolutely devastating for the energy sector and for all Canadian resource industries. Uncertainty has chased away billions of investment dollars, and over time, it has significantly worsened Canada's business reputation around the world.

One of the worst examples of this has been the Impact Assessment Act. We saw death by delay with cases like Teck Frontier or the Trans Mountain pipeline, where the project's proponent in the private sector eventually gave up and walked away because the review process was too slow and inconsistent. Proponents had to follow required processes, but the bureaucracy did not have the same pressure with meeting deadlines and it had further options for dragging out the process. There has been a broad consensus for years that we cannot move forward until the government overhauls the impact assessment process.

Major reforms are long overdue. Conservatives have been demanding it forever, and I have lost count how many times my colleagues and I have stood in this place and called for change. The Liberals have refused to repair their broken system, and even now with Bill C-39, they continue to pursue mostly performative changes. All their big talk about one project, one review, one year is mainly stuck at the surface level. Of course streamlining the project approval process is helpful, but there are so many other things that need to go along with doing that.

Once again, Bill C-39 would fail to do the fundamental work of creating the strongest possible regulatory environment built on consistency and certainty. The one-year timeline would apply to completed applications, but proponents for new projects would also be dealing with an open-ended preparatory phase without a hard deadline. That would cost millions and millions of dollars.

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I will give the example of Teck Frontier again. It had a write-down of \$1.13 billion while it waited for the government to make an approval, and that is what it walked away from. That was the cost for Teck.

Extensions could also be granted with Bill C-39, especially for consultation purposes. If this mechanism were applied to allow for some reasonable flexibility, it is true that there could be a benefit to industry in some cases, but right now we have no idea how it would play out and if it would be consistent. We still have uncertainty hanging over everyone's heads, and because this is such a big and complex omnibus bill, it is tough to find clarity on some important points.

If proponents missed a deadline, the application could be declined, but what would happen if the government missed the one-year deadline? Where is the accountability and the transparency for government to support industry? Could this put us right back in the same spot where projects run into death by delay all over again? The bill would allow cabinet to designate certain projects or regions in the national interest, but this might not be as promising as it sounds. Again, where is the consistency? The government would still have too much control over the process, where it could pick winners and losers. There would still plenty of room for having unhealthy favouritism between industries or for political priorities getting in the way of our economic recovery.

We are still way too close to comfort to the way things were under Justin Trudeau and the same problems remain in place here. In a weird way, the Liberals are reinforcing the uncertainty and setting things up for it to become worse by proposing to centralize the process and opening it up for more politicization. While this is going on, global investors would still see that energy production remains subject to other priorities while uncompetitive policies remain in place, like the Liberals' fuel regulations or an industrial carbon tax scheduled to increase.

Canadian industry talks about a lost decade, and it is not because it is living in the past or crying over spilled milk. It is forced to make up for that lost time while facing global competitors and jurisdictions that do not punish their industries the same way that these Liberals do. It is not good enough for the government to take its sweet time and tinker with amendments to Trudeau's policies. Bold and decisive action is the only answer.

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Canadians are running out of patience and they are tired of hearing excuses from the Liberals. Canada needs to build major projects to strengthen the economy, improve energy security and defend our national sovereignty. Success does not come from passing a bunch of Liberal government bills. We have to measure success by how many projects are built by the private sector and how many pipelines will move Canadian energy to market. Canadians need clear answers and strong action from the government. Like they say, it is time to get started. It has had 11 years. When will it get started?

• (1800)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member says “bold and decisive”. That is exactly what we have seen since the last federal election, when Canadians elected a new Prime Minister and 70-plus new Liberal members of Parliament. All one needs to do is take a look at what has transpired.

The Conservatives like to be critical of the Major Projects Office: 24-plus projects and half a trillion dollars. What about the investment summit hosted by the Prime Minister? Again, we are talking about half a trillion dollars. We are talking about historic amounts of money to support a stronger and healthier Canadian economy.

The only division in the House of Commons is within the Conservative Party. When will the Conservative Party recognize a good thing and get behind Bill C-39?

Jeremy Patzer: Bold action, Mr. Speaker? The member has been in the House a lot longer than I have. He has enjoyed a very long political career that stems back to his time in the provincial legislature in Manitoba. He has seen many governments come and go. He knows this government has done nothing when it comes to actually taking bold, substantive action to get things done in this country.

If he wants to take bold action, he should stand up in this place and denounce all the disastrous policies of Justin Trudeau's time that he supported. That would be a step in the right direction. That would be bold, and I would welcome him to do that.

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I listen to some of my colleagues, I get the impression that there are only a few members of Parliament, including those from the Bloc Québécois, who are concerned about the environment and who want to keep the safeguards.

Right now, it seems like no one is listening to anyone else. Obviously, that is because we are talking about the environment. No one cares, since they do not believe in climate change. We are definitely not looking at the same science.

My colleagues should be ashamed because when we go back home, our children and grandchildren ask us what tomorrow holds for them.

My colleagues think only about the next election or their region's economy. For heaven's sake, let us think about the future.

[English]

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the passion that the hon. member brings to the House.

It is the next generation that really motivates me. I have three kids of my own. I know the opportunities I had growing up in small-town rural Saskatchewan. The very lifestyle I had growing up, that way of life, is under attack by the Liberal government. The Liberals have actually used the environmental lens to try to punish and destroy the rural way of life. They have zero clue. They have no understanding of what it means and what it is like to be from rural Canada and to have to suffer under the policies that they have put in place. That needs to end. The government needs to quit using the environment as a way to destroy and punish the main industries and sectors that drive and fuel the Canadian economy.

Yes, we need to have proper environmental protections. We have the strongest regime in the world. If the rest of the world adopted Canadian environmental standards, all the issues the Bloc talks about would start to slowly go away.

• (1805)

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague for his great speech.

The fact is, with the team Canada approach by the Liberals, there has never been a more divisive prime minister in the history of our country. There is a separation issue in Quebec. There is a separation issue in Alberta. The Prime Minister has divided our country along regional lines ever since he was elected 18 months ago.

This is exactly the same legislation as Bill C-5, which talked about building at speeds never seen before. These guys have 500 projects at the Major Projects Office, and they have approved none of them. Why?

Jeremy Patzer: Mr. Speaker, with the Liberal government, it continues to be all rhetoric with no results.

Again, getting back to taking bold action, the government has done nothing when it comes to bold action. In fact, the environment minister herself is an active ally for the movement to try to end any development in the oil sands. She hates the oil sands. It is even on her own website that she does not want to see any more development in the oil sands. She is very much anti-oil and anti-gas.

The Liberal government still has the same anti-energy activists in the government, in cabinet, still forcing some of these decisions. That is what is leading a lot of the destruction of Canadian industry and the Canadian economy. That is why a lot of the divides continue to exist in this country. This country needs a unifying prime minister. and it is certainly not the one who is sitting over there.

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Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate today on behalf of the people of Lakeland. I hear every day from workers, farmers, families and business owners who know what is at stake when Canada cannot get major projects built. For more than a decade, Liberal laws and red tape have made it harder to build, invest and compete. That costs the people of Lakeland and Canadians everywhere jobs, businesses, higher prices and hope. After imposing layers of antidevelopment laws, taxes and delays, the Liberals seem to have finally discovered Canada must build for our own affordability, security and self-sufficiency.

Conservatives, of course, agree. We have always pushed for more competitive regulatory and fiscal frameworks so Canada can have pipelines, mines, LNG, nuclear power and better ports, railways, highways, airports and trade corridors to move Canadian resources and goods across the country and to global markets that want our products. What Canadians do not need is yet another announcement or agreement pretending the last 11 years never happened. There is no doubt the federal government could have implemented real major project fast-tracking measures immediately when it took office and should have listened to economists, industry experts, provincial leaders, us and other countries years ago.

Let us be clear. What has not changed? The Liberals have not repealed the unconstitutional Impact Assessment Act, the west coast oil shipping ban or the federal industrial carbon tax. Those are core parts of the Liberal antidevelopment agenda that Conservatives have always fought. They prolong uncertainty, increase dependence on one customer and undermine Canada's competitiveness, distinctly not what other major producing countries or the U.S. inflict on their businesses or entrepreneurs. I have cautioned the damage that the Liberals would do and pushed for change at every step.

In 2017, I fought Bill C-55 and antidevelopment zones that prohibit Canadian opportunities in water, often near regions where those are most important.

In 2018, I warned repeatedly that Bill C-69's so-called concrete timelines were anything but, since assessments could be stopped, extended and restarted at any time, making it totally uncertain for proponents and investors. Eight years later, proponents faced the same problems. The power to consider any other matter the agency decides is relevant obviously makes it impossible for investors to prepare, and removes efficiency and predictability from reviews.

In 2018, I fought Bill C-48, the Liberal oil shipping ban, which the most impacted B.C. north coast first nation sued the Liberals over for its own rights and title to pursue its own economic opportunities, and prevented Canada from reaching vast Asian markets to reduce dependence on the U.S. in the most direct, affordable and efficient route. It is still law today.

The federal industrial carbon tax remains too, the only one in the world for a major energy producer, which makes everything more expensive for Canadians and businesses.

The Liberals have prolonged uncertainty despite the clarity and consistency of Canadian industry in the case for regulatory and fiscal change, and even in the face of challenges from Canada's biggest customer and trading partner.

Nine months ago, with the MP for Long Range Mountains, I moved our Canadian economic sovereignty motion to repeal the Impact Assessment Act, the shipping ban and the federal industrial carbon tax. The Liberals opposed it and every single one is in place today. Therefore, when the Liberals called Bill C-39 a dramatic break from their own past, let us look at what remains. This is the Liberal illusion, new language, new announcements, releases and rhetoric, but the same antidevelopment architecture, barriers and growing bureaucracy.

Now the Liberals promise one project, one review, one year, which has been what Conservatives have proposed for years and ran on in 2025. However, the truth is the review clock would not start until proponents completed their comprehensive application, studies and permit information, work that can take years. Once it starts, the minister could add up to 90 days, cabinet could extend it further and timelines could be suspended. What good is a one-year promise if the clock starts years into the process and can stop along the way? That is still a stopwatch the government would control completely and proponents could not count on.

I warned about this with Bill C-69 eight years ago. In June last year, I tried again with respect to Bill C-5. I put forward amendments for a 90-day designation decision and a one-year conditions timeline. The Liberals rejected both. More than a year later, Canadians are right to ask: Where are the results and what on earth is taking so long?

Conservatives collaborated, helped improve and ultimately supported Bill C-5, because Canada must build urgently. The Liberals said that law and their Major Projects Office would get it done. Conservatives implemented greater transparency, conflict of interest, national security safeguards, indigenous participation and reporting on timelines and outcomes. We worked with the Bloc to protect provincial jurisdiction. That was in June 2025. Where are the results?

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• (1810)

Since then, at committee, the government has confirmed that roughly 100 people work at the Major Projects Office, with a budget of over \$200 million. The head of the MPO said that 275 applications had already come in from all sources, sectors and jurisdictions. The Liberals seem to celebrate this, but really, the fact that there are 275 applications of all kinds and from all over shows chaos not clarity. Today, the MPO acknowledges only 18 projects and eight strategies. Many were already under way before the office existed. Others are concepts with no final investment decision and no shovels in the ground.

Which projects actually moved because of the MPO, and what measurable outcomes did taxpayers get? Announcements are not outcomes. Meanwhile, at least 500 projects are waiting on the Prime Minister's desk before projects at the Canada Energy Regulator, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Impact Assessment Agency are even counted.

Although the sector remains the biggest investor in Canada's economy, it is about even more than oil and gas. Manufacturers need reliable rail. Farmers and exporters need ports and trade corridors to work efficiently for lower costs. Communities need highways, water and waste-water infrastructure. The entire economy needs power and transmission lines. For years, Conservatives have said that infrastructure and natural resource development are not obstacles to Canada's security and sovereignty; they are the foundations.

Canada's competitiveness and productivity problem is not new. A 2024 analysis using the federal major projects inventory found nearly \$670 billion in natural resource projects suspended or cancelled since 2015. Finance Canada itself says that Canadian business investment has stagnated while U.S. investment rose and outpaced Canada's. That matters even more amid U.S. trade uncertainty while the Liberals keep domestic antidevelopment taxes and regulatory barriers in place.

Canada cannot control what the U.S. or other countries do, so Canadian governments should resolve to compete and beat them at home. CNRL says it directly. Two Canadian oil sands expansions of 240,000 barrels a day are on hold, waiting for more effective and efficient regulation, and a competitive fiscal framework. Canada could unleash that investment right now, but it is blocked, not building. Meanwhile, competitors proved that projects can move faster. TC Energy's 700-kilometre southeast gateway pipeline in Mexico began construction eight months after permit application, and it entered service in under three years. Canada should be able to compete.

Canada has done it before, under a different government. During the global financial crisis, 23,500 infrastructure projects were completed. They went from concept to completion in under two years. That is why Conservatives call for one and done: one project, one approval and one year, with a real deadline. The west coast pipeline proves the point. On October 1, the government finally listed a west coast oil pipeline as a project of national interest.

Conservatives support another pipeline to the Pacific. We have argued for years for diversified export markets and pipelines built by the private sector in all directions, but Canadians should note

what is happening here: The Liberal government and the Crown corporation once again have to build a pipeline because private sector proponents will not fully take it on. For years, those proponents faced an uncertain Impact Assessment Act, and Conservatives warned that it would drive away investment. Another pipeline to the Pacific was obviously in Canada's national interest years ago. Canada needed market diversification years ago.

Canadian energy has always been the key for security, sovereignty, affordability and leverage. The Liberals must create conditions for private capital to build, not make governments project owners because their own policies drive investment away.

Canadians know the difference between an announcement and an outcome. A designation is not construction. An MOU is not a pipeline. A project on a list is not a project being built. Canadians want shovels in the ground. The federal government must do its own constitutional obligation of indigenous consultation to get to yes. If consultation is one reason a federal clock can stop, the government must deliver its part promptly and consistently, and it cannot use its own duty as an excuse for indefinite delay.

Since the Liberals decide which projects receive special treatment, Canadians deserve transparency about conflicts of interest, ownership, foreign-state-owned investment and whether any Brookfield-related conflict screen applies. That is why Conservatives fought for those safeguards in Bill C-5. There is no doubt that Conservatives want Canada to build, not a headline deadline with years hidden before it and pause buttons built in. We want Canadian workers to build Canadian pipelines, ports, railways, highways, mines, nuclear plants, transmission lines and trade corridors with Canadian materials, but Bill C-39 would not get rid of the bad laws that are the problem in the first place.

The Liberals cannot say they were not warned. Canada has lost enough time. Stop blocking, stop taxing and stop delaying. Give proponents certainty, and bring private investment back to Canada.

• (1815)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of fast talk and no doubt a lot of words. I will pick up on some of the things the member was commenting on.

The member talked about getting oil to the Pacific Ocean. Stephen Harper was 10 years in government, and not one inch of pipeline was built directly to the Pacific or the coastline.

Now, we can talk about TMX. We can talk about LNG. Let us talk about the time since the last federal election. A newly elected Prime Minister has done more in 18 months than Stephen Harper did in 10 years, quite frankly, when it comes to economic development and the creation of literally close to a trillion dollars of potential investment. That is what has taken place in the last 18 months.

We can talk about the Pacific link. We can talk about LNG phase two. What is the member talking about—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member to give a chance to the member for Lakeland to respond.

Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member is not telling the truth about either the last 11 years or the previous record. The fact is that private sector proponents made proposals for a dedicated Asian export pipeline off the west coast. Also, the private sector proponents made a proposal for a west-to-east pipeline to provide Canadian domestic energy security and exports to Europe. The court ruled that there had to be more indigenous consultation done on northern gateway. Prime Minister Trudeau had the option to redo that consultation, get it right, and Canada would long be shipping barrels of oil to Asia to diversify markets beyond the U.S., on the private sector's dime, on their time, and that infrastructure would have been built years and years ago. Instead, the only thing the Liberals have a record of is chasing out private sector proponents and putting Crown corporations and taxpayers on the hook, and no shock—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing I do not understand.

I do not understand why the Conservatives seem so angry. We can hear it. It is palpable. They are angry. Why are they angry? They seem angry that the government wants to bypass environmental assessments in order to build pipelines. However, I always thought that was the main objective of their political agenda.

I would like to hear an explanation.

[English]

Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, the current situation is that the Liberals have just created more uncertainty and more chaos. What ever happened in this country to what was a world-renowned, independent, impartial, objective and evidence-based regulatory body that made recommendations? Instead, what the Liberals are doing is

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centralizing power so that politicians are picking pet projects. They have a 100-person, \$200-million Major Projects Office, which calls itself a concierge, while they have three existing regulators and more than 70 projects with private sector proponents that are stuck in front of those regulators right now with no end in sight. The Prime Minister himself said that there are 500 projects sitting on his table since they started this whole hullabaloo.

The point is: streamline the regulations, fix the laws, get rid of the anti-competitive taxes and bring private sector investment back to Canada for unity, sovereignty, security and leverage abroad.

• (1820)

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are important issues for our country and to the member's area.

In Bill C-39, we see an increase in the bureaucracy in section 2. We see that the Liberals want more discretionary powers given to ministers, and so powers going from the legislative branch to the executive and even some very wide-reaching powers that we agreed to give them on a temporary basis. If members remember, on Bill C-5, the Liberals, at the time when they were accused of grabbing too much power, said, “Oh, we'll put in a sunset clause for five years.” Well, in Bill C-39, they are removing that and saying that they will only use those large-scale powers to exempt projects from huge, important laws. The only limit now would be the dissolution of Parliament or prorogation of Parliament.

Does the member think that the Liberals are being a little too cute by saying, “On those powers, we put in a sunset clause”, and now they are basically taking all that power back again and more?

Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for all the work he has been doing on the bill before us and also on Bill C-5 when we worked together on that legislation.

The member has made the exact point about the fact that, right now, everything is as uncertain as ever for private sector proponents, for developers of major infrastructure and for resource development. I think the member has, very importantly, pointed out what is actually the agenda of the Liberals, and it is central—

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member.

Before I recognize the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, I want to warn him that I will have to interrupt him in about eight minutes. He will have two minutes remaining when the House resumes debate on this bill.

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The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by making a brief comment on the speech given by the member who spoke before me, as I tried to listen to it. I sometimes like to practise my English, so I listen to speeches in the original language. I must say that I really sympathize with the interpreters, because I had a lot of trouble understanding everything that was said. However, I did understand a few things, because I tried to keep track of the number of times the word “pipeline” came up in the speech. I ended up losing count because it came up so often.

At least I understood that my colleague was talking about a pipeline. Since we are talking about Bill C-39, I gather that she wants more pipelines. It is not a good time to be a Conservative right now, because the Liberals are building more pipelines than the Conservatives ever built, more than they ever would have dreamed of and more than they ever wanted. Unfortunately, this is not a good time for the planet either.

That is what I want to talk about in my speech on Bill C-39.

The government decided to call this bill the “building Canada act”. That is what it says at the bottom of the screen for anyone watching this debate on Bill C-39 in the House. That kind of title always surprises me. Anyone who reads the bill will soon realize that it is not a law designed to build Canada. Rather, it is a law designed to give the government even more arbitrary powers to override existing laws, to gut environmental protections, to trample on workers' rights and to sell off our airports to the highest bidders. That sums up the bill. It is sad to see the government, which already had an authoritarian flavour when it was a minority, go even further now that it has a majority.

Earlier, one of my Conservative colleagues mentioned something that we have already reported a number of times in the House. I think it bears repeating, because the Liberals apparently fail to grasp the magnitude of what they are doing. We already passed Bill C-5, one of the worst bills I have ever had the misfortune of studying and debating in the House. Unfortunately, they are now proposing Bill C-39. Apparently, they had it in them to come up with something even worse. Bill C-5 contained limitations imposed by the opposition because, in committee, we heard from a number of witnesses who essentially told us that Bill C-5 was similar to the Emergencies Act. The government could claim there was an emergency, like the tariff emergency or the economic threat emergency, as an excuse to gain extraordinary powers that would let it override some laws and tailor others to suit specific projects that it decided were in the national interest.

At least we managed to impose some limits, such as the creation of a special committee to oversee the enforcement of Bill C-5. We also managed to include a sunset clause in the bill so that the measures would expire after five years, because an emergency is not a permanent state. It is temporary. What is more, those powers could not be used when the House was not in session, when Parliament was prorogued. That is basically all just common sense. In short, when the government is granted extraordinary powers, it must be held to account for how they were used.

Unfortunately, it seems that was not enough power for the government. The Liberals seem truly power-hungry right now. They have decided to get rid of the provision that ensured Bill C-5 would no longer be in effect after five years. That is mind-boggling. In five years' time, Donald Trump will not be U.S. President anymore. The emergency is now. If it is still an emergency in five years, then it is not really an emergency at all. It is a situation that has become permanent. An emergency cannot be permanent.

Clearly, the government wanted to use the emergency as an excuse to secure concessions and permanently weaken the rule of law. I have a real problem with that. Bill C-39 clearly reveals the Liberal government's true intentions. The Liberals must be held accountable.

Worse still, there are all sorts of other provisions in Bill C-39 that weaken protections, particularly when it comes to workers' rights. I was the Bloc Québécois transportation critic, and I saw all kinds of lobbying for years. Every year, it was the same old tune. Representatives of ports, airports and all types of federally regulated businesses would come to my office and tell me that we really needed to find a way to prevent workers from striking. They would tell me that the government should declare that the national interest is too important for workers in pretty much every federally regulated sector to be able to exercise their rights. Of course, we know that the only leverage that workers have against their employers, aside from quitting, is to go on strike, to have everyone stand up and refuse to work in inappropriate conditions.

• (1825)

Unfortunately, workers who are unhappy with their conditions are now left with only one option: to quit and leave other workers in the same situation. The option of striking at least enables these people to demonstrate their solidarity collectively and build up their bargaining power. Individual workers have very little power. Sometimes they are not motivated to retrain in another field.

There is a certain hypocrisy here, in saying that the government is going to give people time, appoint an arbitrator, allow time for negotiations and then refer the matter to the Canada Industrial Relations Board.

As we all know, the reality is that the government does not want to bear the burden anymore. It does not want to have to justify its actions before Parliament anymore. Up until now, special legislation was required. The government wants to do away with that. It wants to decide everything by decree, behind closed doors, as was the case with Bill C-5. We can see how similar these two measures are in spirit. It is also clear why these two measures are both included in Bill C-39. In a way, these measures are both meant to undermine transparency. The government wants to make decisions behind closed doors, without consulting anyone and without being held accountable. This is very problematic for democracy.

It seems to me that the Liberals do not realize what they are doing. In its speeches and promises, the Liberal Party generally claims to stand for virtue, good faith and ideals. As I listen to my Liberal colleagues speak, I hear only naive optimism. They have nothing negative to say about what they are doing. However, when we actually read the bills, they are frightening.

I do not know if the Liberals realize what they are doing or if they are just blindly taking their leader at his word because they are completely mesmerized, have no idea what they are voting on on a daily basis and simply accept the message. I do not know if they are actually capable of thinking critically, if they read the bills and if they ask themselves questions. I wonder if, in caucus, they actually ask the ministers and the Prime Minister questions.

Personally, I am troubled by the parliamentary dynamic that is taking shape. We saw debate cut short in the case of Bill C-5. I hope we will not see that again with Bill C-39.

It seems that the government is interested not in democracy, but in power. The Liberals are going to realize that at some point. I cannot believe that they will not listen to their constituents who will be experiencing difficult situations or when there will be protests in their ridings in the future against projects that will have been unilaterally imposed before an environmental assessment has even been completed. It is madness, but that is where we are headed. What a sad prospect.

I have a lot more to say, but my time is up.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1830)

[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am returning to a question I raised regarding CORCAN last week. CORCAN is the inmate skills development wing of Corrections Canada.

Last week, I asked why CORCAN employs 608 individuals, at a cost of \$66 million in salaries alone, to train only 1,056 inmates in rudimentary tasks like farm chores, apple picking and sewing. The public safety minister responded to my question with a heartwarming story about a trip he took with the Governor General to a prison in Saskatchewan. That was a very unsatisfactory answer, so I am back again to point out that the per-prisoner cost of a CORCAN education per year is \$62,000, which is half the tuition at Harvard University and is also more than the average Canadian earns in a year. At this price, one would assume that the investment is justified by astoundingly good public safety outcomes and a very low rate of recidivism for people who receive CORCAN training, but as it turns out, that is not the case.

The government has defended CORCAN by pointing over and over again, when I raise these questions in this place, to a research report by Corrections Canada published in 2014 that found that former inmates who find post-release employment are less likely to re-

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offend. Of course that is true, but I am not sure that the government read the rest of the research report, because it concludes, based on measurable data, that “Involvement in CORCAN employment [while incarcerated] was not found to have a significant impact on the length of time that offenders retained their first job post-release” and that “CORCAN participation was not directly linked to reductions in recidivism.”

In other words, CORCAN does not make a person any more likely to maintain employment after serving time in prison and therefore makes no difference to that person's employment status and does not reduce their likelihood of reoffending. In fact, the research in the same study found “no significant differences” whether prisoners worked for CORCAN, worked a non-CORCAN job in prison or did nothing at all.

Here is an interesting fact. Eight times as many prisoners, 7,944 to be exact, worked while incarcerated in non-CORCAN jobs last year compared to only 1,056 in CORCAN jobs, at a much lower cost. CORCAN is therefore as redundant as it is inefficient and expensive.

Why are we spending \$66 million to add nothing at all to the skills prisoners receive? The minister asked us to look at what he calls the remarkable success of CORCAN. I see no success whatsoever. Why does this program exist at all?

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through CORCAN, the Correctional Service of Canada actively enhances the safety and security of our institutions and our communities. CORCAN programming does that by providing offenders with a sense of purpose, promoting pro-social behaviour and allowing them to participate in meaningful work. This reduces the risk of violence among offenders in CSC institutions, thereby benefiting the safety of other inmates as well as our correctional staff.

CORCAN's public safety benefits extend much further than within our correctional institutions, as CORCAN actively enhances public safety by providing offenders with the employment skills and experience necessary to become productive, law-abiding citizens and skilled workers when they return to their communities.

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We all want safer communities for our friends, our loved ones and our constituents. That is why I am proud to acknowledge that employability-related training is available at all federal institutions. This is in addition to the CORCAN-operated on-the-job training sites at 34 CSC institutions across the country and in six community-based operations. Additionally, Correctional Service Canada provides apprenticeship opportunities to offenders through certain on-the-job training assignments in institutions, as well as through the CORCAN community industries program during transitional employment.

Research clearly demonstrates that offenders who are employed in their communities are less likely to reoffend and return to federal custody. This is why vocational training for offenders remains so important. Not only is it our duty to do so, but it is effective and it works. It provides offenders with knowledge and skills that are transferable to the workplace and are aligned with industry and the Canadian labour market. Vocational training also results in industry-recognized certificates that enhance the employability of offenders, thereby promoting greater rehabilitation.

In fiscal year 2025-26, there were 20,714 certificates earned by offenders for their work in vocational training programs. Further, staff and contractors, and general employment services available in the community, assisted offenders under community supervision to obtain 2,425 community job placements.

In response to the member opposite's question, I would like to advise that offenders participate in training and work programs that are directly transferable and in line with the Canadian labour market. This includes areas of farming, construction, welding, manufacturing and work in the food industry, among others. These are the skills being promoted by CSC facilities, including within CORCAN.

• (1835)

Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, the government asked Corrections Canada to make cuts to save \$132 million over the next three years. To that end, Corrections Canada has eliminated 25 community employment coordinators. These are the people who actually help prisoners find jobs after they are in prison. Firing these employment coordinators saved \$2.7 million.

Now, it seems to me the wrong cuts are being made. Eliminating a totally unnecessary and ineffective program like CORCAN would save at least \$198 million, and that is just the salaries, over the next three years and would save the jobs of the employment coordinators, who actually make a difference in finding jobs for ex-convicts and making our communities safer.

Does the government have it backwards? Were the researchers at Corrections Canada right when they said, in a report to the minister, "CORCAN is an outdated model"?

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I do not share that opinion. I think CORCAN does help the labour market, and it helps inmates to achieve their rehabilitation and be productive in our society.

I would just remind the hon. member that as members of Parliament, we all want safer communities for our friends, loved ones and constituents. Having inmates going into permanent jobs, jobs that are giving them skills and a salary, is a good way to prevent

reoffending. It is in pursuit of this goal that I am pleased to highlight the positive interventions provided by CORCAN that provide offenders with the skills and competencies necessary and that are aligned with labour needs. As stated, there is a direct correlation between an offender's ability to find employment and rates of recidivism.

HEALTH

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the taxpayer-funded CEO in charge of the \$300-million PrescribeIT failure is suing Canada Health Infoway for \$3 million in damages after he was fired. Buried in the lawsuit is a very damning allegation. Michael Green claims that his firing "was timed in order to prevent his further testimony" before the health committee.

In May, the Liberal health minister said in the House of Commons, "the CEO of Infoway's behaviour was unacceptable. I spoke to the board of directors, and they took the necessary steps."

My question is simple. Did the health minister instruct the board of directors to fire the PrescribeIT CEO in order to prevent him from testifying at the parliamentary committee, yes or no?

• (1840)

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked the same question two weeks ago, and today he will get the same answer that he got two weeks ago.

As the Minister of Health said at the time and as she stated in June, while many Canadians have benefited from the work of Canada Health Infoway to advance the interoperability of health data and sharing of that data, important questions have been raised in recent months about the program's accountability and value for money. That is why the minister launched a multi-phase review of Canada Health Infoway. Phase one involves an independent, third-party audit, which will include a comprehensive review of the organization's finances and determine whether the funds were used appropriately. Phase two will include an independent review of the organization's governance structures and operations.

This work is currently under way, and it is important that enough time and space be given for fulfilling the critical task of the audit and review. It is not just our government that is saying so. The Auditor General herself said, in response to the minister's statement, that conducting a performance audit at this time would be duplicative and therefore of limited added value for parliamentarians and Canadians.

In my humble opinion, we should let this independent work continue instead of rushing things through with the kind of political interference that the Conservatives are calling for. Canadians deserve a modern health care system that meets their needs, and these reviews will help achieve that.

[English]

Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, my question was not the same as it was two weeks ago. The taxpayer-funded CEO who was in charge of the \$300-million PrescribeIT failure is suing Canada Health Infoway. He claims that he was fired to prevent him from testifying at the health committee.

Did the Liberal health minister have any role in terminating the PrescribeIT CEO, yes or no?

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is referring to a lawsuit filed by the former president and CEO of Canada Health Infoway. I think it would be inappropriate to comment further on this matter at this time. This is a completely standard procedure. The member opposite can laugh all he wants, but he knows full well that we do not comment on this sort of thing.

Again, no one is denying that Canada Health Infoway followed best practices or that Canadians got their money's worth. That is why the government launched an independent review and an independent audit. We look forward to the results of both, and we will act accordingly.

[English]

HEALTH

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is such a pleasure to be back again for the late show. I shared the topic of my question with my colleague on this side. Questions regarding PrescribeIT are consistently not being answered in question period, so that is why we are here. I am not happy to be here this late. I imagine the parliamentary secretary across the way is also not happy. We could put an end to this if he would just answer the questions tonight.

To put this into perspective for Canadians, \$300 million was blown on a piece of software that did not work. That is \$50 million more than the Liberals spent on the sponsorship scandal that brought down the Paul Martin government. I happened to bump into a popular television personality on Sparks Street today, and I mentioned to him that I was going to come do the late show about the PrescribeIT scandal. He asked, "What's that?" I asked, "You go on CBC frequently and talk about politics, and you haven't heard of this \$300-million scandal?"

Do they know, on the other side of the House, how many nurses \$300 million could hire? Do they know how many hospital beds

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could be constructed with \$300 million? When a financial catastrophe such as this happens, \$300 million is how much money 300 Canadians who worked their whole life long for a paycheck would be lucky to see over the course of their whole life. The Liberals wasted the life's work of 300 Canadians on something that did not work at all. Why are they not interested in getting to the bottom of this with us?

My question in question period was very simple. Michael Green was getting \$1 million a year to do nothing, as far as those of us on the health committee could tell. He got fired. The Minister of Health previously, in question period, told me that he got fired after she spoke with the board, but the chairman of the board, Dr. Peter Vaughan, told the health committee that the Minister of Health had never spoken to the board, so what the heck happened? This is important. The member opposite talked about accountability. Who is accountable? Is the Minister of Health the person who fires the CEO when he wastes a bunch of money, or is she not? The people who sent us here to the chamber just want to know what happened with the money.

Finding out who was in charge of firing the CEO is step number one. It could be that this was all a miscommunication. It could be that the Minister of Health told her representative, Jocelyne Voisin, to fire Michael Green, and then that Jocelyne Voisin went to the board and did not tell Peter Vaughan that why she wanted to fire Michael Green was that the health minister told her to. It could be that Peter Vaughan was just left out of the loop, but if that is the case, let us get to the bottom of it. If that is the case, why would the health minister not say that this is what happened?

Why would the Liberals on the health committee go to all the lengths they have gone to in order to shut down our investigation? He spoke at length about the third party investigation they are paying for. Is it independent? We have an independent Auditor General. The independent Auditor General was asked to look into this, but because the Liberals hustled in and got a third party to look into it before them, they have now brushed the Auditor General aside. Why are they not answering the questions of members of Parliament? Why are they not allowing the Auditor General to do their work? Are they not ashamed to be covering up a scandal larger than the sponsorship scandal?

Is this how the member opposite wants to spend his parliamentary career: coming here late at night to continue to obfuscate the questions we ask that are reasonable and that our constituents, every Canadian taxpayer, wants to and deserves to hear the answer to? Did the health minister, or did she not, fire Michael Green through her representative on the board?

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• (1845)

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to comment on the remarks made by the member opposite. He said that the program did not work. That is not entirely accurate. In fact, the program has been relaunched. An agreement has been signed with at least one province to date. In fact, what was found was that the program did not have the full support of the medical community, which is why it was discontinued. That said, it does not necessarily mean that the program was not working.

Second, with regard to what happened in terms of governance, I will reiterate what the minister has already said, which is that there were shortcomings. That is why she launched an independent review of the organizational structure and mandate of Canada Health Infoway.

This approach was welcomed by the Auditor General, who herself concluded that there was no need for her to conduct her own investigation. She was satisfied with this approach. Given that the Auditor General was satisfied, I think we should wait to see the findings of this review. The government has already indicated that it will take note of them and ensure that the Canada Health Infoway program becomes operational again.

For now, no supplementary budget has been allocated because we take the management of public funds seriously. No further payments will be made until we receive the findings and an assurance that the money invested in Canada Health Infoway is meeting the needs of the medical community and Canadians.

[*English*]

Matt Strauss: Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting point.

I later asked the Minister of Health if she would be disbursing the funds. She said no. However, a week later, her policy spokesperson, I believe his name is Alexandre Bergeron, told The Globe and Mail that they would be disbursing the funds. I would like the member to confirm, based on the statements of Alexandre

Bergeron from the minister's office, whether it is in fact the case that no funds are flowing through right now. That is a really important point.

I have a second point. The member talks about the program working, but 95% of doctors refused to use the program, and that is before the Liberals put the 20¢ copay on the pharmacist. Every pharmacist group in the country that I spoke with said they were not going to use the program. They made a program that nobody wants to use. I would say that it is not working.

Why will the member not just answer the question? Did the health minister act to remove Michael Green or did she not? It is a very simple question. It does not matter if it is before the courts or not. The member has absolute privilege to give a true answer here and tell the people of Canada what happened with the money.

Did the health minister fire Michael Green?

• (1850)

[*Translation*]

Jacques Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, to answer my hon. colleague's question, the Minister of Health has suspended payments to Canada Health Infoway for the current fiscal year. Since then, no funds have been disbursed to the organization, and we have made it clear that our investments will resume only once we are certain that the money will be spent in the best interests of Canadians. The Auditor General has indicated that she wishes to review the results of this work, and we look forward to sharing them with her as soon as they are available.

This is essential to ensuring that Canadians can trust how their money is spent. That is what this government intends to do.

[*English*]

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

(The House adjourned at 6:51 p.m.)

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