



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

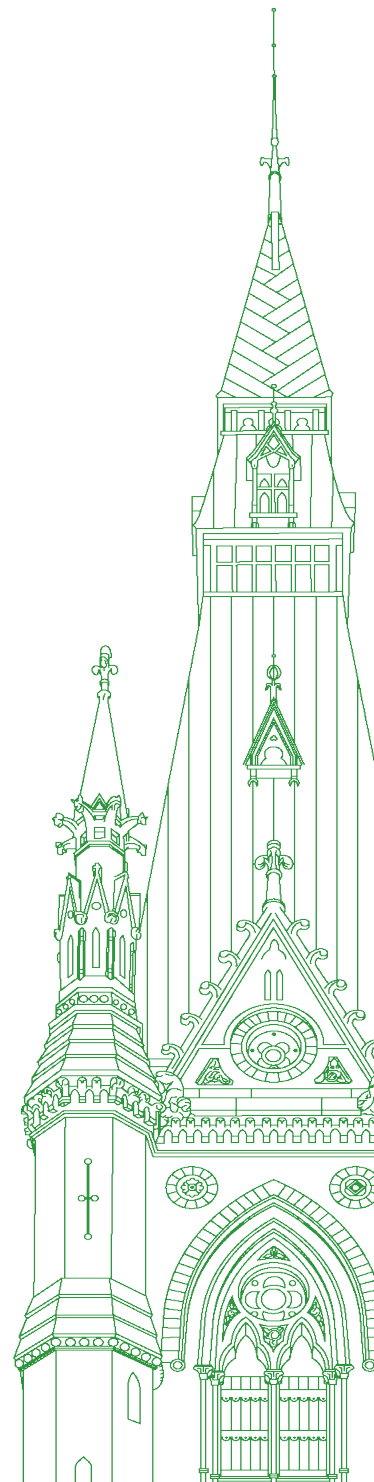
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, led by the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Des Collines.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

RECOGNITION OF AFGHAN WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, five members of Parliament from this place, from five different parties, were deeply honoured to welcome to this place former Afghan members of parliament. All these former MPs are women. All of them lost their role as parliamentarians in the blink of an eye on August 15, 2021, when the Taliban again seized power and declared a war on women, a genocide on women.

These former Afghan women MPs inspire us. We were deeply honoured as a team to work together across party lines to help get them entry to Canada and safety, but the work is not done. We do not sit back and congratulate ourselves as long as women and girls in Afghanistan cannot go to school. We cannot forget them. We cannot turn our page and say that was then and this is now. Now is the time for action to protect the women and girls of Afghanistan.

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NEWS MEDIA AWARD RECIPIENT

Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Trevor Greenway, editor-in-chief of The Low Down to Hull and Back News in Wakefield. Trevor won first place at the Canadian Community Newsmedia Awards for his powerful reporting on health and suicide in the Gatineau hills, in particular among men. Mental health is important, and his reporting gave a voice to grieving families and shone a light on the barriers people still face today when seeking help. This award confirms something

our community has known for a long time: Local journalism matters.

Congratulations to Trevor for his well-deserved national recognition. I thank Trevor for giving a voice to our community.

* * *

● (1405)

ADDICTIONS

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a drug crisis that is destroying lives, families and communities. Families are watching loved ones struggle with addiction, while communities face open drug use, crime and disorder. We want to show compassion, but compassion means helping people overcome addiction and rebuild their lives, not accepting addiction as the status quo.

We need to put treatment and recovery first, crack down on the criminals who profit from addiction, and restore safety and order for our communities. There is nothing compassionate about a system that allows people to remain trapped in addiction without a clear path to recovery. Every Canadian struggling with addiction deserves hope, dignity and a real opportunity to recover. Canadians deserve safer communities and a federal government that puts treatment, recovery and public safety first.

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RECOGNITION OF CORPORATE EXCELLENCE

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am loving it. McDonald's Corporation Canada is visiting Parliament Hill today. Let us look at some of the base numbers. It has 100,000 employees across the country. When we think of products from Canada, let us think of Canadian hamburgers, potatoes, chicken and eggs, with 85% of what is sold through McDonald's coming from Canadian producers. As a corporate citizen, I think of Ronald McDonald House and the many contributions to our health care system that have been made through Ronald McDonald House.

Statements by Members

For 35 years, I have used my local McDonald's as a meeting place for my constituents. I can tell the House that it is a great place to have fellowship with the community, with friends and with family, and so much more.

McDonald's Corporation Canada is having an open house later on this afternoon. I would encourage all members to get out and support it.

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COVID-19 EVENT

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, In September, I held one of the most important events, which touched many Canadians' lives: the Allison Inquiry. There was one purpose to this inquiry: to listen to folks who were injured by the COVID injection.

For four days, we heard heart-wrenching testimony, leaving many of us in tears. Several witnesses testified on behalf of family members who had died. Crystal testified on behalf of her brother, Scott Gorry. Scott worked on Parliament Hill for years. When he learned of the inquiry, he wanted to be a witness. Sadly, on July 4 of this year, Scott tragically passed away due to side effects from the COVID injection. It was a devastating story. All stories were difficult, but I truly believe they needed to be heard, and they were, all around the world.

I want to thank all the witnesses who made it from across the country and all of my MP colleagues who attended. I thank Shawn and Teresa Buckley for their incredible dedication. I thank all the volunteers who made this inquiry possible. Finally, those of us who serve in public life know how important the support of our family is. There are long days and many times away from home, so I want to thank my wife, Rebecca, for her unwavering support, for her encouragement and for standing beside me throughout it all.

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[Translation]

SUZANNE-MARIE LANDRY

Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to Suzanne-Marie Landry.

Suzanne-Marie devoted much of her life to promoting culture in the Eastern Townships and in my riding of Brome—Missisquoi. She was passionate, engaged and determined. She always focused on helping others thrive by providing encouragement and motivation. Suzanne-Marie was a cultural dynamo with a zest for life. How sad it is that she was taken from us far too soon.

Suzanne-Marie understood that culture brings us together, gives us a way to tell our story and breathes life into our regions. She left behind a precious legacy and a lasting imprint on everyone who crossed her path. On the day she died, she called me to ask if I was going to see the show in Bromont that night. I told her that, unfortunately, I had an event to go to and that we could talk the next day. I never had a chance to speak with her again.

I want to thank my friend Suzanne-Marie. May she rest in peace.

[English]

SALMON RUN

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the sockeye that return every fall to the world-famous Adams River, known as the richest 300 acres in the world. This return is the final chapter for thousands of sockeye that hatched in the river four years ago before beginning their epic journeys through the Thompson and Fraser rivers and Pacific Ocean. After swimming thousands of kilometres, the weathered sockeye finally return home to initiate the next generation.

In early October, people from the Secwépemc and Shuswap welcome locals and visitors from around the world to witness this extraordinary spectacle of life and death against the backdrop of fall colours. Salute to the Sockeye events run from October 9 through October 25 at the Adams River and include a welcoming ceremony, interpretive and educational displays and scenic walks along the riverbank, where salmon can be seen doing what comes naturally. I encourage everyone to join in the Salute to the Sockeye events in the heart of the riding of Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies and to witness the beauty of the salmon, the people and the scenery.

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● (1410)

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 12, Ismaili Muslims here in Canada and around the world will commemorate the 55th birthday of His Highness Prince Rahim Aga Khan, our 50th hereditary imam.

As many in the chamber will remember, His Highness visited Canada twice this year at the invitation of our Prime Minister. These visits reinforced the importance of the enduring relationship between the Ismaili Imamat and Canada, grounded in the shared set of values of improving the quality of life of others, of building prosperity sustainably and responsibly, of leading with conviction and humility and of building big things together. All of this was manifested in a set of agreements to work together to build affordable housing for Canadians and to work together abroad to bring peace, stability and security to those most in need.

His Highness's birthday is a moment to recognize his leadership, his commitment to Canada and his deeply held conviction that by working together across our differences, we build a better world for all.

I invite all members of the House to wish His Highness a very happy birthday, and wish all Ismailis across Canada *salgirah mubarak*.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been three years. We remember the execution of teenagers at a music festival; the slaughter of men, women, children and babies; and the hostages, tortured, who were killed in Gaza, all murdered because they were Jews.

Since October 7, the intifada has been globalized. Jihad is on the move. The hate that targets Jews is not just limited to Jews. We remember 9/11, the Boston Marathon, the London buses, the Madrid trains and the German Christmas markets. We remember the shooting right here on Parliament Hill.

Many proud Canadians, including Muslim Canadians, came to Canada to escape jihad. We all live peacefully side by side. A school in my riding got shot at three times. We must please confront the intifada before it is too late.

We must never forget. May all of their memories be a blessing.

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[Translation]

RECOGNITION OF AFGHAN WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to acknowledge the presence on Parliament Hill of former Afghan women parliamentarians. These women were able to escape Afghanistan thanks in part to the efforts of a small group of parliamentarians, a group of which I am proud to be a member.

They were members of the Afghan Parliament until the fall of Kabul, when they were forced to flee their country. There were seven of them, but only six managed to escape the Taliban. On January 15, 2023, we heard the tragic news that Mursal Nabizada had been brutally murdered in her home at the age of 32, along with her bodyguard. I was deeply saddened by her passing, but I am proud of what we accomplished. We demonstrated that, regardless of political affiliation, the common good must always come first.

We drew courage from the example of a woman who should have been here with us today but sadly is not.

That is why I wanted to say a few words in her memory and pay tribute to all the women and men who risked their lives for democracy and freedom.

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[English]

RCMP GRADUATION

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the honour of standing at the RCMP Depot in Regina as Troop 44 graduated after 26 demanding weeks of training. These new Mounties have chosen a life of service, protecting our communities, upholding the law and contributing to the public safety and national security of our country.

Behind every new constable also stands a family that has supported them and sacrificed with them, and that will continue to do so as they begin their postings across Canada. I want to recognize

Statements by Members

the instructors and staff at the Depot who prepared these officers for the tremendous responsibility they now carry.

To the members of Troop 44, wear the red serge with pride, serve with courage, integrity and compassion. Always remember the trust Canadians place in them.

Congratulations, Troop 44. We are proud of them, we are proud of our Mounties and Canada is grateful for their service.

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● (1415)

COST OF LIVING FOR SENIORS

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Barry from Vaughan recently reached out to my office. He is 72. He worked hard his entire life. He paid his taxes, saved responsibly and worked toward owning a home he could retire in. He did everything right, but today, he is still carrying a mortgage and considering selling his home because rising costs have made retirement hard to afford.

Under the Liberal government, seniors are paying more and being remembered less. Why did the government forget about the people who built this country? We are calling on the Liberal government to adopt our Conservative economic action plan to lower costs, cut wasteful spending and restore affordability for Canadian seniors. Seniors like Barry deserve to retire with dignity and security.

Conservatives will never forget the seniors who built this country, and we will always stand up for them.

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PUBLIC SERVANTS

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public servants are Canadians serving Canadians. This summer, I met with public servants and their families in Burnaby Central. I heard about long commutes, caregiving and balancing work and family. I also heard about something important: pride in their work.

Statements by Members

Those conversations highlighted the potential value of flexible work arrangements. Where operationally appropriate, they can support caregivers, people with disabilities and those facing long commutes, while helping reduce unnecessary travel and emissions. Our government has a responsibility to ensure that Canada's public service is productive, accountable and delivering results. A strong public service is built around effective service to Canadians. Flexible work can be one tool when it supports operational needs and helps deliver results.

As parliamentarians, our role is to set direction and understand how that direction is experienced by the people who carry it forward. I will continue to bring their perspectives to this House.

* * *

DIESEL PRICES

Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, fuel costs have hit record highs, and working Canadians are paying the price. Diesel has gone up 80% in a year. Farmers are spending thousands of dollars a day to keep feeding the country, and those costs hit every grocery bill.

Canada should have some of the most affordable energy on the planet, but a decade of Liberal blocking, stalling and delaying has led us here. Foreign wars outside of our borders should not dictate Canada's ability to be a self-sustaining energy superpower.

The Conservatives have an emergency fuel relief plan to support Canadian diesel. We would fast-track permitting to build pipelines, refineries and energy storage, eliminate all federal taxes on diesel at least until Canada Day and increase production to one million barrels per day so that Canadians are never dependent on foreign oil again.

Today, the Liberals can vote for the Conservative motion to give Canadians relief. Will they?

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[Translation]

SOUFFLE MAGIQUE DES SORCIÈRES

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, Terrebonne was transformed into a magical wonderland for Souffle magique des sorcières, a family event that drew over 3,000 visitors, both young and old, and gave them the opportunity to enjoy a unique experience filled with magic and wonder.

The event was a huge success thanks to the dedicated individuals who devote their time and energy to helping our community thrive. I want to sincerely congratulate Corine Beltrami, president of Événements citoyens, and all of the volunteers, artists, partners and others who helped make this year's event such a resounding success.

Initiatives like this one help families create special memories, bring generations closer together and help make Terrebonne a warm, vibrant and welcoming community.

I want to congratulate the entire team and thank them for showing everyone what a great community Terrebonne is.

DIESEL PRICES

Joël Godin (Saint-Augustin—Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as elected officials, our number one responsibility toward the voters who put their trust in us is to do everything we can to improve their daily lives. Today, after question period, we will be voting on a motion moved by the members of the official opposition. It calls on the government to implement practical measures to reduce the cost of diesel.

At a time when Canadians are being hit hard by inflation, lowering the tax on diesel could have an immediate impact on the operating costs of our farmers, truckers and businesses. Ultimately, it would help lower the cost of the groceries families buy every week, which means that every generation would benefit: our families, our young people and our seniors.

I urge the Liberal government to support our motion. When we have an opportunity to help Canadians save money and enhance our energy self-sufficiency, we would do well to work together without partisanship. Let us put Canadians' interests first.

* * *

● (1420)

[English]

ANTI-SEMITISM

Leslie Church (Toronto—St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, three years ago today, on October 7, eight Canadians were among the nearly 1,200 people murdered and well over 200 others taken hostage in the deadliest attack against Jewish people since the Holocaust. Hamas's attack deliberately targeted civilians and inflicted profound suffering on Jewish families in Canada, in Israel and around the world.

Hamas's terror also had a much more pernicious goal of dividing us from one another. Anti-Semitism has surged onto our streets and into communities, like it did in Belleville only 17 days ago.

Today, we remember all of the victims of October 7 and commit ourselves to honouring their memory by exposing hate and standing up for our fellow Jewish Canadians, who, like every Canadian, should be able to live every day of their lives freely, proudly and in peace.

May their memories be a blessing to us all.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by wishing you, the Prime Minister and all Canadians a happy Thanksgiving.

Unfortunately, for many families, the cost of their Thanksgiving meal will take some of the joy out of the day. According to Dalhousie University, the cost of a Thanksgiving meal has risen by 10% since last year. One year after this Prime Minister came to power, despite his promises on affordability, things cost more.

When will Canadians be able to afford a Thanksgiving meal?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to join the member for Toronto—St. Paul's and all members of the House in marking this tragic anniversary.

I would also like to join the Leader of the Opposition in wishing all Canadians a happy Thanksgiving. The government has taken measures to help with affordability, to the tune of \$20,000 per family.

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HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal Prime Minister is costing Canadians dearly. He is all talk and no action. He is also out of touch with reality. He is out of touch when it comes to food and also when it comes to housing.

According to a Habitat for Humanity survey conducted in 22 countries, Canadians are the most likely to have given up on the dream of home ownership. They are twice as likely to have abandoned that dream as people in half of the 22 countries surveyed.

When will the Prime Minister stop making big promises and creating more bureaucracy and start increasing the supply of homes that people can buy?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what is really happening for Canadian families. I just got here, and this week, 12 million Canadians received cheques from the Government of Canada through the Canada groceries and essentials benefit.

When it comes to housing affordability, we are building affordable housing through Build Canada Homes.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in English, I wish the Prime Minister, the Speaker and all Canadians a beautiful Thanksgiving.

However, Canadians will not want to give thanks when they walk down the grocery aisles and find out that the cost of a Thanksgiving meal is up 10% since last year. All of this is under the Prime

Oral Questions

Minister's leadership since he promised he would be judged by the prices at the grocery store. He is out of touch and Canadians are out of money.

We have heard all of the grand promises and the big spending. What Canadians who sit around that table with empty wallets want to know is when they will have the result of affordable food.

• (1425)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I join the Leader of the Opposition in wishing all Canadians a happy Thanksgiving.

Some 12 million Canadians will have just received from the Government of Canada the essentials benefit of \$170 for an individual and \$240 for a family, and 22 million Canadians have had their taxes cut. All Canadian families, on average, get \$20,000 in support with child care, the national food program, dental care and the national child benefit.

That is a country that takes care of each other. That is a country to be thankful for.

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HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is out of touch and people are out of money. Giving back a tiny fraction of what the government takes away will not cover even one mortgage payment, and that is if people can afford a home.

Today, we have a report from Habitat for Humanity, which did a survey of 22 nations and found that Canadians were the most likely to have given up on the dream of home ownership. It said 56% of them believe they will never own a home, which is twice the average of the international community. This is after the Prime Minister promised that housing would be affordable.

When will we have an end to the promises and of home ownership—

The Speaker: The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to keep reminding the Leader of the Opposition that I just got here. He has been here for 20 years. Every single month this government has been in office—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Speaking of Thanksgiving, I would be thankful if members could hold it down just a little.

The right hon. Prime Minister, from the top, please.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Mark Carney: Mr. Speaker, I would note the Leader of the Opposition's 240 months and counting, and my 18 months. What has happened in those 18 months? Every single month, rental affordability has improved in this country. Every single month, housing affordability has improved in this country. Jobs are up. The economy is up. We are moving forward. We know we have more—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the guy who said he was going to build at unimaginable speeds says he just got here, after 18 months. It is not that he has failed to make things better after the 10 years of Liberal government that he helped advise on. It is that things are getting so much worse. Rent is up 86%, almost double, from \$970 to \$1,800 today. The Prime Minister is now leading an economy where the largest number of Canadians have given up on home ownership.

When will we have an end to the big talk and actually get some home ownership results?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every single month that this government has been in office, rental affordability has improved. Every single month that this government has been in office, housing affordability has improved. It has gone from 54% of disposable income to the low 40s per cent of disposable income, on average, in this country. There is more to do, but we have momentum. We are building Canada strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): I will turn it over to you, the people out there. Is your rent payment really going down? Is your mortgage payment really going down? Is anything really getting built? Where are the results in your life back home?

Mr. Speaker, this is the Prime Minister who set up a new bureaucracy that he said would double home construction to 500,000 a year. It has built only 2,000 homes, not even a drop in the bucket, and homebuilding is down 4% year over year.

Will the Prime Minister stop with the big promises and the big spending and actually deliver some real results?

The Speaker: This is just a reminder to speak through the Chair, even when using rhetorical devices.

The right hon. Prime Minister may answer the question.

• (1430)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, real results are 140,000 more Canadians in work. A real result is the fastest-growing economy in the G7 in the last quarter, at 3.8% annualized. Real results are incomes growing, rents coming down and housing affordability improving. We are building Canada strong.

* * *

[Translation]

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 seems to reveal the Prime Minister's real priority in building his Canada strong. It is really about building a pipeline for western oil companies by suspending environmental laws.

The Prime Minister is not hiding the fact that he is doing this to appease the Alberta separatists. If Bill C-39 is good for appeasing Alberta separatists, perhaps it will also be good for enraging Quebec sovereignists.

Given that this government's biggest and most costly achievement is the pipeline to American oil companies, what place would Quebec have in its strong Canada?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's place in a strong Canada is at the centre of a strong Canada. That is why this government catalyzed the major project at Churchill Falls, the largest clean energy investment in the history of North America.

What is the rationale for building a pipeline from Alberta to the west? It is to support the sovereignty and independence of Canada, including Quebec.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is worth noting that the largest project for Quebec is actually in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The cost of the Prime Minister's new pipeline is currently estimated at \$40 billion. We can only imagine how much it will actually end up costing. Quebecers' share of the bill for this gift for the American-owned oil companies in western Canada will come out to at least \$9 billion. That is more than Quebec's entire deficit. That means money coming out of the pockets of Quebecers and going into the pockets of American shareholders of western Canadian oil companies, supposedly to ensure independence from the Americans, even though there is no tariff on oil.

If this is the Prime Minister's idea of a strong Canada, why is he so determined to not—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit surprising, but it seems to me that two lessons are needed here, one in geography and one in economics. The bottom line is that the Churchill Falls project represents \$200 billion for Quebec, and that is according to Hydro-Québec.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he sacrificed billions of dollars earmarked for culture by caving to pressure from the tech giants. In the fight against climate change, he has completely surrendered. He is not providing sufficient support for the aluminum and forestry sectors, yet when a pipeline is involved, there is \$40 billion available for oil, which is not even tariffed. The companies are owned by Americans. The profits go to the United States. Moreover, 95% of the oil is purchased by Americans. Pacific link is not a gateway to economic diversification. It is a pipeline for carrying Quebecers' money to western Canada and the United States.

Does he not realize that Quebecers' money should be used to develop Quebec, not to destroy the planet or benefit friends in financial circles?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Quebecers' and Canadians' money is going to be spent on developing Quebec. The Churchill Falls project and the port at Contrecoeur are two examples. High-speed rail, which the Bloc Québécois supported during the last election, is another example.

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[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the Prime Minister makes the excuse for being out of touch because he is not ever here—

The Speaker: No, that does not pass muster. I am warning the hon. Leader of the Opposition that if he does that again, we will have to deduct the question. He may start from the beginning.

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, maybe that is why he mis-spoke a moment ago. He claimed that home ownership costs have gone down to the low 40s as a percentage of disposable income. I just pulled up the numbers from the RBC affordability index, and it actually takes 53% of disposable income for the average family to make payments on the average home. That is the highest it has been, outside of this Liberal government, since 1990.

Will the Prime Minister stand up, correct himself and admit that a year and a half into his mandate, and 11 years into this Liberal government, Canadians cannot afford to own homes?

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that major players like RBC are observing improving housing affordability, brightening job prospects and stabilizing prices. Indeed, throughout the summer in Ontario, we saw that housing sales for new homes were up 130%. We have now seen across the country for 24 consecutive months that rents are coming down.

Our plan is working. We are investing in Build Canada Homes to build affordable housing from coast to coast to coast, with more than 19,000 units under way. We care about affordability, and we are delivering.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister makes a misstatement of facts, he cannot even stand up and correct himself or defend his remarks. Maybe we will do better on the issue of public safety.

The Liberal approach to drugs has killed 55,000 people with drug overdoses, and now a Liberal-appointed judge in British Columbia has ruled there is a constitutional right to sell illegal narcotics. This threatens to kill even more people.

Will the government announce today that it is appealing this outrageous ruling so that we can get drugs off our streets and keep our people safe?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada

Oral Questions

Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those who traffic in serious drugs that create serious harm are committing a crime, and that is the law in Canada today.

When it comes to the specific case the member mentioned, it is currently within the period for appeals, which are going to be determined by the independent Public Prosecution Service. As was the case under the previous Conservative government, there is respect on this side of the House for the independence of the legal system, including the independent public prosecutor. We are going to let them do their job, and I look forward to seeing them discharge their responsibilities with care.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people going through depression and mental health issues go through the darkest valleys. They need hope. Several years ago, the Liberal government legalized medical assistance in dying for people whose only condition is mental illness. Many people would not be with us today if that policy had been in place before.

The Conservative member of Parliament for Cloverdale—Langley City has put forward a bill to stop that from happening and protect the people who are most vulnerable.

Will the Prime Minister announce that he will vote for that bill today, for hope, for life and for a better future for the people suffering?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsor of the private member's bill for starting a conversation on a very important issue.

I am pleased to share with the Leader of the Opposition that just a few hours ago, I announced that Canada would be moving forward with the exclusion of medical assistance in dying for people who are seeking that on the sole basis of a mental illness. We are going to be moving forward legislation that we will put forward during this fall sitting to ensure that the law maintains that exclusion in an indeterminate way.

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THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2023, the Liberal finance minister said that he would stabilize grocery prices by Thanksgiving. He made the comment in September of that year. Since that time, food prices are up 10%. In fact, the cost of a Thanksgiving meal is up 10% in just one year under the Liberal Prime Minister.

Given that the finance minister promised stable and low grocery prices by Thanksgiving, I ask him now, which Thanksgiving?

Oral Questions

● (1440)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons from the Leader of the Opposition—

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order. I want to remind members that when noise levels exceed a certain threshold, they pose a health hazard to our interpreters, who are just here to help us understand each other better. I would ask members to pay attention to noise levels.

The hon. Minister of Finance.

[*English*]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I was just saying we will take no lessons from that leader. At every step of the way, since he has been on these benches, whenever we presented a motion to support Canadians, he voted against. Conservatives voted against the Canada child benefit. They voted against the national school food program. They voted against the Canada disability program. They voted against the Canada groceries and essentials benefit.

Canadians know we have their backs. We will always support families, always support Canadians, and every day is a good day to fight for Canadians.

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TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if only screaming, hollering and the minister's finger in the air could lower grocery prices by Thanksgiving, everyone would be eating for free, but in reality, they are paying more than ever. In fact, today, Canadians are paying 25¢ a litre more for diesel than the U.S. and global averages because of Liberal taxes, a weak Liberal dollar and Liberal laws that prevent us from refining diesel for every Canadian.

Will they vote today for our motion to get rid of all the taxes on diesel so that we can save Canadians money and bring home our jobs?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have some good news. Canadian diesel production is up 16% this year. More good news is that diesel prices have gone down three cents in the last several days. I have even more good news. If the member wants to actually help, he can vote for Bill C-38 and extend the excise tax exemption.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is good news? Three cents a litre is the good news he announces after prices are up 100% and have risen to the highest place anywhere in the world outside of the Prime Minister's beloved Europe. It is not good news to have three cents off.

We need to bring diesel prices down so that we can lower the cost of food, appliances and basic essentials. Everything that we have comes in a truck. Conservatives have a plan to lower the cost and repatriate the production. The Liberals can vote on it today.

Will they vote to save Canadians money?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that the Leader of the Opposition likes to talk, but now he will have a test. Will he walk the talk? Instead of presenting a motion to oppose, I have a suggestion for him and his entire bench. Why do they not vote for farmers? Why do they not vote for truckers? Why do they not vote for families? Why do they not vote for Canada one day? They could vote for Bill C-38 and extend the suspension of the fuel tax. That is an immediate measure that would help all of Canada.

Will they vote for Canada once and for all?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to vote to get all taxes off fuel until at least July 1, 2027, and get rid of the worst Liberal taxes on fuel forever. That would be the way to vote for farmers, for truckers and for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

We have a motion before the House of Commons today to reduce the price of diesel by at least 20¢ a litre, bring production back to Canada, supply our markets with our own energy and have a strategic reserve.

Will the Prime Minister vote to save Canadians money and be masters in our own house here in Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians watching at home know that the Leader of the Opposition likes to talk, talk, talk, but I have an idea for him.

Today, instead of talking, he can take action. He can take action to help farmers across the country. He can take action to help families across the country. He can take action to help truckers across the country. I have a great idea for him. Today, he even has a chance to show it to Canadians by voting in favour of Bill C-38 to extend the suspension of the federal gas legislation.

Will he vote in favour of Canadians for once?

* * *

HOUSING

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are more than 12,000 homeless people in Quebec. What was restricted to big cities now extends to all regions of Quebec. These are people who are suffering, who are hungry and who are at risk every day. They are dying, as we have sadly seen today. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois and no doubt all my colleagues in the House, I offer my deepest condolences to the loved ones of the woman who died.

Quebec's new government is making the fight against homelessness a national priority. Will the federal government follow suit?

• (1445)

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the question. This is an extremely important issue.

In Quebec and Canada, we are facing a homelessness crisis that we intend to tackle through bold and ambitious action. Our goal is to cut homelessness in half in this country. This is one of the issues on which our government intends to work closely with the Government of Quebec.

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear what the minister just said in response because the government is forcing massive bills down our throats, bills like C-5, C-15 and C-39 in the name of national interest.

The national interest seems to be a broad concept, but, in our view, funding ambitious measures to combat homelessness would truly be in the national interest. Some 12,000 unhoused people in Quebec are getting ready to spend the winter outside. The federal government transfers a few million dollars to Quebec to deal specifically with the encampment crisis.

Does the government think that is enough?

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that we have an ambitious plan. The homelessness crisis is a national crisis that we are taking seriously. We are in contact with the people on the ground, with the municipal and provincial authorities. That is why there is at least \$1 billion, at a minimum, in Build Canada Homes that will go toward transitional housing. Obviously we need the provinces to come to the table with support measures for mental health and addiction and all that.

We are at the table. We are there for Canadians.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have the oil, we have the workers and we have the capacity, yet Canadians pay 24¢ per litre more for diesel than Americans do. The government keeps talking about making Canada stronger, while making Canadian energy more expensive for Canadians. A country with the fourth-largest oil reserves in the world should not be paying a premium to fuel itself.

Will the Liberals vote for our Conservative motion to save Canadians money today, or will the Prime Minister keep making Canadians pay more?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can see through the cynicism on the other side of the aisle.

The federal government has already reduced the price of gasoline by 25¢ a litre. We are building new energy infrastructure across this country. Rather than talk down Canada, why do the Conservatives not help us build the right Canada for the future?

Oral Questions

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Thanksgiving, the same family dinner costs 10% more than it did just a year ago. When diesel goes up, everything goes up. Farmers pay more to grow the food, truckers pay more to move it and families pay more at the till.

The government says it wants to lower costs, but here is its chance. Will the Prime Minister vote for our emergency fuel relief plan today and drive costs down for families instead of giving empty promises and false prophecies?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the other side focuses on caucus revolts, image reboots and finding the leader yet another riding to run in, we are focused on affordability for Canadians. The groceries and essentials benefit will lift 77,000 Canadians out of poverty. On this side of the House, we are going to deliver affordability measures for Canadians. The Conservatives can continue to vote against each and every one of them.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the world's fourth-largest proven oil reserves, yet Canadian truckers pay 24¢ more per litre for diesel than Americans do and 31¢ more than the global average. Diesel prices have surged nearly 80% in the past year, driving up costs for truckers, farmers and families.

Our Conservative emergency fuel relief plan would cut diesel taxes today and refine more Canadian fuel here at home instead of relying on U.S. refineries. Will the Liberals support our Conservative plan to save Canadians money?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe the Conservative Party would join with us in pausing the federal excise fuel tax, which will save Canadians 10¢ a litre when they fill up at the pump. We also cut the consumer carbon tax, saving Canadians 18¢ a litre when they fill up at the pump. The leader has been in the House for 7,600 days. He has produced nothing for Canadians. We are focused on affordability.

• (1450)

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, hundreds of dump truck drivers hit the roads protesting the rising diesel prices. Diesel powers the trucks that move our goods, the equipment that builds our communities and the farms that put food on our tables. When diesel costs rise, Canadians pay more for everything.

Oral Questions

Today the Liberals have the opportunity to vote on a Conservative emergency fuel relief plan to cut all taxes on diesel until Canada Day and bring some relief during Thanksgiving. Will the Prime Minister listen to our truckers and finally give relief to Canadians?

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the ongoing global conflicts and supply chain disruptions, we are focused on what we can control: bringing down costs for Canadians so they can get ahead. By suspending the federal fuel excise, we reduced costs by 10¢ per litre on gasoline and four cents on diesel.

Lowering the price at the pump is one step to support Canadians, but let us also talk about the Canada groceries and essentials benefit that arrived in bank accounts this week, including in those of almost 1.5 million Canadians who live in British Columbia.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all of my colleagues on both sides of the House for their messages over the past few weeks. I would urge them to take care of themselves and their loved ones.

The situation facing our farmers is unsustainable. Nick Majeau, a farmer in Quebec, told us that his diesel bill has doubled this year, and he is not alone. In a country with the world's fourth-largest oil reserves, this is unacceptable.

The Conservatives' emergency relief plan would provide immediate tax relief and expedite approvals for energy infrastructure projects. For the past 11 years, the Liberal government has raised taxes and created more bureaucracy.

Will the Liberals finally vote in favour of our diesel motion and help our farmers?

Daniel Gobeil (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. Our government has always been there to protect workers, farmers and employees across all sectors of the economy.

That is precisely why we have introduced Bill C-38, which would suspend the tax on diesel and oil. I invite our colleagues opposite to support this legislation, which represents a first step toward making life more affordable for Canadians.

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recent global events have shown that Canadians cannot take secure supply chains for granted. In my riding of Guelph, we know all too well that food security is national security and that Canada's producers are an essential part of our food sovereignty and our national sovereignty. That is why investments in infrastructure that moves Canadian food from farm to market are so important.

Can the minister explain how the \$1 billion food-link fund will strengthen Canada's domestic food system, support Canadian producers and ensure that we are less vulnerable to global disruptions?

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, food security is national security. I thank the member for all her hard work in her riding.

We have an ambitious \$3.2-billion national food security strategy in play, the largest and, further, most invested in AFC's history. We have just announced a \$1-billion food link. We are investing in transportation, we are investing in storage and we are investing in distribution and market connections to strengthen the food supply chains to support our farmers and make them more sustainable and prosperous for years to come. This means more choice, more Canada and more control.

* * *

• (1455)

JUSTICE

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Shane Ertmoed took the life of Heather Aspin-Thomas, an innocent 10-year-old girl, for sexual gratification. He should never see the light of day, according to counsel for Heather's mom. Those are not my words.

Victims are tired of hearing that the parole board is independent. They want to know whether the Liberals will repeal the laws that the independent parole board enforces that allow someone such as Shane Ertmoed to leave jail to take cooking classes that Heather will never get to take.

I will look directly at the Prime Minister, who appears to be talking to somebody else. Will he commit—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I think we should maybe try to keep it a little less personal. The member may conclude, but I hope he does not do that again.

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, I will look directly at the Prime Minister and ask this: Will he commit to repealing Liberal parole so our children can remain safe?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the case that the member refers to is a horrible case, and my sympathies go out to the family.

As mentioned previously in the House, we are reviewing the act, and we are open to changes. However, I must remind all people viewing, and especially the Conservatives, that the act that currently exists to oversee these procedures was created by a Conservative government. The Corrections and Conditional Release Act is a Conservative act.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, wait until the Liberals find out who has been in charge the last 11 years. Imagine that.

Right now, we do not know whether Shane Ertmoed is out figuring out the difference between a béchamel sauce and a Béarnaise sauce, while Heather's family has to serve a psychological life sentence. The government gives empty words.

I will ask this for a third time: If the Prime Minister believes in the answer his minister just gave, will he rise in the House and agree to a meeting with Heather's family, yes or no?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member that we were in power this spring when we passed six pieces of criminal justice legislation on things such as hate, bail and safe spaces. Where was the member? Every time the roll was called, he sat in his place and opposed the law-and-order agenda of the new government in Canada.

We are the anti-crime party. We are the people taking the measures. The member should get up and support them.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Darren Scott Ray raped, tortured and murdered a 14-year-old boy, Darren Pepin, in Scarborough. He strangled this child to death and dumped his body in the garbage room of his apartment building. He was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. Today, many of Darren's young former classmates, who now call Oshawa and Durham region home, are in the very community where this killer was granted a 72-hour unescorted temporary absence.

When will the government fix broken Liberal parole and finally put victims and public safety first?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my thoughts are with Darren, his family and his community.

I will just assure my colleague opposite that we are working with victims, survivor groups and those representing families in order to strengthen our parole process. This is an issue, as I have indicated in the past, that requires collaboration among all the parties. This is not to be politicized.

It is important that we work together toward strengthening victims' rights. That is exactly what we did with Bill C-16 that passed this spring. It is the same thing we did with Bill C-14 on sentencing and bail reform.

• (1500)

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is an out-of-touch response from the minister. This is not an isolated case. This year alone, Canadians have watched multiple pedophile child killers who have received life sentences get unescorted temporary absences from prison, including two in B.C. within 10 days of each

other. Darren Scott Ray received a 72-hour unescorted temporary absence in Oshawa and has been promised two more.

Will the government finally act and fix broken Liberal parole—and it is broken Liberal parole because they voted against our bill that would have changed it—and ensure that pedophile child killers serving life sentences stay where they belong behind bars?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as mentioned before, we are open to reforms and are currently undergoing a review process. However, I must remind everyone that this is a Conservative act that we are undertaking a process to improve. Our government, for the last 18 months, has been reforming the Criminal Code of Canada to modernize it and to make sure that criminals stay behind bars.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were shocked to learn that, under the Liberals, federal prisons are handing out paper straws for inmates to snort cocaine with. That is right; there are taxpayer-funded paper straws behind prison walls. The Liberals are literally helping inmates do dangerous drugs, which will make them even more dangerous when they come out of jail. I know they have no use for paper—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It is getting a bit loud. I could not hear the hon. member.

The hon. member for Oxford may continue.

Arpan Khanna: Mr. Speaker, I know the Liberals are looking for a new use for their paper straws, but this is insane.

Will the member end this today?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned by the distribution of these items in federal penitentiaries. Correctional Service Canada is an independent agency and follows its own established guidelines and frameworks. I have been made aware that, following discussions with employees and labour partners, Correctional Service Canada has decided to pause the implementation of these additional measures.

Our government will always work to protect Canadians and correctional staff and combat the flow of illicit drugs, including in federal penitentiaries.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first the minister approves it, then he gets caught and now he says they have paused it. Under the Liberals, convicted child killers are getting released for cooking classes, and now we have these guys handing out paper straws to prisoners to snort coke. The system is a complete joke. Our streets, our parks and our downtown areas are being destroyed by drugs and disorder. There should be zero tolerance for illegal drugs in our streets and in prison.

Will the minister stand up today and finally end it completely, yes or no?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe I have answered this question, but let me just address the second issue that came up.

I want to take a moment to remember Heather Thomas, who was 10 years old when she was killed. My thoughts are with the family of the loved one.

I understand that the Parole Board has decided to postpone the decision that my friend opposite is referring to.

Our government is committed to strengthening our criminal justice system and protecting victims' rights. That is what we will continue to do. We are looking for collaboration from the other side in order to make constructive criminal justice reforms.

* * *

• (1505)

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the government is serious about strengthening protections, maybe it should actually do it.

Waterloo region had 70 overdoses in four days. This is not just a public health issue. This is a humanitarian crisis. Our Conservative plan will keep communities safe.

How many more lives need to be lost? How many more families torn apart before this government finally reacts? When will this government reverse course, admit that its policies are failures and start focusing on recovery, rehabilitation and treatment?

[Translation]

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question because the issue of addiction is very important.

I can tell her that I am working closely with all the provinces and territories—including her own province, Ontario—to ensure we provide the best possible support to people in distress. The provinces obviously have a say in the matter, and I am ready to work with them.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, federal corrections officers face assaults, makeshift weapons and drug overdoses on a daily basis, yet since

October 1, patrol posts and other essential resources have been cut, endangering the safety and even the lives of penitentiary staff.

The Minister of Public Safety visited Donnacona Institution and, rather than meeting with officers who are risking their lives, he chose to ask inmates if they were comfortable.

Will this Liberal minister understand that his responsibility is also to protect the people who work in our prisons before coddling violent criminals?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where this member is contriving these allegations, but let me be very clear. At every single correctional facility I visit, and I have visited a number of them, we have the union as part of our tours. I very much engage with, and I am very grateful for, the frontline staff who put their lives on the front lines each and every day to protect Canadians. I will continue to work with the union as well as those who are serving on the front lines in order to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the minister visits the same places I do.

I have been to Donnacona twice. My colleagues have visited the prisons in La Macaza and Drummond. We have seen what is going on in federal prisons, and it is a total disaster. For the past 10 years, ever since this government introduced their changes, working in these facilities is nothing short of hell. Prisoners have all the rights and face no consequences since Bill C-83 came into force. Now, there are cuts to frontline resources, patrols and officers in key areas. It is not working.

Has the minister visited the same prisons as I have, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the safest correctional facilities anywhere in the world. Our frontline officers work hard day in and day out to protect Canadians. The allegations that this gentleman is making are quite out of line.

I will say that each and every day we will continue to support Canadians. Their safety and security is paramount to us. The conditions of correctional facilities, including those of these hard-working men and women, are also super important to us, and we will always be there to defend them.

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the launch of the Defence Investment Agency, we have taken an unprecedented step. Among other things, we announced our plans to acquire six GlobalEye aircraft and a nearly \$2-billion partnership between General Dynamics Land Systems and Canada for 190 armoured vehicles.

How will Bill C-40 support this progress?

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

In a world that is more divided and dangerous than ever, it is truly vital to give the Canadian Armed Forces the equipment they need to protect us. This has to happen quickly.

That is why I am so proud that we introduced Bill C-40, the strengthening Canada's defence sector act, to bring procurement and investment together. The goal is to act more quickly, ensure that there are economic benefits for Canadians and have more direct, modern business practices. That is what we need to help strengthen our domestic production, meet the needs of the armed forces and support good jobs across the country.

• (1510)

[English]

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to build Canadian and buy Canadian. Now, LNG Canada phase two is a massive private sector investment, but the inputs for the facility portion are not coming from Canada. Canadian steel fabricators say that they have the capacity to supply significant portions of this project, but they were not consulted.

Before billions of dollars of fabrication went overseas, did anyone in the Liberal government actually ask Canadian industry stakeholders what they could build here at home?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the modules that he is referring to are not made in Canada because there is no steel that can make those modules in Canada. All of the steel, the 15,000 tonnes that are going to go with the pipeline, is going to be made in Canada, along with the 6,100 jobs and the \$50 billion in royalties for Canada. Instead of talking down a project that builds Canada, maybe they should support us in helping to build Canada.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was not the question. Canadian steel and pipelines do not answer why Canadian companies were not consulted about the fabrication of the LNG facility itself. It is out of touch to point to steel used somewhere else in the project while ignoring Canadian fabricators who say that they can have a substantial portion of this work completed here in Canada. The Prime Minister talks about “buy Canadian”, but Canadian companies apparently were not even consulted.

Oral Questions

Therefore, who determined Canadian industry could not complete the work? Was it LNG Canada, the Liberal government or nobody because no one even bothered to ask?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those are nice comments, but they are completely inaccurate. We actually talked to people at the steel companies, and they said they cannot service those orders. They asked us to make sure the rest of the steel was bought in Canada, and it will be bought in Canada.

The Conservatives are talking down projects that create 6,100 jobs. They are talking down a project that creates \$50 billion to pay for health care, to pay for dental care, to pay for schools and roads. Why do you not stop talking down Canada, and start trying to—

The Speaker: Speak through the Chair, please. I want to remind members to always go through the Chair.

The hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister tells Canadians to buy Canadian, but government contracts to American companies have increased by 50% since he took office. Now, LNG Canada plans to use foreign steel for its expansion, while Canadian steel companies say they can do the work. Canadian steelworkers need jobs. The Liberals give slogans, all talk and no results. Conservatives are fighting for lumber workers. Conservatives are fighting for auto workers. Conservatives will continue to fight for the steelworkers of Canada. When will this Prime Minister?

The Speaker: I just want to highlight again that when we bang on a desk, it can hurt the ears of the interpreter. I have done it. I will admit that in the past I have gotten passionate giving speeches and I banged my desk and I was told what the consequence could be. Let us be careful about that.

The hon. Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation.

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, instead of talking down the country and instead of talking down projects, they have to build it up. This pipeline is going to provide tens of thousands of jobs and Canadian steel. We are talking about supporting jobs in Hamilton in steel.

Why do the hon. members not support Hooper Welding in Hamilton, which employs 100 people? They are making steel. In Peterborough, Kawartha Metals employs 60 people. They are supplying metal. In Windsor, there is Central Stampings.

We are supporting the companies making steel because we believe in building in Canada, buying in Canada and believing in Canada.

*Routine Proceedings***SENIORS**

Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 1, we marked National Seniors Day, an opportunity to celebrate older Canadians and recognize the tremendous contributions they make to Canada and our communities. Can the Secretary of State for Seniors tell the House how the federal government is supporting older Canadians so they can age with dignity?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her hard work and for being a strong and consistent advocate for seniors across Canada.

In the more than a year that I have been serving in this position as Secretary of State for Seniors, I have had the privilege of meeting inspiring seniors across this country and I have learned about the challenges and opportunities that come with aging. From the \$50 million of investments every year through the new horizons for seniors program to the groceries and essentials tax benefit to delivering Canada's national anti-fraud strategy, our government is committed to helping seniors live healthy, active and happy lives.

* * *

• (1515)

JUSTICE

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Liberals are taking a cynical gamble with vulnerable Canadians' lives, asking Parliament to reject Bill C-218 for a phantom bill that has not even been written. They are playing political games at a time when lives are in the balance.

The study was done. The broad consensus is there. The bill is tabled. Every minute we waste on an unwritten bill brings us closer to the deadline. Rejecting protection already before Parliament is reckless, and Canadians could pay with their lives.

Will the Liberals do the right thing, work with us and support Bill C-218 today?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her work to advance an important conversation when it comes to mental illness as the sole underlying mental condition that would justify medical assistance in dying in this country. This is a serious conversation.

However, I would like to point out one inaccuracy in her question that is very important. Today, there is no access to medical assistance in dying because it is excluded in the Criminal Code. Before that exclusion expires in March next year, we will advance and adopt legislation to, in an indeterminate way, continue the exclusion of access to medical assistance in dying when it comes to mental illness as the sole condition that would justify its use.

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LABOUR

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two blocks from this chamber, the Bank of Canada's security officers have been on strike for over three months. Shockingly, the bank has twice been caught breaking federal anti-scab laws. It even brought

in Pinkerton, a contractor with a notorious history of violent strike-breaking.

The Prime Minister built his reputation as the governor of the Bank of Canada. He is now silent while it repeatedly violates workers' rights.

The Prime Minister claims to defend Canadian workers. Why will he not stand up for these workers and condemn this corporate law-breaking?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-58, which came into force on June 20, 2025, amended the Canada Labour Code by prohibiting the use of replacement workers during a strike. We expect all federally regulated employers, including Crown corporations, to abide by labour standards as set out in the Labour Code.

If a union or an employee believes an employer is illegally using replacement workers, they can file a complaint with the Canada Industrial Relations Board. I will note that the CIRB is an independent, quasi-judicial body and tribunal. Any complaints made to the CIRB will be dealt with as the CIRB deems appropriate.

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PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the hon. Eric Schmalz, Minister of Government Relations, Minister of Immigration and Career Training and Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs for the Province of Saskatchewan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**HEALTH**

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:19 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

[Translation]

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

*Routine Proceedings**(Division No. 175)*

YEAS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Auguste	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Begum	Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Bendayan	Bittle
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blois	Bonin
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Caley	Carney
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Chang
Chartrand	Chatel
Chenette	Chi
Church	Clark
Connors	Cormier
Dabrusin	Dandurand
Danko	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
DeBellefeuille	d'Entremont
Deschênes	Deschênes-Thériault
Desrochers	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Earle
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Eyolfson	Fancy
Fanjoy	Fergus
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Fuhr	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Gasparro	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Gladu
Gobeil	Gould
Grant	Greaves
Guay	Gull-Masty
Hajdu	Hanley
Harrison	Hepfner
Hirtle	Hodgson
Hogan	Housefather
Hussen	Iacono
Idlout	Jaczek
Jeneroux	Johns
Joly	Joseph
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Klassen
Koutrakis	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lapointe (Sudbury)	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lavack	Lavoie
LeBlanc	Leitão
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacDonald (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)	Maloney
Martin	May
McGuinty	McKelvie

McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McKnight
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	McPherson
Ménard	Mendès
Michel	Miedema
Miller	Mingarelli
Morrissey	Myles
Naqvi	Nathan
Nguyen	Noormohamed
Normandin	Ntumba
Olszewski	O'Rourke
Osborne	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Provost
Ramsay	Rana
Robertson	Rochefort
Romanado	Royer
Sahota	Saini
Sarai	Sari
Sawatzky	Schiefke
Sgro	Shahnawaz
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sodhi	Solomon
Sousa	Ste-Marie
St-Pierre	Sudds
Tesser Derksen	Thériault
Thompson	Turnbull
Valdez	van Koeverden
Vandenbeld	Villeneuve
Watchorn	Weiler
Yip	Zahid
Zerucelli	Zuberi— 196

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Block
Bonk	Borrelli
Bragdon	Brassard
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Deltell	DeRidder
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Falk (Provencher)	Gallant
Genuis	Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Gill (Windsor West)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Groleau	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Hardy	Ho
Hoback	Holman
Jackson	Jansen
Jivani	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmieć
Konanz	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis

Business of Supply

Kuruc	Lake	Anderson	Anstey
Lantsman	Lawrence	Arnold	Au
Lawton	Lefebvre	Baber	Bailey
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)	Baldinelli	Barlow
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd	Barrett	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Lobb	Mahal	Berthold	Bexte
Majumdar	Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Bezan	Block
Mantle	Mazier	Bonk	Borrelli
McCauley	McKenzie	Bragdon	Brassard
Melillo	Menegakis	Calkins	Caputo
Moore	Morin	Chambers	Chong
Morrison	Motz	Cobena	Cody
Muys	Nater	Cooper	Dalton
Patzer	Paul-Hus	Dancho	Davidson
Poilievre	Redekopp	Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Reid	Reynolds	Deltell	DeRidder
Richards	Roberts	Diotte	Doherty
Rood	Ross	Dowdall	Duncan
Rowe	Ruff	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Scheer	Schmale	Falk (Provencher)	Gallant
Seeback	Shipley	Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Small	Steinley	Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Stevenson	Strahl	Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Strauss	Stubbs	Godin	Goodridge
Thomas	Tochor	Gourde	Groleau
Tolmie	Uppal	Guglielmin	Gunn
Van Popta	Vien	Hallan	Hardy
Viersen	Vis	Ho	Hoback
Warkentin	Waugh	Holman	Jackson
Williamson	Zimmer— 132	Jansen	Jivani

PAIRED

Members

Coteau	Fry
Kusie	McLean (Calgary Centre)
Oliphant	Rempel Garner— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—DIESEL PRICES

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Long Range Mountains relating to the business of supply.

The questions is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (1545)

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

(Division No. 176)

YEAS

Members

Aboulttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison

Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Block
Bonk	Borrelli
Bragdon	Brassard
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Deltell	DeRidder
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Falk (Provencher)	Gallant
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Groleau
Guglielmin	Gunn
Hallan	Hardy
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Jivani
Kelly	Khanna
Kibble	Kirkland
Kmiec	Konanz
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kronis	Kuruc
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lawton
Lefebvre	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Mahal	Majumdar
Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
Mazier	McCauley
McKenzie	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morin	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Reynolds	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ross	Rowe
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shipley	Small
Steinley	Stevenson
Strahl	Strauss
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Warkentin
Waugh	Williamson
Zimmer— 133	

NAYS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree

Auguste
 Baker
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beaulieu
 Begum
 Bendayan
 Blanchet
 Blois
 Brière
 Caley
 Carr
 Chagger
 Champoux
 Chartrand
 Chenette
 Church
 Connors
 Dabrusin
 Danko
 DeBellefeuille
 Deschênes
 Desrochers
 Dhillon
 Duclos
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Eyolfson
 Fanjoy
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Fuhr
 Gaaney
 Gasparro
 Gazan
 Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
 Gobeil
 Grant
 Guay
 Hajdu
 Harrison
 Hirtle
 Hogan
 Hussen
 Idlout
 Jeneroux
 Joly
 Kayabaga
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Lalonde
 Lamoureux
 Lapointe (Sudbury)
 Lattanzio
 Lavack
 LeBlanc
 Lemire
 Long
 Ma
 MacDonald (Cardigan)
 Malette (Bay of Quinte)
 Martin
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
 Ménard
 Michel
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Naqvi
 Nguyen
 Bains
 Bardeesy
 Battiste
 Beech
 Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
 Bittle
 Blanchette-Joncas
 Bonin
 Brunelle-Duceppe
 Carney
 Casey
 Champagne
 Chang
 Chatel
 Chi
 Clark
 Cormier
 Dandurand
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 d'Entremont
 Deschênes-Thériault
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Duguid
 Earle
 El-Khoury
 Fancy
 Fergus
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser
 Gaheer
 Garon
 Gaudreau
 Gerretsen
 Gladu
 Gould
 Greaves
 Gull-Masty
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Hodgson
 Housefather
 Iacono
 Jaczek
 Johns
 Joseph
 Kelloway
 Klassen
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
 Larouche
 Lauzon
 Lavoie
 Leitão
 Lightbound
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Maloney
 May
 McKelvie
 McKnight
 McPherson
 Mendès
 Miedema
 Mingarelli
 Myles
 Nathan
 Noormohamed

Private Members' Business

Normandin
 Olszewski
 Osborne
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Ramsay
 Robertson
 Romanado
 Sahota
 Sarai
 Sawatzky
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sodhi
 Sousa
 St-Pierre
 Tesser Derksen
 Thompson
 Valdez
 Vandenbeld
 Watchorn
 Yip
 Zerucelli
 Ntumba
 O'Rourke
 Perron
 Plamondon
 Provost
 Rana
 Rochefort
 Royer
 Saini
 Sari
 Schiefke
 Shah Nawaz
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Solomon
 Ste-Marie
 Sudds
 Thériault
 Turnbull
 van Koevorden
 Villeneuve
 Weiler
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 196

PAIRED

Members

Coteau
 Kusie
 Oliphant
 Fry
 McLean (Calgary Centre)
 Rempel Garner— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from September 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-218, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-218 under Private Members' Business.

● (1600)

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

(Division No. 177)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albas
 Anderson
 Arnold
 Baber
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Berthold
 Bezan
 Bonk
 Bragdon
 Calkins
 Aitchison
 Allison
 Anstey
 Au
 Bailey
 Barlow
 Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
 Bexte
 Block
 Borrelli
 Brassard
 Caputo

Private Members' Business

Chambers	Chong	Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Cobena	Cody	Blois	Bonin
Cooper	Dalton	Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Dancho	Davidson	Caley	Carney
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Niagara South)	Carr	Casey
Dawson	Deltell	Chagger	Champagne
DeRidder	Diotte	Champoux	Chang
Doherty	Dowdall	Chartrand	Chatel
Duncan	Epp	Chenette	Chi
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)	Church	Clark
Gallant	Gazan	Connors	Cormier
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Dabrusin	Dandurand
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Danko	DeBellefeuille
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	d'Entremont	Deschênes
Gladu	Godin	Deschênes-Thériault	Desrochers
Goodridge	Gourde	Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Groleau	Guglielmin	Diab	Duclos
Gunn	Hallan	Duguid	Dzerowicz
Hardy	Ho	Earle	Ehsassi
Hoback	Holman	El-Khoury	Eyolfson
Jackson	Jansen	Fancy	Fanjoy
Jivani	Johns	Fergus	Fisher
Kelly	Khanna	Fonseca	Fortier
Kibble	Kirkland	Fortin	Fragiskatos
Kmiec	Konanz	Fraser	Fuhr
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Gaheer	Gainey
Kronis	Kuruc	Garon	Gasparro
Kwan	Lake	Gaudreau	Gerretsen
Lantsman	Lawrence	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Gobeil
Lawton	Lefebvre	Gould	Grant
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)	Greaves	Guay
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd	Gull-Masty	Hajdu
Lobb	MacDonald (Cardigan)	Hanley	Harrison
Mahal	Majumdar	Hepfner	Hirtle
Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle	Hodgson	Hogan
May	Mazier	Housefather	Hussen
McCauley	McKenzie	Iacono	Idlout
McPherson	Melillo	Jaczek	Jeneroux
Menegakis	Moore	Joly	Joseph
Morin	Morrison	Kayabaga	Kelloway
Motz	Muys	Khalid	Klassen
Nater	Patzer	Koutrakis	Lalonde
Paul-Hus	Poilievre	Lamoureux	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Redekopp	Reid	Lapointe (Sudbury)	Larouche
Reynolds	Richards	Lattanzio	Lauzon
Roberts	Rood	Lavack	Lavoie
Ross	Rowe	LeBlanc	Leitão
Ruff	Scheer	Lemire	Lightbound
Schmale	Seeback	Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Shipley	Small	Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Steinley	Stevenson	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Strahl	Strauss	Maloney	Martin
Stubbs	Thomas	McGuinty	McKelvie
Tochor	Tolmie	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McKnight
Uppal	Van Popta	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)	Ménard
Vien	Viersen	Mendès	Michel
Vis	Warkentin	Miedema	Miller
Waugh	Williamson	Mingarelli	Morrissey
Zimmer— 141		Myles	Naqvi

NAYS

Members

Acan	Al Soud	O'Rourke	Osborne
Ali	Alty	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Anand	Anandasangaree	Plamondon	Powlowski
Auguste	Bains	Provost	Ramsay
Baker	Bardeesy	Rana	Robertson
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Rocheffort	Romanado
Beaulieu	Beech	Royer	Sahota
Begum	Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)	Saini	Sarai
Bendayan	Bittle	Sari	Sawatzky
		Schiefke	Sgro

Shahnawaz
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Solomon
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Thériault
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi— 187

Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sodhi
Sousa
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Thompson
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Watchorn
Yip
Zerucelli

PAIRED

Members

Coteau
Kusie
Oliphant

Fry
McLean (Calgary Centre)
Rempel Garner— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[Translation]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 43 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1605)

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, reports of the Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for the following three activities.

The first is the 74th Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments, held in London, United Kingdom, from March 9 to March 13, 2026.

The second is the Joint Public Accounts Committee of Belize capacity-building workshop, held in Belmopan, Belize, from July 27 to July 29, 2026.

[Translation]

The third is the report on the bilateral visit to Mozambique and Botswana, held in Maputo, Mozambique, and Gaborone, Botswana, from March 15 to 21.

The delegation would like to express its deepest appreciation to the folks at Global Affairs Canada and the Canadian mission staff in Mozambique and Botswana for their support and for the outstanding hospitality they provided throughout the visit. The delegation would also like to extend a special thanks to His Excellency Anderson Blanc, High Commissioner of Canada in Mozambique, and His Excellency Adler Aristilde, High Commissioner of Canada in Botswana. Their knowledge, advice and dedication were instrumental to the success of the mission.

Routine Proceedings

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology in relation to Bill C-268, an act respecting the spectrum policy framework for Canada.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 113, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 34th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of the legislative committee for Bill C-39, an act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 113(1), the report is deemed adopted.

Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 35th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 35th report later this day.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, entitled “Strengthening Canada’s Resilience on the Critical Mineral Front”.

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

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative members of the committee are going to provide a supplemental opinion to go with that report. As we heard throughout this study, the message that was conveyed to the community is that there has to be reliable access to critical minerals. It is vital to maintaining military readiness and sustaining technological superiority. Witnesses stated over and over again that the dependence on the People’s Republic of China has exposed our vulnerabilities and highlighted the importance of having secure and resilient critical mineral supply chains.

We have added a number of recommendations in our supplemental opinion. I encourage everyone to read it so they understand how important critical minerals are to our overall defence procurement and defence capabilities. We must ensure that we have control over critical minerals, including by having resilience in the supply chain and having stockpiles of critical minerals and energy.

Routine Proceedings

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it being later this day, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 35th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

● (1610)

[Translation]

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)

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME

Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition on behalf of many Yukoners calling on the federal government to work with the Government of Prince Edward Island to develop and implement a guaranteed basic income demonstration project. For Yukoners, there is a particular interest in this project, given the higher cost of living in the north. The petitioners believe a well-designed demonstration project could provide valuable evidence to help inform future policy discussions aimed at reducing poverty and improving economic security across Canada.

I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting three petitions with the same wording, which read as follows:

Whereas Canada Post and the governing Liberals are taking an axe to long-treasured postal services—eliminating good jobs, eliminating door-to-door delivery, lowering mail delivery standards, and removing the moratorium preventing the closure of rural post offices.

Whereas Canada Post has submitted its plan for these cuts to the Government, but it has not been released publicly.

Whereas these cuts will hurt seniors and disabled Canadians in particular, who represent over 40% of the population, as well as rural, remote and indigenous communities, four million households will also lose door-to-door delivery over the next three to five years, and thousands of workers will lose their jobs.

Whereas the Government of Canada has instructed Canada Post to cut services based on an Industrial Inquiry Commission report produced with limited input from the public, its main stakeholder, and which rejected service expansion recommendations of those who did participate, and;

Whereas Canada Post offers a public service that needs to be protected.

Therefore we, the undersigned, citizens and residents of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to stop the postal service cuts, and to immediately launch a fully transparent public mandate review of Canada Post that allows all stakeholders to provide meaningful input.

The Speaker: I would remind members that the idea is to summarize the petition, not to read the entire text.

[English]

The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition on behalf of Canadians who are concerned about the rising rate of crime in Saskatchewan.

The petitioners believe these rising crime rates put Canadians at risk and pose a formidable threat to public safety, community well-being and economic prosperity. They also believe local businesses should not have to suffer the financial and economic consequences of the government's lack of action in addressing crime.

As such, the petitioners ask all members of Parliament to repeal policies that have failed to effectively discourage criminal activity and protect public safety, and they call upon the federal government to deliver a detailed plan specifically addressing the rising rate of crime in rural Canada.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition on behalf of my recently retired colleague, Larry Brock, signed by the great residents of Brantford—Brant South and people across western Ontario.

The petitioners are raising the alarm over the planned expansion of medical assistance in dying, or MAID, to all Canadians diagnosed with any mental illness, starting on March 17, 2027. This June, the Special Joint Committee on MAID released its report, urgently recommending that the government immediately pause the expansion of MAID and exclude people suffering from a mental illness from accessing MAID. Even the Liberal chair of the committee said only elected parliamentarians should debate and decide this significant moral question, as they are held accountable to their constituents.

Mr. Brock's petition calls on the government to immediately suspend the expansion of MAID scheduled for March 17, 2027, as recommended by the joint committee and allow Parliament to do its job by voting in favour of Bill C-218, which would exclude persons suffering from mental illness alone from receiving MAID.

● (1615)

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of many Guelph residents, highlighting the important role Canada Post plays in communities across our country. The petitioners are calling on the government to continue supporting a strong, reliable and accessible postal service and to ensure that Canada Post can continue serving Canadians well into the future.

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.

Today, I rise to present a petition asking for federal funding for the fast-tracking and rebuilding of the Red Bridge, which is a very important monument of significance to the people of Tkemlúps te Secwépemc and Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola. I stand with the good people of Kamloops.

This is my third time presenting such a petition.

SEPSIS CARE

Hon. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to present petition e-7386, which over 2,100 Canadians signed.

This petition comes out of the tragic death of Finlay van der Werken, a 16-year-old from Burlington who died waiting over eight hours in an Oakville hospital. His death demonstrates systemic failures that are occurring nationwide as a result of not having national standards when it comes to sepsis care.

Finlay's family is turning tragedy into action and has moved this petition forward. They are calling on the government and the Minister of Health to strengthen federal oversight of the Canada Health Act, tie health transfer funding to enforceable national standards for pediatric emergency care in sepsis treatment and require transparent reporting and compliance to ensure timely, life-saving care for all Canadians.

Over 18,000 Canadians die every year from sepsis. We can do better.

CANADA POST CORPORATION

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

The first one is with regard to the post office in Mission, British Columbia, at 33191 First Avenue. Residents of Mission are concerned about the oversight of Canada Post, its management and the ineffectiveness of that management. Petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to work with our community to maintain full operations of the Canada Post location, which they note is the only representation of the federal government, save for the penitentiary, in our community.

FLOOD SECURITY

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present today is with regard to the West Coast Corridor Resiliency Partnership. This is an agreement between Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Hope, Merritt and Princeton, calling for stronger, more resilient infrastructure along western Canada's critical trade corridors.

The petitioners note that the 2021 floods, which they have still not received any funding for from the federal government, despite many promises, outlined the critical deficiencies in our infrastructure. If Canada is to actually meet its export objectives, some of the issues that need to be addressed in this corridor need to be fixed in order for Canada to meet those objectives.

Routine Proceedings

EMERGENCY ROOMS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and table a petition that recognizes the \$5 billion committed over three years by the Government of Canada to build on our health infrastructure.

The petitioners are asking for the federal government to make sure that we allocate money toward re-establishing emergency services over at the Seven Oaks General Hospital. It is a very important issue for my local constituents. They are asking the federal government to make sure that they get an allocated portion so that they can get those emergency services restored.

PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce three petitions.

The first is petition e-7227, on pensions for injured workers. I rise to point out to the House that the petitioners note that when federal government employees experience severe or prolonged disability caused by a recognized occupational injury, they face financial disadvantages, including the loss of pension entitlements. While the Government Employees Compensation Act provides some compensation, the Public Service Superannuation Act does not protect these workers' pensions.

As such, these petitioners call on the Government of Canada to amend the Public Service Superannuation Act to ensure that a recognized workplace injury causing disability does not result in the loss of a pension.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is identical to many previous petitions introduced in the House over the years that express concern about the welfare of live horses exported for the purpose of slaughter. These horses often endure long journeys and inhumane conditions, and the federal government has no ability to ensure animal welfare in the importing country.

The Government of Canada must take preventative measures to combat the undue suffering of animals. In light of the Minister of Agriculture's official response, in which he does not commit to ban this practice, the petitioners reiterate their calls to amend the health of animals regulations to ban the export of live horses for slaughter.

● (1620)

SEVERANCE PAY

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, finally, the third petition notes that when federally regulated workers are terminated without cause, their pay in lieu of notice of termination, as well as their severance pay, is inadequate, particularly for those who have served for many years. The petitioners point out that under common law, workers are entitled to significantly more severance pay, but almost all employers will only provide the minimum amount required by the Canada Labour Code.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call on this House to increase the statutory maximum pay in lieu of notice of termination and introduce penalties for companies that routinely underpay owed severance.

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petition e-7344 concerning passenger rail service in the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé regions. The petitioners are calling for the restoration of a daily, reliable and accessible passenger rail service, schedules that would allow trains to stop at stations in the region at reasonable hours, and measures to improve the punctuality and reliability of the service.

I also seek the unanimous consent of the House to table resolutions adopted by 80 municipalities and four regional county municipalities in the Lower St. Lawrence region in support of this petition.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am also presenting petition e-7603, which concerns the democratic process. The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to recognize the Quebec people's right to self-determination and to freely choose their political status. They also call for a referendum option to be deemed successful if it receives 50% of all valid votes cast, plus one vote. Finally, they call for the release of the documents relating to expenditures incurred by the “No” campaign during the 1995 Quebec referendum.

[English]

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dozens of my constituents, through my constituent Henry, provided me with this petition and asked me to present it on behalf of residents and citizens calling upon the House of Commons to support Bill C-218. They raise the point that Canadians with mental illness should be provided with treatment and support. Mental illness is complex and can include suicidal thoughts as a symptom.

Several constituents have since recognized the AMAD report, but wanted me to present this. With that, I present this petition on behalf of constituents of the riding of Waterloo.

SPORTS BETTING ADVERTISING

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also received a petition from Robert with regard to the passage of Bill S-211. The petitioners are concerned about the proliferation of gambling advertisements. They recognize that many studies have now come out to show the increase in problem gambling among young men in this country.

The petitioners are calling upon the assembled House of Commons to enact a national framework to regulate sports gambling advertisements.

With that, I present this petition on behalf of constituents, not from Waterloo, but from the Toronto area. I said I would present it, and I am here to do so.

MENTAL HEALTH

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this petition is very timely, given that Saturday is World Mental Health Day.

These petitioners highlight that mental health is health, yet too many people in Canada cannot access appropriate and timely mental health addictions and substance use care. They highlight that mental illness is a leading cause of disability and imposes enormous human, social and economic costs, including lost productivity and lives lost.

Canada's first national mental health strategy called for mental health spending to reach at least 9% of total health spending, while mental health advocates now call for a 12% target to address the growing needs. Only 6.3% of health care spending in Canada is directed to mental health.

The petitioners are calling on the federal government to ensure that the \$5-billion federal commitment for mental health services announced in 2017, which is set to expire in 2027, be renewed.

M-31, on spending for mental health services, calls on the federal government to establish a national target of 12% of total health care spending for mental health services, and the petitioners ask the government to work with the provinces and territories to achieve that. Canada's premiers have called on the federal government to renew these expiring health funding agreements. The petitioners want them to be renewed and increased, and they want dedicated, long-term, predictable funding for mental health addictions and substance use services beyond March 2027.

The petitioners call on the government to implement the objective of M-31 by establishing that national target of 12% of total health care spending for mental health services and ensuring that transparent public reporting on mental health funding access and outcomes is embedded in it.

● (1625)

The Speaker: Unfortunately, the time for petitions has elapsed.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, may I have unanimous consent to present a petition?

The Speaker: Is there consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The hon. member may proceed.

TAXATION

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues.

I present a petition on behalf of petitioners within my community. They note that during COVID, the use of virtual services became more common, particularly for people in the disabilities community. What has happened since is that the existing criteria for tax exemption for supports for people in the disability community have not been extended to these virtual services. There is a tax unfairness that should be remedied.

Petitioners ask that the Government of Canada please establish a new standard for tax exemptions to enable organizations to offer tax-free virtual support services and programs to disabled Canadians and increase their access to these services and supports in their daily lives.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

ELECTORAL INTEGRITY AND THE ALBERTA REFERENDUM

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

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again, I urge you, I implore you, to consider my request for an emergency debate within the House of Commons.

There are new revelations today that warrant this request. The Alberta referendum is quickly devolving into a crisis on multiple fronts. The integrity of the elections process is in question. Foreign interference in our democracy, allegations of illegal collusion by separatists and a potential national unity crisis are looming on the horizon. This is happening right now.

Speaker's Ruling

This morning The Canadian Press revealed that with less than two weeks to go until Alberta's referendum, more than 3,000 mail-in ballots have been returned with errors that make them invalid.

We have been warning for months that Elections Alberta is underfunded and does not have the needed staff to process ballot packages or to count the votes. The new, complicated voting process introduced by Danielle Smith's government has created enormous accessibility barriers to voters.

This is a scandal, and this is on top of the reports this weekend detailing the extent of collaboration between Alberta separatists and Republican operatives in the United States. This is not a provincial matter. It is a very serious threat to Canada's democracy and national unity.

The Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner, Diane McLeod, called the leak of Alberta's private data "the worst [data] breach in Canadian history" and said her office was flooded with calls and emails from Albertans concerned for their safety.

My constituency office has been inundated with calls from Albertans concerned about the process, including seniors who have learned there are no polling stations inside seniors residences, which means many seniors in Alberta will not be able to vote because they cannot wait hours in line.

Alberta's referendum is failing every single democratic test we have.

Today's news raises serious questions. Can Albertans trust that their votes will be counted? Can they trust that the process and the outcomes have not been influenced by foreign actors? Parliamentarians need the opportunity to ask the federal government what it is doing to ensure the electoral integrity of this.

As a member of an unrecognized party, I do not have the ability to raise these issues in committee. This is my only opportunity to ask questions of the government regarding its responses. The Alberta civilians, the Canadian citizens, I represent deserve those answers.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking you today to let us ask the important questions and demand transparency and security from the federal government as Albertans question whether their votes are safe, whether their data is safe and whether we are headed to a national unity crisis.

● (1630)

SPEAKER'S RULING

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

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[Translation]***BUILDING CANADA STRONG ACT**

The House resumed from October 6 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.

Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. It contains important legislative changes that are part of our government's effort to protect Canada's economic future by reducing red tape across the supply chain, including in transportation.

Last year, our government passed the Building Canada Act, which dramatically expedited projects of national interest, removed internal trade barriers and ensured labour mobility. Over the past few months, we have worked diligently to ensure that the review of all projects, not just those previously covered by Bill C-5, will be approve within a time frame that meets Canadians' expectations. They expect their government to be efficient, and Bill C-39 gives them a reasonable one-year timeline. A year to get a project approved is plenty.

These days, with our economy facing headwinds, we have to be efficient. We want to streamline government procedures and ensure that guardrails are in place when we accelerate project reviews and lower costs. We know that every delay in the approval process and every duplicate decision comes at a high cost to our businesses, and in the present circumstances, their patience is wearing thin.

Obviously, the global economic environment we face is different than the one we knew following the post-Cold War era. For a long time, our economy had the wind in its sails. Conditions with our southern neighbours were extremely steady. Access to the U.S. market was also freer within the North American trade environment, and the rules were understood and obeyed. Unfortunately, our businesses no longer operate in this environment. It is therefore absolutely essential that we act now through what remains within our control. Obviously, we have no control over what happens south of the border, but we can control what happens here, at home. We have long been told that we must become efficient.

We have talked a lot about our supply chains. Unfortunately, our neighbours to the south are using our supply chains as tools of coercion and turning our economic dependencies into a strategic vulnerability. In this rapidly changing world, our new Government of Canada is focusing, as I said earlier, on what we can control, including diversifying our markets to build a much stronger Canada. Transportation is a vital link between all of our other priorities. We cannot diversify our markets and trade to build the strongest economy in the G7 without strengthening our transportation network. By strengthening it, we will, of course, strengthen our competitiveness across all sectors.

We are going to build Canada strong through Canada's trade corridors that connect our Canadian businesses to markets and supply chains across the country and around the world. Indigenous peo-

ples, transportation industry representatives and Canadians often tell us that to build stronger, more efficient and more resilient supply chains, we need to cut red tape, strengthen supply chains, accelerate infrastructure development and attract the investments needed to grow our economy.

● (1635)

At the end of the day, when our businesses are doing well and are no longer facing unnecessary barriers, job creation matters in Canada. Affordability always starts with a good, well-paying job.

Red tape and an insufficiently competitive tax system hinder our businesses' innovation and productivity. With this bill, we want to modernize our business environment and make Canada one of the best countries in the world in which to invest. This needs to be addressed urgently. Yes, we have challenges, but we also have opportunities. If we want to seize those opportunities, we obviously need a regulatory framework that allows us to do so. That is why we are modernizing the rules for getting projects built and making real investments in the infrastructure Canada needs to compete in this new environment.

That does not mean that we do not want to put protections in place. Canadians are asking us to build fast, create jobs, support our economy and build Canada strong, but we must also protect them. They are not asking us for one or the other; they are asking us for both. This bill is in line with the regulatory framework we are already operating under.

I just mentioned red tape. Federal departments and agencies have identified more than 500 recent initiatives and proposed measures to reduce the administrative burden.

This bill therefore allows our federal agencies to begin implementing some of those initiatives. This will demonstrate how Canada intends to fulfill its commitments to remove the barriers that slow private investment, limit trade and labour mobility, and of course, restrict business productivity.

We have made strategic, and indeed historic, investments to build Canada strong. We have introduced a number of strategies and made historic investments, as I just said. If we do not address persistent constraints, such as the administrative burden and the transportation system, we cannot maximize Canadians' investment in their economy. We need to maximize the return on every dollar Canadians invest in their economy. That is what we are doing with this bill, which is essential to making every dollar more productive.

Since I am running out of time, I want to get right to the issue of farmers. I am member from the Outaouais, which is a very prosperous region. We have corn, soybean and canola farmers, for example, who are among the most competitive in the world, but they have to be able to get their grain, soybeans or canola to international markets. This bill will ensure that our roads are efficient, our rail system is reliable and our ports are able to quickly process essential goods.

Every link in the chain is important, and when one of them is slowing things down, costs increase and our farmers' competitiveness decreases. Investing in transportation infrastructure is a direct investment in the competitiveness of our farmers.

In addition to agriculture, Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi also has a large number of food processors, people in the agri-food sector as well as in the technology and manufacturing sectors. That is important. We want to diversify our markets and provide opportunities for the people in these sectors, but again we need solid and effective infrastructure.

In closing, I would just like to add that the digitalization of all of the documents that must be submitted to the various government departments to send goods to the international market is crucial. The digitalization of documents is an important part of this bill.

• (1640)

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her contribution to this important debate.

Yesterday, there was a lot of discussion about creating regions of national interest. One of the government's responses is that there are a dozen laws and seven regulations, that authorizations are deemed to have been granted in those regions, and that a regional assessment will take place. If we dig a little deeper, we see that this regional assessment process already exists, but it is really not the same kind of thing as an impact assessment.

Can my colleague tell me, before the regions of national interest are defined, what the regional assessment will cover? Will an analysis be done for each of the laws that will then be set aside?

Sophie Chatel: Mr. Speaker, choosing a region does not necessarily mean changing all the laws that apply to it. The important thing in choosing a region is to truly recognize that there is a critical activity in the sector and that all departments must work together. The purpose of this bill is really to have one submission, one project and one decision in one year. We do not want to duplicate the various decisions. We really want things to be as efficient as possible in a given geographic area.

Furthermore, it will not necessarily work on a project-by-project basis. When an area is identified, it really means that a number of projects are related and that they must be considered together.

[English]

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, about 18 months ago, the government introduced the One Canadian Economy Act, Bill C-5. Since then, a whole slew of bureaucratic offices and agencies have been opened

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up by the government. Today we are debating Bill C-39, promising more and more of the same.

I wonder if the member opposite can point to where the shovel has hit the ground for just one project in Canada since the government took over 18 months ago.

[Translation]

Sophie Chatel: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of projects in the energy sector. Of course, we have the Churchill Falls project in Quebec. That is a really critical project for Quebec in terms of energy production. We absolutely must double our energy production. We need to focus on our government's ability to deliver what Quebecers and Canadians need when it comes to energy. If we fail to do so, we will be missing out on a very important industrial opportunity. Carrying out a number of projects like the one in Churchill Falls is therefore very important.

Although I do not have a list of the shovel-ready projects, there are many. In my riding, for example, we are already starting work on a number of projects to build affordable housing units. I could give him the list. There are several projects, including one in Gracefield, where 39 affordable housing units are being built.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her fine speech. I know that she spent a lot of time this summer visiting businesses. I know that she heard from many people about the lack of predictability and the current uncertainty. They need more predictability from the government.

Can she share with us what these businesses had to say after she met with their executives this summer, and particularly any comments regarding the predictability that Bill C-39 will be able to provide?

• (1645)

Sophie Chatel: Mr. Speaker, every delay in a decision comes at a cost for businesses. Uncertainty also has a cost for our entrepreneurs. All the businesses I met with in Quebec told me this. They want decisions to be made quickly. When it takes three or four years to make a decision and there is no definitive answer, that has a very clear impact on the predictable growth of our businesses.

The aerospace industry, for example, has a great potential for growth in Quebec. However, delays in certain decisions, whether in terms of procurement or starting new projects, have a real cost for businesses in terms of business opportunities.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Climate Change; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Veterans Affairs; and the hon. member for York—Durham, Canada Revenue Agency.

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Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I spent many years in the private sector running my own business. I can tell members that being out there in the real economy, meeting payroll, selling and delivering goods and services, one learns a very fundamental and simple lesson very quickly: Absolutely nobody pays people for announcements, nobody writes them a cheque for a press release, and customers certainly do not reward them for empty photo ops. They are judged strictly, fairly and ruthlessly by what they deliver.

The Prime Minister came into office making grand promises. He promised Canadians that he would build at speeds not seen in years, if not generations, yet here we are 18 months later, and still not one single shovel is in the ground. I will take some time today to look deeper into why this paralysis persists and why more broken legislation from a worn-out government will never fix legislation that it broke in the first place.

Just a year and a half ago, the Prime Minister marched into the chamber championing Bill C-5. He told Canadians that he would finally unleash construction speeds not seen in generations. The headlines were glowing, the announcement ceremonies were lavish and grand, and the promises were astronomical, but as Canadians have come to learn all too well, they were just empty words.

After all the endless talk, all the international summits, the luxury travel abroad, the expensive catering and the state photo ops, how many actual projects has this new government office built? Zero. How many permits has it successfully issued? Zero. How many hard-working Canadians are on a job site earning a living because of it? There are zero, *zip, nada, rien, tipota*.

What the government managed to build is an even more bloated bureaucracy and an unprecedented centralization of power in the minister's and Prime Minister's offices. In the last 18 months, the Prime Minister has somehow managed to create 14 brand new government agencies, which brings us squarely to where we find ourselves today: endless manufacturing urgency yet absolutely nothing accomplished.

People are judged by what they deliver. Look at the Pacific link pipeline. The Prime Minister grandly designated it a project of national interest. Let me share a news flash with my Liberal friends across the aisle: Another vital pipeline heading to our Pacific coast has always been a matter of critical national interest, and construction should have broken many years ago. Due to layer upon layer of punishing Liberal regulations, red tape and suffocating bureaucracy, no private proponent would step forward. No pipeline was ever built. Fast-forward to today, and the private sector still has zero confidence in the government's ability to provide regulatory certainty. That leaves taxpayers on the hook to own and build their own pipeline.

How does the Prime Minister propose to provide such much-needed certainty to private investors now? It is by proposing another bill, a legislative text that is supposed to fix what the last bill, passed 18 months ago, was supposed to fix. This new piece of legislation clocks in at a staggering 250 pages, and we are expected to believe that it would magically cure all the systematic problems the Liberals themselves engineered over the last 11 years.

Let us be clear about what is missing from the bill. It would not repeal Bill C-69, Justin Trudeau's notorious antidevelopment law. It would not repeal Bill C-48, the Liberal job-killing ban on shipping oil off our west coast. It would not eliminate the punishing industrial carbon tax. All the structural obstacles that have systematically chased investment capital and talent out of this country for a decade would remain entirely untouched.

The bill would still force project proponents to address "any other matter relevant to the impact assessment that the [agency] requires to be taken into account." How can the Liberals stand up and lecture us about regulatory certainty, when their checklist of arbitrary demands has no end? Is it just the Prime Minister who gets to decide who wins and who loses?

● (1650)

The government's big selling point for this legislation is the magical one-year timeline: one project, one decision and one year. It sounds wonderful in a sound bite, but let us look closely at the fine print. I cannot tell the Speaker to pause the clock on my speaking time and allow me to speak for 20 minutes today. Under this new bill, the government would be able to do precisely that. The official clock could be stopped. The bureaucracy could hit the pause button for a multitude of reasons, and the suspended time would simply vanish from the calculation. A company could spend years wrapped up in red tape and the Liberals would still claim that it all happened within one year.

If that loophole is not wide enough, the minister could unilaterally tack on 90-day extensions. If that is not enough, the government could run behind closed doors to cabinet and extend the timeline yet again, with absolutely no hard limit whatsoever.

Let us put ourselves in the shoes of a serious investor for a moment. Would we allocate billions of dollars of capital knowing full well that a Liberal cabinet that has spent the last 10 years actively blocking major projects retains the absolute legal power to delay our money and our project's decision indefinitely?

Here is the critical part the Liberals deliberately avoid talking about. The famous one-year clock would not even start ticking until the proponent has completed all preplanning, finished every single consultation and submitted exhaustive engineering and scientific data for a full assessment on every secondary permit along the way. Let us be completely honest with Canadians about what this legislation actually is. There is no real enforceable one-year timeline in the bill. It is pure smoke and mirrors. There are shiny headlines without deadlines.

There are devastating real-world consequences when the government chooses endless talk over actual building. The Prime Minister grandly promised Canadians the fastest-growing economy in the G7. Instead, the OECD places Canada well deep in the pack, with our economic growth forecast slashed all the way down to a miserable 0.9 per cent. Canadian households are now among the most heavily indebted in the entire industrialized world. Let us think of that for a moment.

Families across our country watch their mortgage renewal approach with sheer dread and look at their grocery bill with absolute disbelief from week to week. International investors are noticing this dysfunction. Representatives from the U.A.E. came to this country looking to invest a staggering \$90 billion. Just six months later, they returned and stated publicly that they could not find a single approved shovel-ready project to put that capital into.

What is the alternative? We as Conservatives have a clear, pragmatic plan that is beautifully simple: one project, one review and one approval within one year. We know it can be done, because it has been done. During the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, our minister John Baird told his department officials that he wanted the application form for infrastructure projects brought down to a single page. After significant back and forth, they delivered a clean, functional, one-page application form. What was the remarkable result? Roughly 23,500 projects went swiftly from concept to completion in under two years.

Other people warned at the time that it would be an unmitigated disaster for safety and environmental standards. However, when the environmental commissioners subsequently audited those exact projects, what did they find? Not a single one came back with a safety and environmental problem. That tells us something critically important: All the mountains of paperwork, all the endless procedural hoops and all the deliberate delays have everything to do with feeding a bloated, self-serving bureaucracy that thrives entirely by getting in the way of progress.

Here is what Conservatives will do: repeal Bill C-69, repeal Bill C-48, scrap the punishing industrial carbon tax once and for all, approve hundreds of projects currently languishing and put a real, hard, binding cap on approval times, not a fake timeline that can be paused, extended and stretched into infinity.

Canada should be the fastest place to secure a building permit, but we will certainly not take the government's word for anything it is saying, because Canadians have heard these exact hollow promises far too many times before. The blunt truth is that the Prime Minister does not need to do more announcements. He needs to stop blocking, stop taxing, stop obstructing, and stop signing meaningless memoranda of understanding that yield zero results. He needs to get out of the way and let our builders build, let our workers work, let our investors invest, and get projects built for the prosperity of all Canadians.

• (1655)

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to set the record straight on two counts before I ask my question. My colleague said that there have been some grand an-

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nouncements, but nothing concrete. I was actually in Lévis on March 29 for the steel cutting ceremony for the Polar Max icebreaker, so that is one project that is happening.

Our government announced an \$11-billion contract to build six icebreakers that will provide jobs for 5,000 people in our region. It also provides predictability for more than 600 suppliers in the region who will be able to invest so they can supply the Davie shipyard. That is what our businesses want.

With that, does my colleague still think that we need to stop making announcements that support our businesses?

[English]

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should be reminded that we are talking about Bill C-39, the build Canada act for major projects across the country of major significance. The current government has done none of that. It has not put a shovel in the ground. It is all talk and no action.

The Prime Minister is flying all over the world, making agreements and signing things. He brings nothing into the House to be discussed and there is no debate whatsoever in committee, yet, here we are now talking about Bill C-39, a rehash of Bill C-5 of 18 months ago. I commend the member for his question and I hope that he actually does see some action in his riding.

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech my colleague gave on the headlines but no deadlines bill. He mentioned that the bill was called “building Canada”. We had that bill ourselves, as I recall, under Harper. Would he make the distinction between this new bill that they call “building Canada strong”, but is actually the headlines without deadlines bill, and the bill that we put in after 2008 that actually got things built very quickly?

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the colleague for recalling a time when the government actually took these projects seriously and when a minister took action.

Minister Baird, at the time in charge of infrastructure, sat down with his colleagues in the ministry. He gave them a directive to fast-track the approval process down to a one-page application and that resulted in 23,500 projects being built. The current government and this Prime Minister have built 14 new offices. Can members believe it? They built 14 new centres for people to make decisions, just bloating and bloating the democracy with zero results for Canadians and not a single shovel in the ground.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his contribution. I hold him in high regard. I would like to hear his perspective on the idea that the minister could conduct regional assessments and then designate a region as being of national interest. Once that happens, authorizations would be deemed to have been granted.

Under Bill C-39, all the minister would have to do to designate a region as being of national interest is conduct a regional assessment. The minister will set the terms of reference, select the members and constitute the regional assessment committee himself. Does my colleague consider this to be a rigorous approach?

• (1700)

[English]

Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's very intelligent and informed question.

What this bill would do, as we have seen in previous bills that the tired Liberal government has brought forth, is centralize more and more power in the hands of the minister and the Prime Minister. What we have seen from the current government is a lack of respect for the people's voice, a lack of respect for Parliament. Arbitrarily, the Liberals can make decisions, and we know where we will find out about it: in news stories and news headlines.

It is totally wrong. As parliamentarians, we have no confidence that the government should be given the full authority to make these decisions and then simply inform us through the media. This is the place to bring the legislation in and debate it properly in committee and in the House of Commons.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House to highlight the labour components of Bill C-39. Today, I will outline the labour components of the bill and how they would strengthen labour relations in federally regulated sectors.

[Translation]

We know that a strong economy depends on a strong workforce and strong relationships between workers and their employers.

[English]

Workplaces with healthy labour relations have the stability and the confidence to invest and grow. The labour components of the bill are designed to strengthen good-faith bargaining and worker protections in Canada's federally regulated workplaces. The Canada Labour Code is a framework that supports workers and employers in federally regulated sectors, such as interprovincial transportation, banking and telecommunications. The framework and the tools within it help 95% of federally regulated workplaces renew their collective agreements without labour disruption. For the other 5%, getting to a renewed agreement is much more difficult and some present cycles of an inability to conclude agreements without labour disruption.

This cycle is often self-reinforcing, as relationships between workers and the employer often remain strained. The inability to resolve their disputes together further places the next collective bar-

gaining process at risk. This is unfortunate, because all parties agree that the best deals are the ones that they arrive at together.

We asked employers, workers and Canadians how to improve the tools of the federal government that are offered to parties and that can help them get to agreements in a better way. We heard that, for the most part, Canada's labour relations system works well. We also heard that existing tools do not always help resolve the most complex and contentious disputes. That is why Bill C-39 focuses first and foremost on strengthening the tools, supports and processes to help workers and employers find solutions together.

The bill focuses on three priorities.

First, we would be modernizing collective bargaining with strengthened tools and additional supports. This means earlier engagement, helping to rebuild labour management relationships following disputes, adding supports for first collective agreements, providing more time for parties to reach an agreement and laying the groundwork for expedited grievance arbitration and an administrative monetary penalty regime for bad-faith bargaining.

Second, the bill would strengthen workers' protections. We would increase our government's capacity to protect workers from wage theft, misclassification and workplace accidents, and we would make it easier for the conclusion of a first collective agreement. We would also protect airport workers by preserving their union representation and collective agreements when contracts change hands.

Finally, we would be clarifying section 107 of the Labour Code and defining clear requirements for the use of this last resort tool. It bears repeating that 95% of federal collective agreements are renewed without labour disruption. The new tools in Bill C-39 are designed to help parties in high conflict focus on transparent solution-focused bargaining. The bill would also place clear guardrails around the use of section 107, which permits a minister to refer a dispute to the Canada Industrial Relations Board.

Government Orders

The use of section 107 would move to a tool of last resort, only usable once parties had gone through an intensive, transparent process to resolve their differences and only usable after a strike begins. First, a special mediator would be appointed to work intensively with the parties and help them reach an agreement. The parties would then have five days after the receipt of the report from the mediator to get to an agreement. If the parties were still not able to resolve their differences, the special mediator report would be made public. Second, an assessment of national interest would be made that considers economic impact and social impact, and balances the constitutional right to strike. Third, importantly, a strike would actually need to have commenced. This new guardrail would prevent the pre-emptive use of section 107, strengthening workers' rights to strike.

• (1705)

[Translation]

The overwhelming majority of collective bargaining negotiations will proceed as usual.

[English]

Canada's workers are the foundation of a stronger Canada.

[Translation]

Every major project, every infrastructure and every opportunity to grow our economy depends on Canadian workers. A stronger workforce means a stronger economy. A stronger economy means a stronger Canada.

[English]

These labour measures would help build Canada strong.

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday morning, I woke up and I thought there was an air raid going off. I heard sirens. I did not feel any bombs drop. I looked out the window and did not see any buildings on fire nearby. These sirens kept on going. This morning, I walked down Sparks Street on the way to West Block, and I heard these sirens again. It was members of the public service striking, and they had this siren that sounded like an air horn or an air raid.

If the workers, for whom this legislation is supposed to be so beneficial, are opposing it so vociferously, how is it going to be good for them? Why are they so opposed to it?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, we worked extensively with employers and labour unions, and of course Canadians, who all told us that it is very important to uphold a collective right to strike. It is in our Constitution. That is exactly what this legislation would do. It would address the challenges that workers are having in their workplaces, in particular around those first collective agreements, which can also be very difficult to arrive at. Importantly, it would strengthen workers' rights to be able to pursue a strike without the pre-emptive interference of the government.

Finally, it would put the onus on the parties themselves to get to an agreement by using new tools, especially in high-conflict relationships. That is a very important new process that I believe will help parties get a deal at the table where it ought to be made.

[Translation]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her contribution to the debate, and I want to draw her attention to an issue that goes beyond Bill C-39: the centralization of power.

In several sections of the bill, authority that previously rested with cabinet, for instance, will be delegated to a minister. This will result in fewer and fewer people being involved in decision-making. When it comes to the regional assessments that will lead to the creation of regions of national interest, this is exactly what will happen. As a result, it will be the minister who sets the terms of reference to determine which types of development projects will be pre-approved in a region.

Is my colleague not concerned, as I am, that all this centralization of power could open the door to abuses?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour does have the responsibility and the right to use the Canada Labour Code to foster industrial peace. Section 107 is not the only tool that ministers have used in the past to end labour disruption because of national economic interest. As the member would know, this House has been used to pass back-to-work legislation, which is obviously a worst-case scenario for everyone, including the employers, the employees and certainly the government.

The legislation that we are proposing today in Bill C-39 would actually bring the responsibility back to the table, between the employers and the workers, where that decision ought to be made, to form collective agreements to help workers and companies into the next—

• (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last 18 months, whether it has been a minister or the Prime Minister, we have heard about how we are going to build a stronger and healthier Canada. A major component of that is unionized labour.

We constantly hear about the government's desire to encourage, promote and get unionized labour involved in the building of a stronger Canada because we cannot do it without it. We have excellent programs such as the Red Seal program, and the enhancement and promotion of it.

I am wondering if the member can provide her thoughts on that aspect of labour.

Government Orders

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has risen many times and talked about the importance of good union jobs as an outcome of build Canada strong. In fact, that is why the Building Trades Unions stood with the Prime Minister a year ago or so as we announced the creation of the Major Projects Office. It is why it has been so supportive of the team Canada strong approach to ensuring that young people choose the trades and that apprentices can complete their studies, resulting in full Red Seal certification.

I will say, as a proud mother of a Red Seal crane operator, this is something that I know is very important, and we have these incredible professionals across the country who can help build Canada strong.

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, of course, we have heard from unionized labour. We have heard from the Canadian Labour Congress. We have heard from Unifor, CUPE, ILWU and USW, and these unions have been very clear: this is a red line for them. In fact, the CLC did a legal analysis and found that this would give more powers to the Liberal government than any legislation in any other G7 country.

How does the minister feel when she says that this would enable more rights for workers, yet every single union that has told her that they cannot support this says the opposite?

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that section 107, a contentious part of the Canada Labour Code, has been used pre-emptively two times in the past. In fact, we are responding to unions' concerns that this particular part of the code could be used to pre-emptively prevent a strike from occurring. We have said that is unconstitutional, so we have put guardrails around this particular piece of the code, which must, in my opinion, remain there as an emergency piece of the code for when parties are at an impasse and a strike has no end.

The point is that we will be there to support employers and workers in getting to those collective agreements, and we will respect Canadians' right to strike.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say hello to all my colleagues here today.

This is a substantial bill. It is certainly quite a challenge to try to understand it and to try to understand the—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start again. I understand that the minister is excited, but I cannot hear myself speak.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): There is an adequate noise level now.

[Translation]

The member for Mirabel.

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I will start over. With all due respect to the minister, it is important to stay focused, particularly as this bill is so significant. It is a very substantial bill.

Last night, we sat until midnight. I listened to the debate. I did my best to listen to as much of it as possible. What my colleagues who spoke said, and what I have also said, is essentially that Bill C-39 represents a drastic step backwards for the environment, workers' rights and democracy. It pre-approves projects by reducing environmental assessments to a mere formality, weakens workers' rights, further concentrates power in the executive branch and opens the door to the privatization of ports, airports and other public infrastructure. This is very strong language; it stems from an analysis we carried out, which I believe was thorough.

Yesterday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources spoke to the bill.

He sat through a significant portion of the debates and listened. We really appreciate that. We debated, and he looked at us. My colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue was an energetic participant during the debate. The parliamentary secretary laughed at us. He made fun of us. He looked at us as if we were aliens, and when he rose to speak, he told us that we had our facts wrong. He tried to teach us a lesson, to correct us, saying we had misunderstood the bill. He seems like such a credible person. After all, he comes from the company that sold us Phoenix and Cúram. Surely there is no way he could be mistaken.

I decided that I should read the bill again, so I did, together with my colleague from Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, a lawyer and former bar association president. We spent a lot of time rereading it yesterday evening and today. What we ultimately discovered was that we had been right all along. It really does weaken environmental regulations—and workers' rights too, but I am focusing on the environment today—in such a pernicious way that it gives the impression that the government is still conducting environmental assessments after all.

That is the problem. The bill gives a lot of discretion for circumventing legislation, and it is hard to understand for ordinary people who are not used to reading laws and who are not part of a provincial bar.

Here is how it works. Right now, it is true that when all sorts of environmental assessments have to be conducted, files get passed from agency to agency. There are a lot of processes involved. It is true that it follows a specific sequence, that it can take a long time, cause hassles and harm certain types of investment. We agree that that is true.

We can understand the principle of taking the laws related to impact assessments and creating a one-stop shop to maintain the same due diligence while eliminating some of the hassle. We can see things from the investors' perspective.

However, that is not what this bill does. Here is what the bill says, and my colleague mentioned this several times: Before creating a region of national interest for a project, the minister will have to conduct regional assessments. Let us look at the case law and the way in which the laws are written. Under sections 92 to 96 of the Impact Assessment Act, the assessment examines the “effects of existing or future physical activities carried out in a region”.

It does not specify that all of the activities must be assessed. The minister has a lot of leeway to define what is included in the assessment.

We took another look at the Impact Assessment Act. We realized that the minister had the power to determine what would be assessed, what the criteria would be, how much time the committee would have and who would sit on the committee. That means he can fast-track the process and ask for things to be done quickly. He can appoint a few friends to the committee or appoint people with a vested interest. He might not do that, but from the public's perspective, there is always justice and the appearance of justice, the independence of the process and the appearance of the process. We are losing that here.

The minister conducts his assessment. Under the legislation before us today, the minister must take into account the rules and laws in effect. He cannot ignore them. He will tell the assessment committee to take such and such applicable laws and include them in its report. However, after that, the minister is free to ignore the conclusions of that regional assessment. That is what the Impact Assessment Act says. What is more, the minister can justify putting species at risk or infringing on a certain number of rights on the grounds of economic benefit or any other reason that the minister deems relevant.

• (1715)

The minister can also list a region of national interest in schedule 2 to the act, list a project and list the acts covered by the bill, parts of which will be suspended. The project proponents will then be exempt from complying with those acts. He has the power to allow them to circumvent the law. That is how Bill C-39 is written.

Of course the party in government would say that assessments will still take place, that it is just creating a one-stop shop. When a member of the public reads a 250-page bill like this one, they are bound to get the impression that this is what is happening. The minister has the power to allow project proponents to circumvent a number of federal acts, including the Fisheries Act, the Canadian Navigable Waters Act, the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States and Canada, the Canada Transportation Act, the Canada Marine Act, certain sections of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Species at Risk Act and the Impact Assessment Act, as well as seven regulations, including the migratory bird sanctuary regulations, the wildlife area regulations, the marine mammal regulations, the metal and diamond mining effluent regulations, and the migratory birds regulations. The consequences are real.

Now we have a minister who has the power to create a different regulatory regime for projects approved by, let us be honest, the Prime Minister's Office. Anyone can see what these ministers are doing. We saw how they operated before, under Justin Trudeau.

Government Orders

Now they are unrecognizable. They do not even look like the same people.

Everyone knows that the PMO makes all the decisions and that the PMO is full of yes-men. We know that the Prime Minister selects the projects, the decision is passed down and then it moves forward. A two-tier regulatory regime seems to be taking hold. There are the projects selected by the Prime Minister, where everything will be processed quickly. Then there are the projects proposed by ordinary Canadians, who have to obey all the laws simply because they are not best buddies with the Prime Minister or a minister. That is the reality.

There is also the whole issue of time limits, because the bill now enshrines them in law. We are being told that, for a pipeline, everything will have to be done within a year. I agree that there should be a one-stop shop. I agree that the process should be more efficient and our laws should be implemented more quickly and efficiently. However, when we look at what is being done elsewhere in the world, for pipelines that cross hundreds or even thousands of kilometres, a one-year deadline is below the legal minimum. What this tells us is that the government has already decided that it wants the pipeline and then it will work out the laws to get there. That is what the Prime Minister is telling us.

The bill would provide for mandatory fast-tracking of assessment timelines. There are problems with this legislation. We are not making this up. We spent half the night reading the bill. It allows projects to be approved before they have been assessed. The government says to start the project and the assessment will come later.

Even if the assessment ultimately concludes that the project is too harmful, that its benefits do not outweigh the cost, and that it should not move forward, the project will already have begun. The regional assessment will be conducted, then the minister will exercise his discretion, and the project will go ahead anyway. The government says assessments will still be done. If they end up being thrown out anyway, what difference does it make? What is even the point of doing assessments? Why do them at all? Why spend public funds on them?

The government wants to take responsibility for conducting impact assessments away from the agency. It should just create a one-stop shop and get someone to run it. Why not ask the Canadian Impact Assessment Agency, since it has independent scientists? Why not establish the one-stop shop within a department that already has the necessary expertise, skills and resources? Why make the Canada Energy Regulator act as the one-stop shop, when its objective and mission are to deliver oil? Why get the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to serve as the one-stop shop for nuclear projects? The government is simply telling Canadians that assessments are nothing more than window dressing, a mere formality dressed up in a Halloween costume to look like an assessment. In reality, the assessment is toothless and pointless.

Government Orders

That is the problem. The government looks at the opposition, and sometimes government members walk out of the room while we are talking. They look at us as though all we want to do is complain and stir up trouble. However, we are doing our job as legislators with very limited resources. We are telling them that we are concerned about democracy, the concentration of power, the loss of expertise and the environment. We might have been able to come to an agreement on the principle of this bill, but the government is telling us that it has a majority. It is just going to continue to push this through however it can.

• (1720)

That is a bad way of crafting legislation. I know that this bill will pass because the government has a majority, but, given the facts, it is clear that all of the concerns raised by the opposition yesterday evening are valid and people have good reason to be concerned.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, whom I respect and with whom I work in committee.

I have two things to say. First, what I have been hearing from him and his colleagues since the beginning of the debate on Bill C-39 can be summed up by the words “status quo”. They want to maintain the status quo in many areas. They want to know why we would do this or that and why we would make changes. As we know, the status quo means not making a decision.

Something occurred to me. I know my colleague worked very late last night and again this morning. I did my homework, too, and I looked into it. Bill C-39 speeds up projects, but it also speeds up situations like the one in Lac-Mégantic. People have been waiting for 13 years, and things are stuck in administrative projects. We are talking over \$100 million. The project is going to cost more. Bill C-39 makes it possible to fast-track projects like the one in Lac-Mégantic.

Did my colleague's research yield any concrete suggestions for speeding up decision-making, so that situations like this never happen again and so that we can actually resolve things more quickly?

• (1725)

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows that I respect him, but clearly, spending 20 years in banking does not nurture logical thinking. My colleague is new here; he has not been here long. He needs to understand that the Liberals have a majority and that when they introduce bills, those are government orders. My colleague is talking about the status quo. This bill will be passed. We are engaging in constructive discussion to ensure that initiatives that have value for society—a net positive value—move forward. We are studying the bill, but they are the ones drafting the bills. Government orders are written by them. We spend our days studying what they give us.

My colleague is talking about Lac-Mégantic, and he is starting to scare people. This process will result in expropriations. Speaking of trains, they are also in the process of expropriating land in Mirabel without an assessment, without a project, and without any financial details. They are walking around private property in my riding and announcing that they want to expropriate precisely for this reason, precisely because of this way of doing things. They have a bulldoz-

er approach. They are running roughshod over people without being prepared.

My colleague speaks of maintaining the status quo. They should introduce better legislation, legislation that is open to amendment. I have been here for more than five years, and we have tabled amendments before. The process worked well.

My colleague should know that government orders are written by the ministers. They should write better ones.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Lis-tuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his insightful remarks.

Listening to him contributes to our collective understanding of Bill C-39. One issue that we have homed in on is the possibility of pre-approving projects. If we think about the regions of national interest, and I would like to hear my colleague's views on this, it is apparent that the regional assessment would be conducted in advance, and the minister would make the decision afterwards. The minister will read the reports, but then he is free to do whatever he wants. As long as a regional assessment has been completed, the minister can proceed as he sees fit. The minister would then be able to designate and describe a region and approve specific categories of projects and criteria.

Would my colleague not agree that this is a way of pre-approving projects en masse based on very general criteria, rather than on assessments of the individual projects?

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right in his analysis.

The government tells us that investors are reaching out, that it wants investment, and that we need a stable regulatory environment, or so the Liberals say. However, what is being proposed here is not a stable regulatory environment. There is no regulatory environment. An investor is told that their project will be pre-approved and that, when the report comes out, at worst, it will be scrapped or parts of it will be removed, and then three or four laws will be violated just to move it forward. That is not a stable regulatory environment. There is nothing more unstable than that.

It is a lack of regulation, but it is also an injustice.

What happens to investors who do not have access to the Prime Minister's Office or are not a priority to the current government? Those investors have to comply with the other laws. This is an asymmetrical and unpredictable regulatory regime, and I do not think it necessarily serves the government's objectives.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to Bloc members comment on this for the last couple of days, and ultimately I would argue that the extreme attitude that the government does not care about the environment or labour could not be further from the truth. Quite frankly, working on major projects, working with environmental issues, working with indigenous leadership and working with the provinces collaboratively is the way to go.

Does the member have anything positive to say about any aspect of the legislation?

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a good read on my colleague. I do not know whether he cares about the environment or not, but I do know that, to anyone who reads Bill C-39, it is clear that the Liberals do not care about it. If that is not the case, then it needs to be fixed.

For example, would my colleague agree that the government should set up a one-stop shop for businesses, but that it should be up to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada to assess projects, rather than having oil companies assess oil projects? It would speed up the process and make it more efficient while ensuring compliance with the law, so why not?

If the Liberals are open to that, we can talk. They have a majority. They will steamroll over us, which is what they have been doing since they got their majority. However, what I suggested would be in the interests of the environment, the economy and society. As Chief Justice Wagner of the Supreme Court of Canada said recently, the rule of law must be protected.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[Translation]

UKRAINIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT

The House resumed from June 12 consideration of the motion that Bill S-210, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month, be read the third time and passed.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to be the first to rise to speak to Bill S-210 this evening. I feel like a bit of an imposter because I see some of my colleagues here who are really committed to this cause, including the sponsor of the bill in the House of Commons. I know that he cares about this cause and that he is the chair of the Canada-Ukraine Friendship Group, which I am proud to be a part of.

Before I begin my speech and speak to Bill S-210, I too would like to take a few seconds to congratulate the new members of the Quebec National Assembly, particularly in my riding of Drummond. These two people are very dear to me: Natalie Bisailon, who is the first woman elected as the first member in the new riding of Marie-Lacoste-Gérin-Lajoie, and Charles Page, who was elected as the member for Drummond—Bois-Francs. Some colleagues may recognize his name, because I have recognized the accomplishments of Charles Page in the House on two occasions. He is the only Quebecker and only Canadian to have climbed five of the eight tallest mountains in the world. These are mountains measuring 8,000 metres or more, including Everest, Annapurna and K2. It is a great privilege to see him conquer another mountain: Quebec City's Parliament Hill. I believe that he and Ms. Bisailon will rise to the challenge. I wish them every success. I also want to congratulate the voters in the riding of Drummond, many of whom turned out to vote and actively participated in democracy, as several million Quebeckers did in this election.

Private Members' Business

I have never set foot in Ukraine. I have no family members or ancestors of Ukrainian descent. I knew next to nothing about Ukraine before I arrived here in Parliament in 2019.

I was a member of the Canada-Ukraine Friendship Group before the events of February 2022. It took the horror of February 24 of that year to open my eyes, and the eyes of thousands of Quebeckers and Canadians, to this great country that is fighting to protect its identity, culture and independence from a brutal attacker attempting to recapture a country that had broken free with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

First of all, let me state that Vladimir Putin is a brutal invader. His goal is to bring Ukraine, and then perhaps Europe and the world, under his sway, under the control of a dictatorship that is completely out of step with the human values that should guide today's world.

While news broadcasts and reports continue to bear witness to Russia's ongoing attacks and relentless campaign against Ukraine, which are still claiming dozens of lives and causing injuries even today, the signals we are hearing and observing suggest that support and vigilance are softening among countries that are supposedly friends of Ukraine. A kind of complacency has set in, with countries feeling like the war has dragged on long enough and that it may be time to resume talks with Russia, restart negotiations or ease sanctions. I find it deeply troubling to hear such sentiments coming from countries that still claim to be partners, allies and friends of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

We must never forget that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is illegal and brutal. Canada must continue throw its full support behind efforts to condemn and resist this aggression, working alongside our allies. We cannot forget that there are approximately 20,000 Ukrainian children who have been deported to Russia. For years now, many of these children have been subjected to indoctrination, stripped of their cultural identity and deprived of their identity by this regime, which we must continue to oppose.

As I said earlier, before coming here, I knew next to nothing about Ukraine. I knew it was a country in Europe that had been under Soviet rule for decades, of course, like many others. Then I discovered a wonderful country, a country with, as I said, its own unique identity and culture that its people cherish. Above all, in the face of the challenges we all know it has endured, the resilience it has shown is truly admirable.

• (1735)

I also discovered people, human beings, who reach out to us, who visit us regularly and tell us not to give up on them, because they are nothing less than a bulwark for Europe, a bulwark for the freedom of countries in the west. What they are going through and what they are defending is who they are and what they want to protect. They are also standing in the way of this madman who will not stop there if we give up. Their resilience is to be commended.

In short, I greatly admire the people, their culture and the things I have discovered about this country, which I look forward to visiting. Talking about Bill S-210 and then supporting the bill is like taking a step forward.

Private Members' Business

This is a month that obviously recognizes Ukrainian heritage and, if all goes right, aims to celebrate, highlight and share the customs, identity and culture of Ukraine.

It is also a month to recognize the contribution of a pretty big community. There are 1.3 million Ukrainians living in Canada. The community is very vibrant, very active and very well established in a number of regions. In recent years especially, Ukrainians have settled in other regions, temporarily at first, but I think they have integrated nicely into their communities. Many Ukrainians have settled in Drummondville, in my region. These are people who have learned French, who have gotten involved with community activities in Drummondville and who are very much appreciated.

In short, this month would recognize the contribution of this community and also make people aware that the first Ukrainian immigrants arrived in Canada in the late 19th century.

As I said when we studied and debated this bill when it was first introduced, I think it is a great idea to designate specific months to celebrate the heritage of a given country. In the case of Ukraine, I think it takes on special significance, particularly in light of recent events. I think we need to ensure that it is not merely symbolic. That is the pitfall of this kind of bill. Often, a particular month is designated as “x heritage month” in response to a request, and then it tends to be somewhat forgotten. That is wrong.

If heritage months are to be designated, they must be worthwhile. It is important to ensure that these tools are used to showcase that heritage, to educate people and to raise awareness. We would all be greatly enriched if we used the month of September every year to showcase the culture and identity of Ukraine, and above all to honour the resilience of Ukrainians and remind everyone of the importance of supporting Ukraine in its current fight.

[English]

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking former senator Stanley Kutcher and the MP for Etobicoke Centre for championing this bill.

This bill would designate the month of September as Ukrainian heritage month. September was chosen to mark the first recorded arrival of Ukrainians to Canada during the month of September more than 125 years ago. Canada is now home to more than 1.3 million Ukrainian Canadians.

Personally, I am honoured to be able to speak in this place to support this bill. I come from Edmonton, Alberta, where many Ukrainian Canadians live. I know first-hand the strong contributions they make in our community. New Democrats are proud to support a month that would recognize the significant contributions that Ukrainian Canadians have made and continue to make to Canada's social, economic, political and cultural fabric, including artistic, linguistic, culinary, religious and folkloric contributions.

The establishment of Ukrainian heritage month would not only be to celebrate Ukrainians in Canada. It would also be instrumental in educating future generations about the impactful role that Ukrainian Canadians have played and continue to play across this country.

We need this bill now more than ever. It has been four and a half years of horror in Ukraine since the further illegal invasion by Vladimir Putin and the Russian Federation. Putin's brutal genocide has killed and injured thousands of Ukrainians, displacing hundreds of thousands more.

As we speak, Ukrainians in Kyiv and other cities and communities across Ukraine continue to face bombing threats and abhorrent violence at the hands of Putin and his forces. Russian oligarchs continue to profit from this war, and Ukrainians stand bravely in defiance, defending their sovereignty and their lives.

I think about a time in 2023 when I travelled to the towns of Irpin and Bucha. I remember going into the communities. I remember standing and looking at the buildings that had been bombed. One of the things I saw was a slide in a children's playground, and it was riddled with bullet holes. This was a child's slide. It was not a military target. Russia's attacks were directed at civilians and civilian infrastructure. It was not just playgrounds. It was hospitals, schools, homes and apartment buildings.

One year later, I watched as Ukrainians worked to rebuild their communities. That same indestructible spirit led Ukrainians to Canada following the Holodomor, over the decades since those unspeakable horrors were inflicted. Now, as families seek refuge from Putin's genocidal attacks, they have come to Canada to build their lives, and in the process, they have helped to forge our nation.

In Edmonton, Ukrainian Canadians and their descendants have helped shape our city and our culture. My friend, former MLA Deron Bilous, announced the province's first official Ukrainian-Canadian Heritage Day. William Hawrelak served three separate terms as mayor, and the most beautiful park in the city, located in my riding of Edmonton Strathcona, is named for him.

The first Holodomor monument in the world rests outside Edmonton city hall. Edmonton is home to the world-renowned Ukrainian Shumka dancers and to the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta in my riding. In November, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council will present the 29th annual Hetman Awards, honouring the many Ukrainian Canadians in Alberta who contribute so much to our communities.

As the foreign affairs critic for the new Democratic Party of Canada, I have fought hard to ensure that Canada's response to the genocide happening in Ukraine is strong. I am proud to have sponsored four motions in the House that received unanimous consent. I want to be very clear: Unanimous consent from all parties is a message we can send as parliamentarians to Putin and the Russian Federation that when it comes to Ukraine, we stand united.

• (1740)

I called on the government to help document Russian war crimes and crimes against humanity, to declare that the Russian Federation is committing acts of genocide, to designate Russia's Wagner Group as a terrorist entity and to honour those who gave their lives in defence of our shared values. I am proud that New Democrats and all parties in the House stood together to support Ukraine when it mattered.

Make no mistake. The threats from Russia expand far beyond Ukraine's borders. We see now how Russia is spreading misinformation online and engaging in foreign interference. These are attacks on democracy itself.

While this genocidal war rages on and attacks on civilians continue, and with the growing threat of nuclear engagement, New Democrats will continue to push the government to do what it can to end this war and to work for peace and justice. The people of Ukraine need and deserve our support, and we must recognize that democracy, not just in Ukraine but around the world, is under threat. It is under attack.

Canadians and New Democrats stand with Ukraine. We will always stand with Ukraine. We celebrate the close ties Canada has with Ukraine and with Ukrainian Canadians, remembering and celebrating the rich history binding our nations.

I look forward to passing this bill so that next September, we can celebrate Ukrainian heritage month together.

Slava Ukraini.

• (1745)

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind members of two different things.

Normally, during debates, members are not allowed to cross between the Speaker's chair and the mace on the table. This area cannot be crossed.

The second matter is on Standing Order 16(2), which is very clear. During proceedings of the House, members cannot cross between the person who is speaking and the Speaker's chair, and there was a member who did it. Not doing this makes it simpler for me to see if the light of a particular member is on, and now with the advent of television, it also makes sure that a member is not seen crossing on camera, which could spoil the use of that particular image and the speech a member is giving or the responses. I want to remind members that Standing Order 16(2) still applies during Private Members' Business.

Also, members have to be in their chair to be recognized, especially members who are next up to speak.

That being said, resuming debate, the hon. member for Lethbridge.

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand today and speak to Bill S-210, which would designate September as Ukrainian heritage month.

Canada is home to a rich and vibrant Ukrainian culture, from beloved foods such as borscht and perogies to cherished traditions

Private Members' Business

and events such as Canada's National Ukrainian Festival. Through their culture, traditions and civic engagement, Canadians of Ukrainian descent have made lasting contributions to our country and have helped shape the diverse and multicultural Canada we are all very proud to call home. Ukrainians have deep historical ties to Canada. Ukrainian immigration to Canada began as early as the 19th century, and now Ukrainian Canadians make up 1.3 million people in this nation. For more than a century, Ukrainian Canadians have contributed to the growth and prosperity of our country in countless ways.

I am often reminded of those contributions in southern Alberta, the region that I am proud to call home and that I get to represent. In my community of Lethbridge, Ukrainian Canadians played an important role in building Alberta's sugar beet industry. For those who are not familiar with this, it involves beets that get planted in the ground and are used to produce sugar. This is our only domestic source of sugar and something we should be very proud of in this country in terms of food security and being able to do that right here at home in a way that also respects human rights.

Following the Second World War, thousands of Ukrainian immigrants came to Canada through programs that brought workers to Alberta's sugar beet farms. They arrived ready to work, often under difficult conditions, and their hard work helped establish an industry that became an important part of southern Alberta and Canada's agricultural economy. These families did not simply come to Canada to work for a season; rather, they built communities, put down roots, raised families and contributed to the growth of southern Alberta.

Their journey is a powerful testament to how deeply Ukrainian Canadians have shaped the heart and history of our great country. Ukrainian Canadians have contributed to agriculture, education, business, culture and public life. They have built churches, community organizations, cultural institutions and businesses, all while preserving the traditions and heritage that connect them to their Ukrainian roots but respecting the values we have here in Canada.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable parts of the Ukrainian Canadian history is the resilience that has carried through generations. Many Ukrainians came to Canada fleeing war, persecution and political oppression. They came from a homeland where their culture, language and identity had been threatened by totalitarian rule. For decades, Ukraine was under Soviet power, yet the Ukrainian people never abandoned their desire for freedom, democracy and self-determination.

Private Members' Business

That desire for freedom is a defining part of Ukrainian history, and it is a history that Ukrainian Canadians have worked hard to preserve and to share with Canadians. This includes remembering the Holodomor, the horrific famine inflicted by the Soviet regime in 1932 and 1933, which claimed the lives of millions of Ukrainians. Ukrainian Canadians have fought for decades to ensure that this history is remembered and that the victims are never forgotten.

In 1991, after decades of Soviet rule, Ukraine declared its independence. On December 1, 1991, the people of Ukraine voted to approve that independence. The Ukrainian people chose freedom and self-determination. The following day, under the leadership of Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Canada became the very first western country to recognize Ukraine's independence and to congratulate it on this. Canada and Ukraine have been close allies ever since, and we continue to enjoy that relationship.

Sadly, however, Ukraine's fight for independence did not end there. In 2014, Vladimir Putin illegally annexed Crimea and launched war against Ukraine. For the Ukrainian people, the threat of Russian aggression was once again at their doorstep. Canada responded. Under Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Canada was among the strongest voices in the international community to condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper took a stand with the Ukrainian people. His government imposed sanctions on Russian officials, provided financial assistance to Ukraine and supported Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Prime Minister Harper also travelled to Kyiv in 2014, just days after the illegal annexation of Crimea, demonstrating Canada's commitment to standing with the Ukrainian people. His message was clear: Ukraine has the right to determine its own future. That principle has remained at the heart of Canada's relationship with Ukraine.

• (1750)

I wish things had stopped there, but they did not. In 2022, Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Once again, the Ukrainian people were forced to defend their homes, their families and their right to live as a free and democratic nation. Once again, Ukrainian Canadians stepped forward. Across Canada, Canadians have rallied. We have rallied in our communities, have fundraised, have welcomed Ukrainians who are fleeing the war, and have advocated for stronger support for the nation.

Ukrainian Canadians have welcomed their fellow women and men from the country. These are people who have endured tyranny, war and persecution, but they have never surrendered their desire for freedom and their commitment to democratic principles. That history is important. It is important for us as Canadians to remember. It is important for members of the House to remember. It is important because Ukrainian Canadians have contributed so much to the country we know today. They have helped build our agricultural communities, strengthen our cultural fabric and enrich our public life. It is so important, because their history reminds us that freedom and democracy cannot be taken for granted.

Many Ukrainian Canadians have preserved their culture while becoming an important part of the Canadian story. They have taught their children their language and traditions, built communities across the country and continued to stand with their homeland

in its fight for freedom. Few Canadians embody this more boldly or better than Mr. Wayne Gretzky. He is not only viewed as the greatest hockey player, but he is also a proud Ukrainian Canadian. For Canadians from coast to coast, Gretzky remains a tremendous source of national pride. During his remarkable career in the NHL, he set countless records and led the Edmonton Oilers to win four Stanley Cup championships.

Even though he has been retired from hockey for 25 years, Gretzky's legacy continues to inspire generations of young Canadians. His contribution goes beyond what he accomplished on the ice. He uses his platform today to speak out in support of Ukraine. He understands that for Ukrainian Canadians, the war is not a distant conflict. Instead, it is an attack on a country for which millions of Canadians have deep family, cultural and historic ties. Wayne Gretzky is more than a hockey legend; he is an example of how Canadian Ukrainians can proudly embrace their heritage while contributing to the country we call home.

Bill S-210 gives us an incredible opportunity to honour the Ukrainian Canadian community, to celebrate its contributions to Canada and to ensure that future generations understand the important role Ukrainian Canadians have played in shaping our country. The Ukrainian Canadian story is a story of resilience. It is a story of hard work, of community and of an unwavering belief in freedom and democracy. I am proud to support Bill S-210 and to recognize the generations of Ukrainian Canadians who have helped make Canada the country we are proud to call home and who so dearly hold true to the values on which we are founded.

• (1755)

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to speak to this bill, which comes to us from the other place. I want to give thanks in particular for the hard work of the member for Etobicoke Centre, who has been championing the cause of Ukraine, of Ukrainian Canadians and of Ukrainians in Canada since his election here and since before then, and for his hard work to get the bill to this point in Parliament.

It is a special pleasure to speak about Ukrainian heritage, because in my riding of Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park in west Toronto, Ukrainian heritage is something that is lived every day. It is lived in the context of war, which has led to a rediscovery and a reimagining of the Ukrainian heritage brought to us by people who have fled that war to find comfort in Canada. It is building on a legacy of institutions that go back decades in this beautiful corner of west Toronto and on a heritage that continues to live, to thrive and to inform not only Ukrainians and Ukrainian Canadians but, in fact, all our constituents. It is something that has been resurrected in the last few years due to the invasion and to the illegal and unjustified attempt to suppress the Ukrainian spirit and the Ukrainian language.

If someone comes to Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, as well as to other parts of west Toronto, where Ukrainian culture and language are live and living, where we continue to welcome Ukrainians who are fleeing persecution and war, they will see a heritage that cannot be defeated. It is a culture that is living. It is a heritage that we, people such as me who are non-Ukrainian, not of Ukrainian heritage, are so blessed to get to see. It is an example of the continuation of culture that perseveres in the face of a real attempt to wipe it and its language off the face of the earth. To see it resilient in Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park is something for which I have the utmost appreciation.

I want to talk a bit about our culture, our Ukrainian heritage, specifically in Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park and in west Toronto. Ukrainians and Ukrainian Canadians started to arrive in our part of Toronto as many immigrant communities do. They came from other parts of Toronto and other parts of Canada. In some cases, they received a bit more wealth. In some cases, they were finding jobs and opportunities in meat-packing and in trades such as roofing, plumbing, painting and bricklaying. Eventually they found each other and found places to settle in Bloor West Village and in Etobicoke. These waves of immigration continued not just after the Second World War but also into the sixties and seventies, and then more recently, tragically, as a result of the war.

The institutions of Ukrainian heritage, language and culture are everywhere in west Toronto and Etobicoke. In fact, there is a building in the riding of the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore that is known as UNF hall. It contains dozens of Ukrainian organizations. Ukrainian civil society is alive. It is well. It is strong.

I just want to point out a couple of organizations in our riding that have recently celebrated some important anniversaries. For instance, the Levada and Orion choirs of Toronto celebrated their 40th anniversary at Runnymede United Church in Toronto just this past weekend. Ukrainian youth ensembles show the power of song and the power of voices coming together. Voices coming together is one of the ways of expressing the indomitable spirit of a people and the indomitable spirit of a language that continues to persevere even when people try to take that away. Since 1985, youth ensembles, the Levada Women's Choir, the Orion Men's Choir and the Vanguard Concert and Marching Band have been connecting people through music. They are promoting and preserving their musical culture and traditions.

We have a more recent phenomenon, which is celebrating close to its 20th anniversary: the Vyshyvanka Day parade. Vyshyvankas, of course, are the beautifully embroidered Ukrainian textiles, sweaters, dresses and other garments that a college student in Ukraine rediscovered. They decided they needed to celebrate these unique regional parts of their heritage. Ukrainian Canadians and Ukrainians will often wear vyshyvankas that come from distinct regions of Ukraine. One can tell from the distinct knitting and the distinct textiles where those vyshyvankas, such as sweaters and other garments, might come from. In High Park, Bloor West Village, we celebrate the Vyshyvanka Day parade every year.

The Bloor West Village Toronto Ukrainian Festival has been around since 1995, so we have just celebrated its 30th anniversary. It was started by Jurij Roman Klufas, who has been there since the beginning. The first festival in our riding had 300 people just in a

little parking lot off Bloor and Jane streets in the west part of Taiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park. It is now the largest annual Ukrainian festival in North America.

● (1800)

It takes perseverance over 30 years to take something that one truly believes in and build the institutions up. Now prime ministers, leaders of the opposition, dignitaries from all sides and the entire community are coming to west Toronto, to Bloor West Village, in mid-September to celebrate Ukrainian heritage and to see the dozens of Ukrainian organizations.

A particular conversation I had with a number of women from the Ukrainian brigades was deeply striking to me. These are Ukrainians who recently arrived in Canada. They want to go back to Ukraine, but in the meantime, they are doing mutual aid. They are selling goods. They are bringing their charitable, intellectual Ukrainian spirit to the community and raising resources that can then be brought to help with the self-defence of Ukraine.

I also want to point out the Shevchenko Museum. It is the only Taras Shevchenko museum in North America and is just down the street from our constituency office on Bloor West. Taras Shevchenko, known as Ukraine's greatest poet and artist, was exiled by the Tsarist Russian regime and sent for punitive military service in the eastern region in the 19th century. He was eventually pardoned, 10 years later. Taras Shevchenko made the bold bet of speaking and writing in the Ukrainian language, which the Russians wanted to suppress.

We are fortunate. I am very grateful to my colleague Matthew McCauley, in our office, who got from the parliamentary library the following dedication, which was read by the late prime minister John Diefenbaker at the unveiling of the monument to Taras Shevchenko in Winnipeg in July 1961. He read the following verse at that dedication:

Our souls yield not to grievous ills,
To freedom march our stubborn wills.
Though waves of trouble o'er us roll
The waves move not the steadfast soul.
Our living spirit is not in chains,
The word of God in glory reigns.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker then said the following:

These sentiments are the epitome of the yearnings of the human soul.

If Shevchenko were here today he would see the fruits of his poetry—freedom enjoyed by those of his race and all races...—the manifest manner in which those of Ukrainian descent in Canada have devoted themselves to freedom by service in two world wars, and in the days of peace in so many fields of national endeavour.

To those words from Prime Minister Diefenbaker 65 years ago, we now have to, unfortunately, add a remark: “and a war of aggression by the Russians in Ukraine, which has brought more Ukrainians to Canada, and yet they are still devoting themselves to freedom and yet are still devoting themselves in so many fields of national endeavour.”

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It is that kind of endeavour that we can pay tribute to today. It is a lived heritage that is being experienced today.

Another poem from Shevchenko speaks to the yearning for freedom that underlies the spirit of this act and the opportunity to debate this act in Parliament, which is the kind of debate that our Ukrainian friends in Ukraine yearn to have publicly and openly without fear of persecution. Here is the last verse of that poem, as translated by John Weir, *My Testament*, by Taras Shevchenko:

Oh bury me, then rise ye up
And break your heavy chains
And water with the tyrants' blood
The freedom you have gained.
And in the great new family,
The family of the free,
With softly spoken, kindly word
Remember also me.

There is so much Ukrainian heritage that we take for granted in our communities today because it is the spirit of freedom on whose shoulders we stand. Ukrainians and Ukrainian Canadians in west Toronto, in Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, speak their language and celebrate their textiles. They bring their works to places like the Shevchenko Museum, share poetry and share innovations, despite years of war and despite being very recently arrived in Canada. They are bringing innovations, charitable endeavours and the culture and language that the Russians are attempting to suppress. They are bringing it as a living example not only of their heritage but of what it means to be Canadian, with Canadian democracy and Canadian freedoms.

To have Ukrainians and Ukrainian Canadians of decades ago, and their families and Ukrainians today, provide this to our riding of Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park is something we are very grateful for, and for that reason, I urge everyone in the House to support this piece of legislation.

• (1805)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is such a pleasure to stand and speak to an important piece of legislation, Bill S-210, as well as to thank the member for Etobicoke Centre and the Senate for advancing the legislation to where it is today. I think the member for Etobicoke Centre embodies a lot of the good things about our Ukrainian heritage community, but he does not stand alone. There are many leaders within our Ukrainian heritage community who are second to no other in their understanding of the true value of diversity. The best thing we can do here in Canada is to share our heritage. That has blessed all of us in Canada.

When I think about the Ukrainian heritage community in Winnipeg, I think of individuals like Joanne Lewandosky, an outstanding Canadian with such a heart for Ukraine and a passion to share Ukrainian heritage with anyone who has an interest in the community.

I represent Winnipeg North. Its strength is there today, in part, because of Ukrainian immigrants from generations ago. People can drive down streets like Main Street, Burrows Avenue and McGregor to see historical churches and cathedrals that are absolutely beautiful to walk into, not to mention inspiring. The faith that takes

place every week, going back generations, contributes to building and strengthening our Ukrainian heritage community in Manitoba, which is very much alive and continues to contribute in many different ways.

If people want a sense of the festivities, whether that is heritage clothing, dance or heritage buildings, they can participate in Folklorama. They have a choice, as this is one of those communities that has not one but two pavilions. In the first week, people can go to either the Kyiv pavilion or the Spirit of Ukraine pavilion, where there are performances to sold-out audiences for seven days, with four or five shows a day, depending on whether it is a Saturday or a weekday. They are virtually sold out all of the time.

There is a sense of excitement because people relate to the types of food. Personally, I found out when I was in Kyiv that pierogi are actually called varenyky. I can tell colleagues about the delighted faces one witnesses when people are biting down on borscht and pierogi. I would argue that the best pierogi in the world come from the north end of Winnipeg, from the many volunteers in the basements of our churches.

The performances, whether of dance or other arts, provide education on what is taking place in Europe today, which has already been referenced significantly, or just how our Ukrainian heritage community has made Canada a better society. All of this can be experienced over the two wonderful weeks of Folklorama, as it has every summer in Winnipeg for the last 50-plus years now.

In terms of contributions to labour and the economy, I think of the late Leo Ledohowski, founder of Canad Inns, a prominent fixture in Winnipeg and beyond, from a business perspective.

• (1810)

I think of the Ukrainian Labour Temple, which was constructed back in 1918 or 1919. It still stands today as a heritage site, and it is used, well used, by not only our Ukrainian heritage community but even the newer communities and our first nations. It is a focal point. It is one of the jewels of Winnipeg's north end.

It is not just the north end of Winnipeg that has benefited but some of our rural communities, such as Dauphin, in good part as a result of our Ukrainian heritage community and the many contributions it continues to make.

I could talk about those families that have been there for over 100 years, or I could talk about those who have settled over the last few years because of the war taking place in Europe today. I want to let those settlers know that they have advocates here in Ottawa who recognize the valuable contributions they make to Canadian society.

There are the many rural northern communities in the Interlake. I see that my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is here. If members go to Gimli, to Winnipeg Beach or to many of these communities, they will see that the settlers from the last few years are bringing more life to our Ukrainian heritage community. It is important that we do what we can to support them.

I feel a great sense of pride in the many contributions of this community that many of us feel very passionately about, 1.3 million people of Ukrainian heritage, and many more of non-Ukrainian heritage, who contribute to making Canada what it is today.

Recognizing September as a month to celebrate and recognize Ukrainian contributions is, I think, a very strong, positive thing we can do. It would provide many opportunities to recognize the community and would say to schools, to people in the workforce and to our employers that in Ottawa, in the House of Commons, we designate the month of September as an opportunity to show love for and to cherish the many contributions of our Ukrainian heritage community here in Canada.

I have found that the more we recognize the rich heritage that makes up Canadian heritage, and the more we celebrate it and promote it, the better we are as a nation. That is why I am pleased to stand today and support what the member for Etobicoke Centre has brought before the House. It would make a difference in recognizing our diversity and honouring the past, today and into the future. It is of great value for every Canadian when we do things of this nature. I thank all those who were involved in making today possible, and having this bill.

Slava Ukraini.

• (1815)

The Deputy Speaker: For the right of reply, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre has the floor.

Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to speak to Bill S-210, which, if passed, would declare September Ukrainian heritage month in Canada.

I would like to start by thanking the sponsor of this bill in the Senate, former Senator Kutcher. I would like to thank all colleagues for their thoughtful remarks and their support for this bill, but also their support for Ukraine at this critical time.

The first Ukrainian immigrants arrived in Canada on September 7, 1891. Since then, generations upon generations of immigrants from Ukraine have arrived in Canada. Many of them were fleeing oppression and seeking a better life. They found that life here in Canada. Canadians have supported them, and Ukrainian Canadians have made great contributions to Canada. Those contributions span our economic, political, cultural and social life.

Watching this debate at home today are leaders and members of the Ukrainian Canadian community. Some of them are immigrants to Canada from Ukraine. Some of them are children and grandchildren of immigrants to Canada from Ukraine.

My mother and my grandparents were immigrants to Canada from Ukraine. My grandparents, Ivan and Olena, came to Canada fleeing oppression and seeking a better life, like so many people who have come to Canada from Ukraine over the past 135 years.

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My grandparents were incredibly proud of their Ukrainian heritage, but they were also incredibly proud to be Canadian. In fact, I have said many times, and some of the members have heard me say, that my grandparents were among the proudest Canadians I have ever known.

To ensure that I learned about my Ukrainian heritage, my grandparents and my parents insisted that I attend Saturday school every week, where we would learn the Ukrainian language, heritage, culture, etc. Every Saturday, after Saturday school, my grandfather would pick me up, we would go for lunch and then he would sit down with me and help me with my Saturday school homework for the following week. When I was a teenager and when I was a kid, I was not all that fond of Saturday school, and I was not fond of doing homework on Saturdays either.

One day, I was really frustrated. I was struggling with what we were working on. I said to my grandfather, “Dido”, as I called him, “I do not want to do this anymore. I want to stop.” He said I could not stop, and he told me why. He said he was incredibly proud of his heritage, and he thought if I learned more, I would be too. He said he wanted me to learn about the history of the Ukrainian people because so many of them came here to Canada. They came before I did. They came before he did, and they helped make this country great. He wanted me to learn about the people who made Canada great.

That is one of the three reasons why I think it is so important that we adopt this bill today.

The first reason is just that. It would be a national acknowledgement of people whose contributions have shaped Canada for 135 years, as my colleagues have spoken to. Through this bill, Parliament would be recognizing these contributions.

The second reason is that it is an opportunity to celebrate Ukrainian heritage, which I know we have all experienced in our communities. Some of the members have spoken to that very experience. It is important to honour that as well.

The third reason is that since 1891, Ukrainian Canadians have come to Canada, and for 135 years, Canadians have supported them. Through this bill, Parliament would be recognizing Canadians. It would be recognizing the support Canadians have offered to that community and the support Canadians have offered to Ukraine, which go on to this very day.

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I would argue that there is no more important time to pass this bill than now. For the past four years, Ukrainians have been defending themselves against Russia's brutal invasion, and Canada has been a global leader in supporting the Ukrainian people in that fight. We do that not just because it is the right thing to do but because it is the right thing for Canada. This is because Ukraine's victory is vital to Canada's security. If Russia wins, it is not going to stop at Ukraine. We know this because Vladimir Putin has told us so. Vladimir Putin, right now, is showing us so. If Russia succeeds, NATO will be next. That means Americans, Europeans and Canadians will be next, defending ourselves against Russian aggression. We can either pay a small price now to help Ukraine win or we can pay a much bigger price later in Canadian dollars and in Canadian lives.

Our government understands this, and that is one of the reasons why Canada has been a global leader in supporting Ukraine since 2022, with over \$26 billion in support. That is military support, sanctions, financial aid and much more. In June, when meeting with President Zelenskyy, Prime Minister Mark Carney said—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member to remind him that he cannot use the Prime Minister's name in the chamber. Refer to him by his title.

I invite the member to finish.

Yvan Baker: I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

The Prime Minister said, with President Zelenskyy present, “The tide is turning as expected in this war.... Ukraine will win. It's just a question of time.” We must support the Ukrainian people until they win, because Ukraine's victory is not only vital to Ukraine but the only option for Canada as well.

Ukraine's most prolific poet, Taras Shevchenko, once famously said,

[Member spoke in Ukrainian]

[English]

Translated, this means, teach, read and learn from others, but always be proud of that which is your own.

Today, I feel the way I think my grandparents would feel, the way the people watching at home would feel, the way their parents and grandparents would feel and the way generations of immigrants would feel if they were here today. I am proud of the contributions Ukrainian Canadians have made to Canada, proud of their Ukrainian heritage and proud to be Canadian.

• (1820)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

[English]

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

Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 21, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, rising on a point of order, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 6:30 p.m. so we could move on to government business.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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.

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I almost always do, I want to thank my Lord and Saviour for the opportunity to stand in this amazing place and to serve.

Before I get into Bill C-39, I want to say happy birthday to my eldest son, Jagger. His birthday was yesterday and I was not home to celebrate it, but I am awful proud of him. Happy birthday to him.

I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the wonderful, hard-working people of Essex to talk about Liberal omnibus bill, Bill C-39. This bill is almost 250 pages long, addressing everything from supply chain and transport corridor management to changing how collective bargaining would work. This massive bill proposes changes to 21 different pieces of legislation.

My Conservative colleagues and I continue to examine every line of this bill, judging it on a simple, foundational standard. Would it protect Canadian jobs and save working families money?

I will recognize that there are very serious changes being proposed to the Labour Code in part 3 that will require extensive study at committee. They would affect federally regulated sectors like railways, ports and banking.

Why did the government choose to hide these major labour provisions inside a 250-page omnibus bill instead of presenting them in dedicated legislation for proper committee scrutiny? It is tough for me to wrap my head around why the government is trying to rush these significant changes in an omnibus bill instead of allowing them to be properly and thoroughly studied at committee.

Major concerns have been raised about these proposed changes to the Labour Code, yet there were no consultations with key sector representatives or affected workers before this bill was tabled.

The Liberals used section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to order flight attendants back to work, effectively sending them back to work unpaid. Having previously used section 107 to order flight attendants back to work unpaid, the government should not be making further unscrutinized changes to section 107 behind closed doors.

What is most staggering about this massive, 250-page bill is not what it contains, but what it leaves out. While the government addresses unionized workers in federal ports and airports, there is absolutely nothing in this bill for the Windsor auto workers at Stellantis. As we sit in the House, Stellantis is facing an upcoming three-week production layoff at the Windsor assembly plant this month. This means that approximately 6,400 auto workers in or near my riding are facing layoffs right before Christmas, and there is nothing here for them. The government has offered them zero support.

These auto workers need certainty. It seems that Stellantis is perhaps getting ready to leave Canada when it comes to auto production because of U.S. tariffs, among many other things, but the Liberal government has already left it behind. Why is the Prime Minister refusing to negotiate for these workers? The Prime Minister promised that he would have a deal with the U.S. by July 2025. The Windsor auto sector is getting hollowed out because of the Prime Minister's incompetence and his failure to lower his elbows and shake hands.

The Conservatives will continue to fight for policies that defend our auto workers and protect these vital Canadian jobs.

Finally, I must highlight the government's proposed changes to the International Bridges and Tunnels Act in Bill C-39. Previously, structural or operational alterations to an international bridge required full federal cabinet approval, but this bill would strip that authority from the federal cabinet and give it directly to the Minister of Transport. That would give a whole lot of power to the Minister of Transport to make some pretty significant changes without proper checks and balances.

• (1825)

If my memory serves me correctly, the Gordie Howe bridge, near my riding, which borders one of the biggest international border crossings in Canada, was clouded with secret backdoor conversations about its opening. My colleague from Windsor West publicly raised concerns about the urgency of finding answers and getting clarity on when the bridge would be opened, and specifically asked the Minister of Transport for answers on multiple occasions without a response. If I also recall correctly, the Prime Minister claimed that the debts Canadians incurred to build the Gordie Howe bridge would be fully repaid before we began sharing tolls with the United States, and we know now that that was also false.

Do Canadians really want to give more authority or decision-making power to the Minister of Transport given the track record with the Gordie Howe bridge? Under Bill C-39, the Minister of Transport would not be subject to the same parliamentary oversight that would apply to Governor in Council orders and regulations.

Government Orders

With decision-making power resting in one minister, that would make the minister more accessible to private bridge operators or regional interests.

If my memory serves me correctly, the Liberal government held private meetings with Ambassador Bridge lobbyists ahead of the Gordie Howe bridge opening, yet the Liberal government is now proposing to remove parliamentary accountability for international bridges through this bill. Why should we give the Minister of Transport more authority to make decisions when his government's track record already shows that it does not have the best interests of Canadians in mind?

I could speak for a long time on Bill C-39. There is much in Bill C-39 that requires rigorous study and much that remains deeply concerning. What I can promise the automakers and families of Essex and Windsor is that Conservatives will never stop fighting for their jobs, for their economic certainty and for a fair deal with the United States, because at the end of the day, Essex residents have made enough sacrifices at the hands of the government.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the Conservative Party is being very short-sighted today in terms of the larger picture and why Bill C-39 is so critically important.

When we look at what has taken place since the last federal election, we see a Prime Minister, a cabinet and a caucus as a whole looking for ways to get things built. We are not talking about \$5,000 projects. We are talking billions of dollars. There are always going to be small projects, but we are talking about the bigger projects. That is why we have the Major Projects Office. Over 24 files have now been passed over to that particular office.

The Prime Minister hosted an investment event, with half a trillion dollars in potential investment from around the world coming to Canada. It is all about building a stronger Canada that is healthier. When the member makes reference to jobs, it is not only about protecting jobs for today, but about building jobs for tomorrow and building a stronger economy.

Does the member not recognize the bigger picture as to why Bill C-39 is important to Canada?

Government Orders

• (1830)

Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, do I not recognize it? There is a funny thing called the battery plant in Windsor that was designed for electric vehicles because of the government. Not one electric vehicle battery has been sent out of that plant. If we are going to invest in something, we should at least follow through with the investment.

I find it a bit shallow for the member across the aisle to talk about getting things done when the government has had nearly 12 years to get things done, and nothing has gotten done after money is put forth.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Essex for not only his speech but also his constant steadiness at the transport committee. His community is well served by him.

I would like to ask him about something that is causing a lot of ruckus in Ontario: the Alto project. Bill C-39 would allow ministers to authorize early works. We saw in the Liberals' last omnibus bill that they basically gave expropriation powers, incredible bulldozing ability, to the Alto project to expropriate lands. Now they are going to have it where a minister can direct early works so they can get a project started, despite opposition in the communities, particularly in the rural areas of both Quebec and Ontario.

Could the member comment on whether he feels those people are being respected and whether the government could be more transparent about what it wants these powers for?

Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. member, my very dear colleague, quite frankly, no, there is not enough transparency from the government. We continue to fall short. Every time we ask for a study, it is usually blocked at committee. When we get answers from the government on behalf of all of our constituents across many ridings in Ontario specifically, they always fall short.

The answer is that we need way more transparency. We are here as the official opposition, and we will continue to work for that transparency.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to understand the Conservative Party's position on Bill C-39 and compare that with its position on Bill C-5. Let us keep in mind that Bill C-5 was passed under a gag order with the Conservative Party's support and that its purpose was to fast-track the development of major projects of national interest.

Today, we are considering a bill that makes it possible to circumvent certain environmental laws, not for five years, as set out in Bill C-5, but indefinitely.

I would like my colleague to explain to me why he supported Bill C-5, but today, he seems to think that Bill C-39 still does not go far enough when it comes to projects of national interest.

[English]

Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, there was a bit of a delay, but I believe I got the majority of the question from my colleague down the aisle. I will do my very best to answer it.

Over the next three weeks, 6,400 people in Windsor-Essex will face being out of work right before Christmas. That is 6,400 people who can forget about a Thanksgiving dinner, because that is long gone, and who are going to have to figure out what it will look like under the tree.

We can talk all day long about the national projects that, quite frankly, never got started, and I respect my colleague, but I am really concerned about those 6,400 workers.

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this chamber to speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

Over the past year, our government has been hard at work for Canadians at one of the most pivotal moments in our history. We continue to respond to the threats against our economy and to the social vulnerabilities that Canadians face every day. The trade war with the United States and recent tariffs have worsened many of these challenges, and as the world continues to rapidly change, Canadians expect us to act.

Our government was elected with a mandate to build a stronger, more resilient economy. For the past year and a half, we have been working hard to deliver on this mandate. We have strengthened the economy by cutting taxes for the middle class. We have eliminated the GST on new homes valued up to \$1 million, helping first-time homebuyers save up to \$50,000. We have partnered with the Government of Ontario to eliminate the full 13% of the HST on new homes valued up to \$1 million, saving up to \$130,000 for all buyers in Ontario.

We are seeing early and fast results. Our economy continues to show resilience, growing by 3.3% in Q2, the fastest in the G7. This summer, our government posted a record high of non-U.S. trade at \$25.6 billion, with productivity rising by 4% in the second quarter, the largest increase since 2020. We have also introduced measures to address affordability for Canadians. Canadians expect us to continue this work.

The building Canada strong act is nation-building legislation. It is about how we invest today in Canadian infrastructure to shape our strength and resilience for generations to come. The building Canada strong act would bring greater speed, certainty and predictability to strengthen our economy, attract investment, create good union jobs and position Canada for long-term success in the 21st century.

As the Prime Minister has stated, Canada is a country of high standards, but high standards should not mean slow decisions. This legislation is one of the most ambitious reforms in recent history and is built knowing that in one year, with one consultation, we can come to one decision on some of the most critical projects in Canada's history. Our government knows that we cannot build a resilient economy without protecting the rights of workers and all Canadians who work hard every day to keep this country together. We will do this while upholding Canada's environmental standards and respecting indigenous rights.

Canada's long-term economic success depends on reliable and efficient transportation networks that connect businesses to domestic and international markets. My riding knows this very well. Spadina—Harbourfront lives at the intersection of trade, transportation and economic growth. From the port of Toronto to major rail corridors and regional transportation infrastructure, residents see how much of Canada's prosperity depends on our ability to move people and goods effectively. Bill C-39 would strengthen Canada's trade corridors and ports, helping Canadian goods move more quickly, unlock new markets and build more resilient supply chains.

For those who call our waterfront home, these waters are an integral part of our community and our economy. Our government has also made record investments to decarbonize our trade. The green shipping corridor program, with a total funding budget of nearly \$150 million, is removing barriers to the adoption of emissions-reducing equipment and infrastructure.

We are introducing measures to embed indigenous representation in Canadian ports, amending the Canada Marine Act to establish indigenous advisory committees to enhance dialogue with indigenous communities. Indigenous consultation is essential to building the projects that Canada needs. Beyond ports, we cannot now or ever build without respecting indigenous rights and ensuring that indigenous communities are engaged as true, meaningful partners throughout this process.

This legislation builds on the important study undertaken by the transport, infrastructure and communities committee earlier this year through its study on Canada's ports. We heard from witnesses across the sector about the urgent need to improve supply chains, reduce bottlenecks, modernize port infrastructure and improve Canada's competitiveness as a trading nation. Bill C-39 responds directly to these challenges. It would create the conditions for a more reliable, resilient transportation system.

Our government knows that we cannot build a resilient economy without protecting the rights of workers and all Canadians who work hard every day to build this country. I am proud to come from a family of union workers. My riding also includes a strong union presence, including IATSE Locals 58 and 822, CUPE Local 79, USW Local 1998, SEIU, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, ACTRA, and the Canadian Media Guild, among many. Workers are critical to a strong Canadian economy.

The building Canada strong act would modernize the federal labour framework and strengthen protections for workers in federally regulated sectors, helping to support good jobs for a growing economy. The legislation would introduce greater transparency and

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accountability around the use of section 107 by requiring the minister to consider an independent special mediator's report and assess the national interest impacts of a dispute before exercising these authorities.

• (1835)

The special mediator is to ensure that disputes are approached through dialogue and negotiated solutions that reflect both the interests and needs of workers and the broader public interest. These changes would reinforce the central role of collective bargaining, encourage parties to resolve disputes at the bargaining table and fully protect the right to strike. Strong labour relations contribute to a stronger Canada.

Our government knows that we cannot build fast without ensuring we maintain high environmental standards. These projects, including transmission lines, hydro, renewables projects and critical minerals are necessary for our future and will also deliver good jobs and investment.

As a waterfront community, Spadina—Harbourfront understands that economic growth and environmental stewardship are not competing priorities. We all rely on clean water and healthy ecosystems. We all benefit from strong economic growth. Canadians want to see major projects move forward, but they also expect strong environmental safeguards. Our goal is to build faster where we can while continuing to preserve our environment for future generations.

Protecting these resources is a shared responsibility, which is why I welcome the work of my colleagues, the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who just announced our new oceans protection plan, and the hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change, who recently launched public consultations to inform Canada's first national water security strategy, soliciting input from Canadians from coast to coast to coast. This builds on the work we have already committed to, such as the Pacific salmon strategy initiative and the freshwater action plan.

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Our government understands that in order to strengthen our ports, we need to also protect our waterways. These efforts go hand in hand. Our government understands that how we respond to climate change will shape our economy, our communities and our global standing for generations to come. Canada is rising to this challenge.

One bill does not capture the full scope of the work our government is doing. Bill C-39 is part of a broader strategy being taken to accelerate the development of nation-building projects. We must take a whole-of-government approach and consider how these measures, along with the actions we have taken over the past year, connect together.

We are creating jobs, strengthening trade and growing our economy while continuing to uphold Canada's high environmental standards. This legislation would also establish clearer, simpler and more predictable processes for project proponents and indigenous groups participating in project consultations, giving investors the clarity they need to put capital to work and build in Canada.

No efforts we make happen in isolation, and if we are to work together towards the shared ambition of building Canada strong for all, we must start with understanding how we can rebalance our systems. Before I was an elected member of this House, I worked on building system solutions to our most intractable challenges, such as affordable housing, gender-based violence and social financing. These experiences reinforced for me the importance of ambitious public policy.

Governments have a responsibility not only to respond to challenges, but also to help shape the conditions for long-term prosperity. Bill C-39 recognizes that government has a role to play in helping Canada build, compete and grow while ensuring that the benefits of that growth are shared across the country. As Professor Mariana Mazzucato at University College of London describes, we must believe in our power to shape markets, direct innovation and lead social transformation. An element she defines as critical for achieving the common good is this idea of access for all and reward sharing.

This is a moment that calls for ambition. Bill C-39 would help Canada build faster and compete in a changing world. I will support it, and I encourage all members of this House to do the same.

● (1840)

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague say in her speech that Bill C-39 would uphold high environmental standards. Under the bill, it is possible to start a project without even conducting environmental assessments. Where are the high environmental standards? A minister can decide to circumvent all laws currently on the books.

Where are the high environmental standards? Can my colleague briefly explain that?

[English]

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, as a mom of two kids, I am often thinking about the future that we are building for this country. I

strongly believe that we are finding an approach and a process that allows us to move more quickly while still putting the work in place to do the assessments and make sure that the rigour is in place for us to move forward on these major projects.

Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the member, I represent an urban riding, but also a waterfront riding. It is one of the defining features of our communities and really underscores the tremendous importance to our constituents of ensuring the protection and preservation of our incredible freshwater resources in this country. That is why one of the pieces of this bill that I personally have found encouraging is the fact that it is not a one-year timeline to get to “yes”. It is a one-year timeline to get a determination on whether or not a project will go forward, and a timely period for proponents to know whether or not their projects will go ahead.

I wonder if my hon. colleague could speak to whether or not that timeline, and the possibility of projects that are not in the public interest and would not serve my constituents nor hers, is a sound part of her support for this bill.

● (1845)

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I think this approach of making sure that we put the steps in place to get to the right decision, but knowing that the work, the assessments, all of those pieces are still there as part of the process, allows us to move with the speed and the efficiency that we are looking for in order to make the investments that we need for our future.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that my colleague has not answered my question. She spoke of high environmental standards. Project assessments must take less than a year. Regardless of the project of national interest in question, the government alone determines what constitutes national interest. Those are not high environmental standards.

The simple question I am asking my colleague is this: Can she explain how conducting botched environmental assessments within a single year, regardless of the project, is consistent with the “high environmental standards” she talked about in her speech?

[English]

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important to recognize that the bill would address changes in governance as well to the ports and other parts of the ecosystem. In terms of making sure that those assessments are done appropriately and well, we are getting to a decision point about whether to move forward. This does not mean that all of the work is completed, but all of those efforts are going to be in place.

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the end of my colleague's speech, she made a reference to Mariana Mazzucato's work around a state that has the capacity to do things. I wonder if she could add a reflection about why it is important to have a state, the officers of government and the departments of government, with the ability to move in a coordinated fashion to achieve big things, as Mazzucato writes.

Chi Nguyen: Mr. Speaker, I might have a slight obsession with Professor Mazzucato's work. I think the emphasis on real principles around how we operate toward the common good is really critical: transparency, co-design and collaboration. She has a new book that has just been released. It sends some signals to me about the ways we can use government to catalyze the best interests of us all.

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise this evening and speak on behalf of the constituents in my riding, Trois-Rivières.

Trois-Rivières has been a port city since 1634 and will soon be celebrating its 400th anniversary. It is a city of trade, industry and workers. Canada's first iron ore plant opened in Trois-Rivières nearly 300 years ago. Trois-Rivières was long the 20th century's paper-making capital of the world. It holds a central place in Canada's industrial development, even though it has had to reinvent itself now and then, successfully, as technology and geopolitics evolved. The resilience and adaptability shown by Trois-Rivières over the years are really the focus of what I want to talk about today. The global situation facing us now demands that we exercise that resilience and adaptability.

Ten years ago, a trade war like the one we are experiencing today would have been unimaginable. We did not ask for this war, but we will continue to stand our ground, come what may. Families, workers and businesses are feeling the effects of this trade conflict every day. That is why we cannot just keep doing things the way we always have. We need to rethink how we invest in, develop and build the infrastructure underpinning all of this. That raises a simple question: How do we re-envision the future and how do we ensure we have the means to achieve our ambitions? This is the reality and the drive to survive that gave rise to Bill C-39.

Canada has what the world wants: energy, critical minerals, steel, aluminum, forest resources and world-renowned industrial expertise. The Prime Minister has been clear about our ambition to make Canada an energy superpower in both renewable and conventional energy. However, possessing these resources is not enough. We need to be able to develop them, process them and generate greater value from them here in Canada. Canadians must be able to reap the benefits of these investments and these assets.

This means we need to rethink our supply chains. What do we import and export? What can we produce and, in particular, what can we process here at home to add more value to our economy and more value for Canadians? We need to build more, and we need to build more of what we need.

That is especially important in terms of critical minerals, steel and aluminum. It is also essential for the forestry sector, which is

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currently going through a difficult period and remains top of mind for us. Since the spring, our government has signed more than 20 new economic and security agreements, and we have launched more than 27 nationwide initiatives. These efforts have helped support 337,000 jobs and nearly \$200 billion in new investments. We need to make sure that we have the infrastructure we need to meet the expectations and respond to the opportunities we created with these trade agreements, both with our international partners and with our SMEs. The potential is even greater. The message is clear. We must create the conditions that lead to investments.

Bill C-39 proposes to overhaul the way we carry out our major projects. What we are proposing is one project, one assessment, and a decision all within one year. The goal is not to conduct fewer assessments or to be less rigorous, but rather to coordinate things more effectively, to clarify the decision-making process, and to run the processes in parallel to speed things up.

Seven provinces have already signed co-operation agreements to reduce duplication among governments, because they know that this hinders the smooth functioning and economic development of our country. Environmental standards remain rigorous, and the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as our commitment to consultation and participation, remain unchanged. This is not just about consultation, but also about the participation of indigenous peoples in these major projects.

For businesses that want to invest here, whether they are from Quebec, Canada, or abroad, predictability is essential. Every month of delay can drive up costs and delay the investments that our communities, families and workers need. That is why we are picking up the pace.

● (1850)

For Trois-Rivières, this is a practical issue. The Port of Trois-Rivières is one of 17 Canadian port authorities. In 2025, the port of Trois-Rivières handled 2.6 million tonnes of cargo, 65,000 trucks, 11,000 rail cars and more than 240 ships. It is connected to 100-plus ports in over 40 countries. It is a hub for Canada's steel and aluminum trade.

Fifty per cent of the goods handled at the port of Trois-Rivières are critical minerals. The trade diversification corridors fund could help improve the efficiency of these activities with new, state-of-the-art equipment.

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Bill C-39 modernizes port governance, clarifies certain rules, facilitates the digitalization of trade and reduces red tape. However, a port cannot operate alone. The St. Lawrence River remains one of our most important trade corridors, and we have to think of our network as a whole, including ports, railways, roads and airports. Their proper operation is vital to both Canada and our international partners. We must therefore identify bottlenecks and invest where it can make the biggest difference. The Churchill Falls and Contrecoeur projects illustrate the importance of this approach. We must ensure that we can move our products as efficiently as possible.

It is also a matter of productivity. A more efficient transportation system makes our businesses more competitive. Unfortunately, for too long now, Canada's transportation system has been one of the least competitive and least productive in the world. We need to make the necessary investments to improve our transportation system's productivity. We owe it to our businesses, to our families and to workers.

This potential is already clear in Trois-Rivières. The new airport terminal, which opened last year, includes a 9,000-foot runway and increases opportunities for freight transport and aircraft maintenance. I attended the opening ceremony, and I can say that the project does a good job of demonstrating our region's potential. Trois-Rivières brings together the maritime, rail, road and air networks; they are just a few minutes apart.

That is exactly why a bill like Bill C-39 can help the regions position themselves well and play the role of economic lever that our country needs. It allows for the right investments to make it possible to link all the points together, facilitate trade and transport goods. We might think of our development intentions in the north, the commitments we have made to develop the north and secure the Arctic, as well as the diversification of our trade.

We have also spent a great deal of time in the House discussing Alto. My colleague may speak to that shortly. Trois-Rivières is one of the seven stations planned for Alto's future rail link between Toronto and Quebec City. We are very eager to see this project move forward. For projects of this scale to proceed, federal processes must be coordinated and predictable.

Of course, our infrastructure is only as effective as the workers who keep it running. Longshore workers, truck drivers, railway workers, industrial workers and unions are the lifeblood of our economy. I would note that 95% of collective agreements in the federally regulated sector are concluded without a work stoppage.

Bill C-39 seeks, among other things, to encourage earlier negotiations and greater use of mediation. Section 107 remains subject to clear safeguards. In fact, additional guardrails are being put in place. The minister must take into account the report of an independent special mediator as well as the impact on the national interest. The right to strike remains protected.

Further centralization is not the aim. The aim is to make processes more predictable and reduce duplication. Greater predictability also means fewer disruptions for our businesses and our workers. If we want to strengthen our ties with Europe, as our colleagues in the Bloc Québécois are so keen to see, we must have the infrastructure required to get our products to those markets. To my Conservative

colleagues, I would say that there is no need to choose between the environment and the economy. We have said this many times. Speeding up a project does not mean abandoning our environmental protections.

Trois-Rivières has been helping to build Canada for nearly four centuries—just take look at our paper, aluminum, grain, transportation and industry. Today, we have the opportunity to help build the Canada of tomorrow. The world has changed, and our ways of doing things must evolve with it.

I call on my colleagues to support Bill C-39 so that it can be referred to committee.

• (1855)

Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague say that we cannot keep doing things the way we always have and that the goal is to improve the Canadian economy. My question is this. Why did it take the Liberal government over 10 years to realize that we cannot keep doing things the way we always have?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, we introduced the bill after our new government took office. I am a new member, elected in 2025. We have been taking action and launching strategies since we first took office, and now we are implementing those measures. We have already submitted 167 projects at the Canada investment summit that took place in Toronto three weeks ago and that helped attract roughly 500 billion dollars' worth of investment to Canada.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Trois-Rivières. She said a lot of things in her speech, but we will try to keep it simple. How does fast-tracking projects make them better projects?

She says that there is no environmental risk and that there will be assessments. Imagine that it takes a year and a half to assess a project, but the bill says that is too long and it must be done within a year.

I would like my colleague to simply explain to the people of Trois-Rivières and Quebec how it is that any project that needs more than a year is not a good project.

Under the bill, all projects must be approved within a year, at most, based on the minister's decision, obviously, whether or not he takes into account the assessments that have been done.

• (1900)

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, but I am a little disappointed that he oversimplified some things in his question.

I think it is clear that the fact that a project takes more than a year to be assessed does not make it a bad project. The assessment standards remain the same. The process remains as rigorous. The processes will take place simultaneously. The decision-making process will be coordinated to expedite the project.

The degree of rigour is not changing. The standards are not changing. The same standards apply. The timelines are there so people know whether or not a project can move forward. Investors need that predictability.

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague. I have actually been to her riding, and I would like to congratulate the people of Trois-Rivières because they are so fortunate to have her as their member of Parliament.

My question is very simple. What role can the Port of Trois-Rivières play in attracting more investment and supporting job creation and our SMEs?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. I have been to his riding as well. We had some great visits.

In fact, 50% of transshipments at the port of Trois-Rivières consist of critical minerals. There are investments that will speed up the process.

Canada's commitments to accelerate the development of critical minerals and mines in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, and the use of a rail network connecting to the port of Trois-Rivières, will really allow the region to play its role to the full, whether in terms of shipping critical minerals to European markets or, once again, shipping domestically in Canada to meet processing needs.

[English]

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has made great fanfare of announcements and more announcements. With the future implementation of the legislation, I wonder how the Liberals propose to measure results. What happens when they repeatedly do not deliver?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, all the announcements we have made are very concrete. For example, at the Contrecoeur port, the work has already started. The work will start at Churchill Falls. With all the announcements we have made, those projects have already started, so I am not really sure what my colleague is referring to.

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour and a privilege to rise on behalf of the people of Windsor West. I want to start by saying something fairly simple. I am encouraged by the direction of the bill. The government is finally acknowledging something Conservatives have been saying for years: Canada has too much red tape, building takes too long, there is too much duplication, there are too many government departments involved and investors certainly do not like uncertainty. If the bill generally makes it easier to build in Canada and if it saves Canadians money, protects Canadian jobs and gets investment moving, I will support those measures.

However, there is another principle I learned during my three decades of a policing career: Trust but verify. I wrote tickets for people not because I only thought they had broken the law. I checked. I looked at the evidence. I verified the facts. That is how I intend to approach Bill C-39. I am not going to oppose something just because the Liberal government has introduced it, but I am also not going to take the government's word for it. Show me the results.

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There is something about the bill that should be pointed out. This is not exactly a new idea. In fact, much of what we are hearing today sounds pretty familiar. The Harper government understood that Canada had a problem with duplication and delays. It moved toward one project, one review. It introduced timelines. It reduced the number of federal organizations involved in major project reviews. The basic idea was pretty simple: Get the right people around the table, do the work, make a decision and get on with it.

That is not revolutionary. That is common sense. I think Canadians would understand that. What is different today is how big the problem has become. Over the years, governments have added regulations, agencies, assessments, consultations, forms and processes. One layer gets put on top of another, and eventually we get to the point where the process becomes the problem.

The government now comes forward and says it is going to coordinate all of this. It is going to establish timelines. It is going to make it easier to build. That is good. I am encouraged. However, I have a couple of questions. Why did it take so long? More importantly, will it actually work? There is a difference between making the bureaucracy easier to navigate and actually removing the bureaucracy. We can put better signs in a maze, and we can open an office to help people get through the maze, but at the end of the day, we still have a maze. That is where I have some concerns with Bill C-39.

If we are serious about cutting red tape, then let us cut red tape. Bill C-39 would not repeal Bill C-69. It would not repeal Bill C-48. It would not remove every regulatory barrier that businesses and investors have been telling us for years is making it harder to build in this country. My question is pretty straightforward: Would we actually be removing obstacles, or would we simply be creating a better system for navigating them? Those are two different things, and Canadians deserve to know the answer.

Let us talk about the one-year promise. One year sounds pretty good. Every Canadian understands "one year". Here is the question I keep coming back to: one year from when? That is the important part. Would the clock start when a Canadian company says it wants to build, or would it start after the company has completed the studies, provided the information and satisfied all the requirements necessary to get the application moving?

If I tell somebody that I will get back to them within a year, they reasonably expect that year to start when I tell them that. They do not expect me to say that the clock does not actually start until I have finished asking them questions. That is the concern. If someone is investing a billion dollars, they need to know when the clock starts. They need to know who is responsible. They need to know what happens when the deadline is missed. They need to know whether that one-year promise is actually a deadline or simply an aspiration. They do not want a one-year headline. They want a one-year deadline that means something.

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We heard a similar promise when Bill C-5 came forward. We were told that Canada was going to move at speeds not seen in generations. Eighteen months later, we are back here with another major piece of legislation. Some people are calling it the big beautiful bill from Canada again, telling Canadians that this time, things will be different. That is fair enough. Let us check. How many projects have actually moved? How many permits have actually been issued through the new major projects bureaucracy? What has actually been built?

An announcement is not a project. A designation is not a project. A memorandum is not a project. A project is when the shovel goes in the ground. It is when the crane goes up. It is when the factory starts running. It is when a Canadian worker gets a paycheque. That is what I am interested in.

● (1905)

I come from Windsor, and we understand this pretty well. We are an industrial city. We have manufacturers and skilled trades. We have tool and die companies. We have automotive suppliers that are tied into supply chains running across Canada, across the bridge and throughout North America. When a decision gets delayed in Ottawa, the consequences do not stay in Ottawa. They show up on the shop floor. They show up in the lunchroom. They show up at the kitchen table. For government, six months can be a line on a calendar. For a small manufacturer, six months can mean six months without an order. For a worker, it can mean six months without a job. For an investor, it can mean taking an investment somewhere else. This is why speed matters, but certainty matters just as much.

I also want to make something clear. Cutting red tape does not mean throwing out every rule. Canadians expect us to protect the environment. They expect projects to be safe. They expect indigenous rights to be respected. They expect taxpayers' money to be protected. This is reasonable. The question is not whether we have rules. The question is whether we have the right rules: rules that protect what actually needs protecting, rules that do not duplicate each other, rules that have an end point and rules that allow a responsible project to actually get built. That is what good government should do.

There is one part of this bill where I think we need to slow down, and that is part 3, the labour provisions. Workers are not the problem. Workers are people who build Canada. They operate the cranes. They weld the steel. They drive the trucks. They run the machines. They build the roads. They keep our factories running. Most importantly, they are taxpayers, so we have to get this part right. The government says these provisions deal with exceptional circumstances and the national interest. Well, maybe that is true, but whenever Parliament gives government additional powers to intervene in labour disputes, we need to understand exactly what those powers mean.

We have already heard these concerns. CUPE has been very clear. On September 23, its national executive board unanimously resolved that it would defy Bill C-39 if it passed unamended, arguing that the bill would limit the constitutionally protected right to strike. CUPE's national secretary-treasurer, Candace Rennick, said,

"Governments cannot legislate labour peace." Those are CUPE's words.

I am not going to stand here and tell the House that CUPE has settled the constitutional question, because it has not, but I am not going to ignore its concern either. We should hear from the unions. We should hear from employers. We should hear from constitutional experts. We should hear from the people who actually work under the Canada Labour Code. What threshold has to be met? When can the minister intervene? What safeguards are there? How do we make sure that exceptional powers stay exceptional? These are fair questions. That is why we are continuing to review part 3. Canadians expect us to read this bill. They expect us to understand it. They expect us to ask questions. That is what we are here to do.

Yes, I am encouraged by the direction of this bill. I am encouraged that the government finally recognizes that Canada has to build. I am encouraged that we are talking about reducing red tape, but I am not going to confuse a good signal with a proven result. My test is pretty simple. Does it save Canadians money and save Canadian jobs? Does it bring investment back? Does it actually remove red tape? Does it make government more accountable? Does it get projects built? If the answer is yes, I will support it, but I will not support it because somebody tells me to trust them. I will support it because we have done the work, we have read the bill, we have heard from Canadians and we have heard from workers.

Canada has everything we need. We have the resources, entrepreneurs, skilled trades and manufacturers. We just need to get out of our own way, and the government should start doing that sooner rather than later. It is about time we start doing what we promised Canadians we would do for them, not just show up and gum up the works as the Liberals have done for the past 11 years.

● (1910)

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoulu, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found my colleague's speech very interesting and encouraging when it comes to Bill C-39. I think he agrees with the spirit of Bill C-39, which is to fast-track projects.

He also wondered about the time limits. The bill is long—over 250 pages—but the information on time limits and analyses is there.

From his speech, I understand that he wants to fast-track things and make them work. He wants us to work together with the unions to make projects move forward and avoid additional delays.

I would like to know one thing: Will he vote in favour of the bill so that we can move forward and fast-track construction?

[English]

Harb Gill: Mr. Speaker, we heard these promises with Bill C-5. If I were a policeman and saw the Liberal bus in front of me going at the speed the Liberals are moving rather than the speed they claimed it would move at, I would pull it over and give them a ticket for impeding traffic. The Liberals have not moved at the speeds they promised us. That is the challenge.

If the Liberals amend the things that need to be amended and there is a one-year timeline or deadline, yes, we will support it, provided they also have the provisions that labour needs in order to ensure they have the right to strike when they need to. It is not something workers want to do willy-nilly. They do not want to go into a work stoppage because they feel like somebody looked at them wrong. It is their last option to gain leverage to do what they need to do.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for reminding us of the importance of consulting the union movement. I am pleased to hear him talk about the right to strike and workers' rights. We in the Bloc Québécois were the first to raise the red flag. My colleague is right.

Just yesterday, I met with people from the steelworkers union. Every day we receive comments, emails and requests for meetings from union groups that are extremely concerned about this bill. Contrary to the government's claims that it continues to stand up for workers' rights, every day I receive emails and calls from unions that dispute the government's claims. Yes, it is absolutely essential to consult unions, and no, this bill does not respect the right to strike and workers' rights.

I would like to hear my colleague speak more on the importance of consulting these folks who work every day.

● (1915)

[English]

Harb Gill: Mr. Speaker, I received an email from an OSSTF district, from Ms. Erin Roy, who is the president of the union. She expressed serious concerns regarding the Canada Labour Code provisions that are introduced in Bill C-39. She wrote that workers and families are facing real challenges in their daily lives because of the high cost of living, and their right to strike remains as the last leverage that provides them the ability to negotiate fair wages, safe work conditions, secure employment and meaningful solutions for workplace concerns.

I totally agree. This is the challenge that our friends across the aisle perhaps do not get: These workers are also taxpayers. We need to show them the respect they deserve and recognize the hard-earned dollars they contribute to the government, as well as what they do for all of us.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was looking at Bill C-5 and what it has produced. ChatGPT, which we have heard an awful lot of in the House lately, had this to say: It has produced some concrete regulatory changes in projects, but ChatGPT could not establish that it completed a ma-

jor project. Then I looked up the Pacific oil pipeline, and it had this to say: The pipeline has not been built, and its final conditions remain outstanding. LNG Canada phase two does not establish that the expansion is completed. The Coastal GasLink construction is scheduled to begin next year, and the federal trade mobility—

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The Deputy Speaker: I need to interrupt the member to give the member for Windsor West a chance to respond.

Harb Gill: Mr. Speaker, this is the challenge we have. If we want people's trust, we have to act and deliver on promises. Simply making promises is like someone's son telling them they are going to get an A, promising that and then never studying to get that A. We have to see the result at the end of the day, and there are no results that we can see from that side of the aisle.

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. There is much to discuss. This bill has been subject to a wild disinformation campaign, some of which has been perpetrated by members of this House. Therefore, I want to begin today by saying something that should not be controversial in this place. Members of Parliament are allowed to disagree. We can oppose and even criticize legislation. We can believe that government has gotten something wrong. That is democracy and that is our job. However, there is a difference between opposing legislation and telling Canadians that legislation says something it does not say. Unfortunately, we have heard quite a bit of the latter when it comes to Bill C-39. We have heard claims that this bill would eliminate environmental assessments. It would not. We have heard that it would eliminate indigenous consultation. It would not. We have heard that it would eliminate workers' right to strike. It would not do that either.

With the rise of social media and short-form content, Canadians are less likely to get the full story. Complex legislation cannot be reduced to a viral slogan or a social media post, yet in an era when many Canadians get their news online, we have a responsibility to ensure that what we share is rooted in facts and not in fear. Therefore, let us separate the facts from the fiction when it comes to Bill C-39, and let us start with the environment.

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I have spent my entire career fighting for the environment, and I would never support something that would weaken environmental protections. The building Canada strong act would make no changes to the federal environmental standards. This would be a change in process. Regardless of what kind of project is reviewed, all factors would need to be taken into consideration, including climate impacts, species at risk, ecological and nature implications, navigation, navigable waters and much more. Bill C-39 does not say to forget the environment and build whatever someone wants. Nothing in the 244 pages of this piece of legislation says that we would bulldoze nature, yet those are the things that are being said outside of this House and in this House.

When multiple government agencies are asking the same questions, running the same assessments and coming to the same conclusion, there is a serious opportunity to streamline processes. We can do that by changing who is leading these assessments and how departments coordinate their decisions.

The projects moving through these new processes would still undergo rigorous assessment. This would not suddenly allow more environmentally sensitive projects to come to fruition. What it would do is make approvals happen faster, reduce the strain on the federal bureaucracy and speed up the economic benefits of major projects. If members opposite believe the bill would not provide adequate environmental protection, then they can make that argument and tell Canadians which standard they think would be inadequate and which safeguards they want strengthened. They can put forward an amendment and present a true alternative. That is what Parliament is for. However, standing in the House and telling Canadians that Bill C-39 would simply abolish environmental assessments is not a policy argument and it is not rooted in fact.

Long regulatory processes have a cost. It costs the government when federal employees are tasked with duplicate efforts. It costs communities that are waiting to see investment come to fruition. It costs workers who are awaiting new opportunities. It comes at a cost to Canada's economic prosperity, which is something we have to be very focused on at this time.

My question to those who oppose this bill is as follows: Why should a federal regulatory process take longer than necessary once all of the information is on the table? I am open to hearing feedback on this topic from my colleagues across the aisle, from my constituents and from Canadians at large, but when this feedback is rooted in disinformation rather than fact, it is the duty of all members of this House to correct the record.

Another section of this bill that has seen significant controversy relates to workers' rights. I took time to study these provisions carefully and meet with my constituents and stakeholders who raised concerns, because it is my responsibility to understand the legislation before us and to provide clear information to Canadians. As I stand here and debate this bill, I want to make it clear that I am not dismissing concerns about the legislation in front of us. My job is to seek clarity on these concerns and bring this information back to my constituents.

● (1920)

What I have been seeing online is that Bill C-39 would eliminate a worker's right to strike, but this could not be further from the

truth. For years, there have been concerns about the use of section 107. Right now, the minister can use it where the minister deems it expedient. Bill C-39 would put clear limits on that power. A prescribed process must occur, and intervention must be tied to a strike or lockout that could have a significant adverse national impact. While we are seeing social media posts saying that this government would be eliminating workers' rights, the reality is that Bill C-39 would put clear guardrails around ministerial intervention. That is why, when I hear the member for Edmonton Strathcona say that this legislation would give the minister extraordinary new powers to intervene in a legal strike, I take issue with that characterization, because this bill would do the opposite.

As we continue to discuss the implications of this new legislation, I invite all members of the House to ensure that we are telling the whole story. Bill C-39 is a transformative piece of legislation that would keep Canada moving. It would unlock economic growth by reducing red tape and providing regulatory certainty, accelerating significant national infrastructure development while improving the labour relations framework and strengthening supply chain efficiency.

We are facing an uncertain world, and Canada needs to build greater economic resilience at home while diversifying our trade relationships abroad. U.S. tariffs have only heightened the urgency of addressing the structural barriers to investment, productivity and trade that are limiting our country's prosperity. This work can be done, and it can be done safely. Through Bill C-39, we can get back into the business of building big things while maintaining strong environmental, social and labour protections, because this bill would not remove protections, but it would remove duplication.

● (1925)

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague. Her notes were very well prepared, but I wonder if she is aware that division 3 of this bill will dramatically accelerate pipeline construction.

I would like to know if she is aware that 91% of our oil exports go directly to the United States. We are told it is in the public interest to build pipelines, but that only serves the interests of Americans and their energy security. We know that 60% of major oil companies are American-owned, so I find it quite surprising that we are scrapping our environmental laws to serve American interests in the context of a trade war. I wonder if my colleague is aware of that.

[English]

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with my hon. colleague's framing. The pipeline, the Pacific link, is a major project. It is designated as a major project, but its purpose is not to serve the United States. It is to diversify our trade relationships internationally and to reduce our reliance on the United States of America. That has been made very clear, and it is something that we absolutely must do to build our economic resilience and provide what we can offer to the world, which is low-carbon fuel, at this time of transition to a clean economy. Bill C-39 has pieces in place that would ensure environmental assessment is rigorous in that process.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was looking up things that had to do with Bill C-5, and I am wondering if there is any change here. Things that were built in 18 months are the Space Needle in 1962, the Empire State Building in 1930, the Pentagon in 1941, the Alaska Highway and the Crystal Palace in 1851. I am wondering if my colleague can tell me what has been built in the 18 months since Bill C-5 was passed.

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Speaker, that was an interesting history lesson. I appreciate that. We are laying the foundation for transformation in this country. We have shovels in the ground across this country, which has been said in question period all of this week, on major projects, and more are to come. It does take a bit of time to get it all in place, but I think we are proving that we are acting on our commitments in good faith in trying to urgently transform our economy to address the crisis with the United States.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her extraordinary work on the Liberal environment caucus. I urge her not to give up. Interestingly, when I was in Halifax, I saw that bus systems are now being electrified.

How can our government help our SMEs invest in cleaner technologies while boosting competitiveness, creating jobs and strengthening environmental protection?

[English]

Shannon Miedema: Mr. Speaker, this is the work I did for a very long time in my past life. I am very excited about our new national electricity strategy. This is going to unlock our ability to double our electricity capacity while cleaning our grid and adhering to our climate targets. Electric buses are one piece. Electrifying our building energy systems is another and fuelling our economy at large. I think that a lot of good work has already been done across this country by local governments, provinces and territories, and this federal government. We are going to keep on working towards that objective.

We just had Energy Efficiency Day nationally. Colleagues may not know that. Today, we had experts from across every sector here on the Hill, from the steel industry to the wind industry, buildings, efficiency and clean fuels. Everyone is pulling in the same direction to drive this clean economy of the future. I am really excited about it.

• (1930)

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-39. To begin, I want to point out to Canadians

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that the Liberal government has once again introduced an omnibus bill of some 246 pages that inappropriately combines measures that do not belong in the same legislation. This ploy is an attempt to blur issues and blunt criticism. It disrespects Parliament and the voters who send us here to properly scrutinize bills and hold government accountable. It directly contradicts previous promises by Liberals not to use this odious practice inappropriately. Unfortunately, this is not surprising. Liberals are infamous for saying one thing at election time and doing the opposite once elected.

As labour critic for the New Democratic Party, I will focus on the proposed changes to the Canada Labour Code contained in part 3 of this bill. Let there be no doubt that this bill contains one of the most serious attacks on workers' rights in a generation: the entrenchment of the harmful misuse of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. These changes would expand the federal government's unilateral authority to terminate a legal strike in a manner more broadly than exists in any G7 country, including Donald Trump's United States.

At its core, this bill would prevent Canadian workers from meaningfully exercising their constitutionally protected freedoms of association and expression. It would restrict their charter right to withdraw their services. It would fundamentally alter the balance of power in collective bargaining in Canada, and the way it would do so is deeply troubling to anyone who supports transparency and accountability. Once again, it reveals a disturbing trend by the Liberal government of concentrating power in the hands of cabinet ministers to avoid being responsible to Parliament. That is the approach of authoritarian rulers, not democratic ones.

Let me start by pointing out that ending lawful strikes was never the purpose of section 107. Since its inclusion in the code in 1984, this provision was always understood as an exceptional administrative power, not a weapon to violate workers' rights. In fact, there have been previous attempts to stretch that authority in the past, including by the Harper government in 2011. Former Conservative labour minister Lisa Raitt has publicly stated that Conservatives contemplated the use of section 107 to end strikes, but decided against it based on legal advice that this was not a proper use of that provision. However, the Liberal government has ignored that history and taken the use of section 107 to an unprecedented extreme.

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In the last three years alone, Liberals have used section 107 10 times to intervene in labour disputes, most recently involving rail workers, port workers, postal workers and airline workers. In many cases, Liberals used this section to break strikes just hours after they began. Why is this objectionable? It is because the freedoms of association and expression have been recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada to include the rights of workers to bargain collectively and withdraw their services in concert to advance their interests, so using the law in this way violates workers' constitutional rights. Because corporate management has disproportionate power in the workplace with unilateral rights to manage and vastly superior financial resources, workers' only way to counterbalance these is through withdrawing their services. Interfering with this strips workers of the only real power they have because this legislation undermines the collective bargaining process.

If employers know that government will intervene on their behalf to end a strike, they have reduced incentive to bargain seriously and come to an agreement themselves. Members should not take my word for it. Employers like Air Canada have publicly admitted this. It is unnecessary. The federal government and employers already have the tools they need to protect the health and safety of the public or intervene if the Canadian economy is truly imperilled by a protracted labour dispute. Governments always have the power to bring in back-to-work legislation where the issues can be fully debated in public in this chamber and elected representatives are held accountable to their voters by voting in their seats. This has been done numerous times when the national interest requires it.

• (1935)

Every labour code in the country, including the Canada Labour Code, has essential services provisions that allow any employer to make a case before an impartial adjudicator that a strike ought to be limited to preserve the health and safety of Canadians. These are routinely used in the cases of bargaining units like those of nurses, police officers and longshore workers.

Now, in this legislation, the Liberals want the ability to violate workers' rights even more easily. Far from containing any guardrails or government right to break strikes, this is a road map for how to do it. Bill C-39 would codify the minister's unilateral power to end a legal strike and would make the minister's own opinion the sole test for exercising that power. It would require the minister only to consider the report of a special mediator. This is someone, by the way, whom they appoint and whose recommendations they are entirely free to disregard.

It states that the minister may consider any relevant issue they wish, with no benchmarks or limits expressed in the legislation. It would require the minister only to consider the impact of their decision on freedom of association, merely making them think about workers' rights before violating them. In other words, federal workers can have their rights to take job action taken away by the sole opinion of a single cabinet minister for any reason they find convenient.

The legislation is also counterproductive, and I believe it would harm the public's interest. Undermining the right to strike is more likely to fuel conflict than prevent it. When workers are denied a legal means to withdraw their labour, disputes do not disappear;

they risk becoming more confrontational and difficult to resolve. The history of labour relations and market economies makes this clear. When workers' rights were suppressed, strikes did not disappear: They were frequent, protracted and often violent, and they tore communities apart.

The facts prove that the legislation is not even necessary. The truth is that the current system of counterbalanced collective bargaining in this country works. About 95% of all collective agreements in Canada are successfully negotiated at the bargaining table by the parties themselves, with no job action. Canada is on track this year to have the fewest days lost to strikes in the federal sector since 1954. This is why unions across the country have warned against these provisions: They understand that Bill C-39 would fundamentally change the balance of power in labour relations and harm the Canadian economy by fuelling uncertainty and instability.

Bea Bruske, the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, has been clear: Unions across this country are united. From coast to coast, across every sector, they are delivering the same message that unconstitutional restrictions on the right to strike are unacceptable and will be fought.

The right to strike is not a privilege. It is protected by the charter and recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada. It is not a right to be respected only when it is ineffective.

Strikes can disrupt. They can cause discomfort. They can cause economic consequences to employers and sometimes sections of the public. However, that is the very point of a strike. It is the most impactful, and frankly the only, way workers can demonstrate the value of their labour in the marketplace. By showing the effect the withdrawal of their labour has on society and on their employer, they make the case that they should be compensated accordingly.

Let us all acknowledge in this place that labour rights have had and do have a very positive impact on Canadian society. Through the struggle and sacrifice of working people for the last 160 years, as well as the many men and women who took job action for fair wages, safer working conditions and a better life for their families, all Canadians have benefited. We all enjoy a standard of living that economies with no labour rights look on with envy.

This debate is ultimately about more than labour law. It is about what kind of country we want to build and whose interests we seek to defend. New Democrats believe that strong countries are built by empowered workers. Strong economies are built through free and fair bargaining. Strong democracies respect constitutional rights.

● (1940)

The legislation is built on the view that workers' rights are an obstacle to nation building. That is wrong. Workers are the people who literally build this nation. New Democrats believe that if we want to build a stronger Canada, we must respect workers' rights, value their voices and raise their standard of living, yet—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member would apply the very same principles he just spoke about to the Province of Manitoba, in which one minister went to the Manitoba Labour Board and forced 350 health care workers back to work. The member knows that it was Wab Kinew's New Democratic government.

The changes being made to section 107 would put in safeguards to ensure more accountability and more transparency. However, as one of my colleagues talked about, it is easy to get a quick social clip that spreads misinformation.

Can the member provide his thoughts, on principle, in terms of what the Manitoba government has done with the health care workers?

Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, it is funny that whenever this member and the current government want to deflect attention from their own actions, they point to someone else. It reminds me of my mother when I was in grade 3, when she asked me, "If Johnny jumped off the bridge, would you?"

It is a ridiculous argument, but I want to address the misinformation embedded in the member's question.

There is not a single guardrail in the legislation, not one. We can read it. It says that it is through the sole opinion of the minister, taking into account any relevant consideration they want, that they may order the end of a strike. There is not a guardrail in the legislation. One person can end a strike based on no evidence whatsoever after a special mediator issues a report.

The only misinformation is spread by the government in trying to tell Canadians that they put guardrails in this. There are no guardrails at all. This is a road map to violate Canadian workers' constitutional right to strike, and that member knows it or he has not read the legislation.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know this is an issue that the member cares deeply about, and so should we all, because we are talking about workers' rights. Last I checked, workers' rights fall under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in section 2(d).

Another section that is particularly relevant to this conversation tonight is section 4.2 of the Department of Justice Act, which says that the Minister of Justice is legally required to table a charter statement for every single government bill. Liberals like to say they are the party of the charter. So many Liberal members have said they are all about workers' rights, yet the House and the special legislative committee that is going to be set up to examine Bill C-39 have not yet seen this.

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Does the member believe that the government has the obligation to give the people that charter statement before we start deliberating this at committee, yes or no?

Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, the answer is clearly no. In fact, I believe the real reason the legislation has been brought forth here in the House is that 12 hours after the flight attendants of Air Canada walked off the job, the Liberal government ordered them back to work. It was 12 hours after the rail workers went on strike that the government ordered them back to work. Do members know what happened? The Teamsters and CUPE filed court challenges saying that the government violated their charter rights. This case is before the courts right now, and in the government, the Liberals know they are going to lose, because the right to strike and the right to collectively bargain are respected charter rights recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Liberals have attempted to charter-proof themselves by bringing in the legislation, but it will not work.

By the way, this gives me a chance to point out that this is the first Liberal government in over 100 years not to have a minister of labour. If we want a signal of what the government thinks about workers, it is that it does not even think they deserve their own minister of labour. The Liberals have a Minister of Jobs and Families. Now, that is a big slap in the face to organized labour in this country, and I can tell members that it is noticed.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that my colleague has had a long day and that he may be tired at this hour, but I would like to ask him this question: Does he really think that the right to strike in Canada will be suppressed by any government?

● (1945)

[English]

Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of thinking; it is a matter of observing. I have watched workers in this country in the last 36 months have their rights violated 10 times by the Liberals, including by the member across from me. Of course, they have violated strike rights, and every time they take away a worker's right to strike hours after they began. They did not even wait until there was any impact on the public or on the employer. In fact, that is why Air Canada said it was not bargaining seriously at the table: It knew that the government was going to order the workers back to work before the strike even started, and that is what the Liberals did. They are doing the bidding of management. They are tipping the scales in favour of management. They are interfering with collective bargaining and violating workers' constitutional rights. Workers know it and unions know it; that member should also know it.

Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

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We find ourselves living in an extraordinary time of global transformation. We are witnessing unprecedented shifts in global trade patterns, rapid advancements in technology and heightened geopolitical uncertainty. The agreed-upon ways of doing business are being challenged across the globe every single day. It is clear that, as the world changes rapidly around us, we must look to our own domestic strengths to ensure that our supply chains are resilient, our infrastructure is strong and our economy is built to last. We cannot afford to passively observe global trends. We must take a hard look at how we build, approve projects and connect our communities to the world. This legislation does exactly that and provides our local communities, industries and workers with the certainty and predictability they need.

This step forward is made possible by the coordinated leadership of our government leads on this bill. Under their direction, Bill C-39 builds directly upon the foundation laid out with the One Canadian Economy Act and the successes of the Major Projects Office. Our government's commitment is one project, one review, one year.

Islanders and Atlantic Canadians know the value of time. On P.E.I., our construction seasons are short. Our local businesses cannot always afford to feel trapped as they wait for a decision they fear may not come. Anyone who has spent a winter in Atlantic Canada knows that our window for breaking ground and completing major physical infrastructure projects is narrow. When a project decision is delayed by weeks or months, it means losing valuable productivity for communities. That kind of delay is costly and frustrating.

Investors need to know that when they commit capital to a major project, they will receive an answer in a timely fashion. If Canada is going to attract the investment needed to build energy projects, do modern manufacturing and expand transportation hubs, we must prove that we can be nimble. Bill C-39 establishes clear timelines for federal project decisions and adjusts regulator timelines to better suit these needs. It moves federal approval processes to a concurrent review system and away from the slower sequential format of the past. This bill removes departmental silos and ensures that multiple bodies are looking at the same project at the same time. In the riding of Cardigan, this means that updates to our critical infrastructure, such as our small craft harbours and our energy grid capacity and expansion, can move forward without undue delay, all while retaining our strong protections.

Accelerating our timelines does not mean compromising our values. This legislation explicitly ensures that we continue protecting our environment while safeguarding and respecting indigenous rights every step of the way. High administrative standards do not demand slow decisions. We have proven that environmental stewardship and economic momentum go hand in hand.

P.E.I. relies on our ability to move goods efficiently. From the quality P.E.I. potatoes grown by our farmers to the world-class seafood harvested by our fishers, P.E.I. is ready to feed the world, but a strong product is only as good as the trade corridor that carries it to market. If our regional transport networks are outdated, our local producers lose out on opportunities. For an island province, those connections are especially important. We have the Confederation Bridge that was built in 1997 as a vital economic

link connecting Prince Edward Island to New Brunswick, the rest of Canada and the markets beyond. The same is true of the Wood Islands to Caribou ferry, which is in my riding of Cardigan. That crossing connects eastern Prince Edward Island directly with Nova Scotia and forms an important part of the transportation network that supports our communities, our tourism sector and the movement of goods throughout our region.

Our trade network does not end when goods leave Prince Edward Island. Atlantic Canada succeeds when the entire region is connected. Infrastructure in Halifax, including the grain handling and port facilities, helps connect Atlantic Canadian producers to international markets. If we are going to achieve a doubling of our exports to countries other than the U.S., we need this valuable infrastructure and these improvements to go ahead.

● (1950)

Our bridges, our ferries, our highways, our railways and our ports are all links in the supply chain. That is why strengthening Canada's trade corridors matters so much to Atlantic Canada. When one link in that chain is strengthened, our entire region becomes more competitive. When one link becomes a bottleneck, the effects can be felt by businesses and producers hundreds of kilometres away.

The building Canada strong act would modernize the governance of Canada's ports, its railways and its supply networks. This bill would help ensure that the hard work of Islanders and the hard work of Canadians can reach global markets reliably. We would strengthen our local economies by building a robust national network. When we fortify trade corridors across this country, we are building an economy where geographic isolation is no longer a barrier to success.

We cannot build a prosperous future using outdated processes. The tools of the past are not equipped to solve the problems of the future. This act would provide clarity, give our industries the modern trade corridors they require and give Canadians a strong, unified economy they could depend on. It represents a step towards a more competitive and resilient Canada and it tells Canadians that their federal government is focused on the everyday realities that keep Canada moving forward. For those reasons, I am supporting this bill.

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James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can tell members that there is some stuff in this legislation that we can support. I represent a large farming area in Manitoba, Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, and I have an agriculture background. I can tell members that the grain and oilseed producers in my riding have always had a lot of concerns about how sometimes their products do not get moved quickly; sometimes there are disruptions in rail and at the ports. We lose the confidence that we need as a nation, as a reliable supplier of our agri-food products.

There are three main parts in this bill. There is one section in here under the transportation side that talks about interswitching. Why has the current government not put permanently in place the interswitching of rail so that our grain farmers, our oilseed producers and other commodities producers can use whichever rail company they want, to get their products to port?

Kent MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, the member would be fully aware that this government is committed to port development, whether it is in Churchill, Manitoba, or in Vancouver. There is a large expansion being discussed. That would alleviate a lot of the struggles with the export of grain, particularly in the fall. We speak to ranchers in western Canada, and obviously it is the same everywhere. We all harvest in a certain window and that product all has to go to market, so we are going in the right direction in terms of port development. We need the processes to allow these expansions to happen.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague seems obsessed with the goal of completing major projects in one year and with the idea of diversifying our international markets. However, does he realize that, even internationally, there are clear rulings on the right to strike and on what a strike is? Does he realize that if the bill were to pass, Canada would become the only G7 country where the executive branch could decide to prevent workers from exercising their legally recognized right to strike? That does not present Canada in a very favourable light on the international stage.

• (1955)

[English]

Kent MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the member's statement. What this bill would do is give certainty to industry. The act would take concrete steps to strengthen labour relations by requiring earlier bargaining in complex cases. It would give unions and employers more time to identify issues, access mediation services and reach negotiated agreements before a strike or a lockout. The bill would develop the guardrails that give security to those labour relations.

Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech this evening by my colleague from the riding just directly across the Hillsborough River from Charlottetown. I want to ask him a couple of questions that are directly related to his own experience before coming to Parliament, and also something that is critical for his riding.

Where does he see the opportunities in this legislation with respect to that critical transportation link between Wood Islands and Caribou, Nova Scotia? Second, based on his decades of experience

in the dairy farming industry, where are the opportunities presented by this legislation in that industry?

Kent MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I would say first, with regard to the transportation links, obviously, in the region of the province and country that I am from, we have a ferry service that is essential to commercial business and the export of potatoes, fish and many other commodities that leave P.E.I. We are a province of 180,000, and P.E.I. has been called the million-acre farm. What we grow, we have to export. That has to go to international markets and markets in the rest of Canada.

In terms of the question about the dairy industry, I see this bill offering more certainty to the processing sector to build expansion. We are currently trucking milk to Ontario and Quebec that could be processed in Atlantic Canada. I think we need certainty in the business world to accomplish that.

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to send congratulations to my son and daughter-in-law Melody on the birth of their first son and our first grandson. I am happy to report that mom and baby are home and everybody is healthy. I love them lots and look forward to meeting Evan this weekend.

Mr. Speaker, over a year ago, the Prime Minister promised that Bill C-5, the one Canadian economy act, and his new Major Projects Office would get projects built at a speed not seen in generations. Liberals are back with a massive bill that amends the Building Canada Act that the government passed last year. Thirteen months after promising projects built at speeds not seen in generations, they are once again telling Canadians that another announcement will finally make the difference. Talk about not seeing something for generations.

Canadians have heard this promise before, and Conservatives are waiting on the 500 projects collecting dust while sitting on the Prime Minister's desk waiting for federal approval. In fact, we have already watched major projects disappear under the last decade of Liberal mismanagement. This includes energy east, northern gateway, Pacific Northwest LNG and the Frontier oil sands mine, just to name a few of these shelved projects, amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars in value.

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Although 20 projects have been referred to the Major Projects Office, it is important for the government to understand that a referral is not a shovel in the ground. When the government needs another law to fix its first one from last year, questions need to be asked. While the government keeps announcing new processes, Canadians continue waiting for projects to be approved and construction to begin. Bill C-39 is nearly 250 pages long, and my Conservative colleagues and I are continuing to review whether the legislation cuts delays or creates more bureaucracy and photo ops. Conservatives have consistently called for six-month project decisions because businesses need certainty. It is no secret that lengthy approval processes delay investment and prevent construction, but this is just one part of the problem when it comes to getting things built.

Conservatives have also called for a repeal of Liberal antidevelopment laws such as the “no more pipelines” law, Bill C-69. We also called for the repeal of the tanker ban law, Bill C-48, which blocked routes for shipping Canadian resources overseas. Conservatives have advocated for one project, one review system so major projects can face one coordinated federal assessment instead of multiple overlapping reviews and approvals. If this bill gets projects approved faster and gets Canadians' goods to market sooner, it does deserve credit. However, if it does not, it is another example of the Liberals mistaking a press conference for a project.

Bill C-39 is also to be judged by what it means for the cost of living in Canada. The minister has not guaranteed that this bill will not raise the costs of energy bills for Canadians. Our position is simple. Conservatives oppose policies that increase the cost of living on Canadians. We are laser-focused on making life more affordable. If a policy lowers costs, we support it. If it raises costs, we oppose it. The Liberals should also tell Canadians whether they have completed an independent cost-benefit analysis of Bill C-39 and what the bill is expected to mean for businesses across Canada.

Before my first election to Parliament, I had served as president of Manitoba's largest general farm organization, Keystone Agriculture Producers. I am also a lifelong farmer. That is why I was very attentive to the interswitching change proposed in Bill C-39. The concept of interswitching is to have a business use an alternative railway even when only one railway serves the facility directly. The purpose is straightforward. Giving more shippers access to alternative railways can increase competition and more transportation options.

• (2000)

Conservatives have supported that approach before. In 2014, the previous Conservative government passed the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, which enabled regulated interswitching to be extended from 30 kilometres to 160 kilometres in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Now, nearly 10 years later, Bill C-39 proposes to bring back a 160-kilometre extended interswitching regime in the same provinces for four years.

If extended interswitching helped move commodities to market 10 years ago, why did the Liberal government allow the earlier 160-kilometre expansion to expire, and why bring it back for only four years? Farmers and businesses that transport their goods plan several seasons ahead and invest based on rules they expect to face.

They need certainty. Conservatives will watch closely to see whether the Liberals allow this temporary regime to lapse again. Failing to provide certainty and predictability in Canada is not putting Canada first.

Canadian farmers and businesses need more than reliable rail access. They also need ports that can move goods efficiently once they reach the coast and send them to customers around the world. Canada has always depended on transportation infrastructure to connect this country. Sir John A. Macdonald's vision was a national railway that linked British Columbia with the rest of Canada and helped move goods to market. More than 140 years later, Canada still depends on that same connection to move Canadian products on rail, through our ports and out to world markets.

That is why the port of Vancouver is relevant to this debate. The port of Vancouver is a critical gateway for prairie grain exports to the world. When one of the most important export gateways performs poorly in part of its operations, that should concern Canadians. The World Bank's 2025 port performance index ranked Vancouver 375th out of 400 globally.

Farmers and businesses need a whole system to work. Better rail access will only go so far if goods then face delays or uncertainty at the port they are extended through. Canada has experienced repeated labour disruptions at ports and railways, which have impacted the ability to move goods to market. Conservatives respect workers' right to collective bargaining. At the same time, Canadian producers and businesses need reliable access to ports so they can control freight costs and meet commitments to customers around the world. As parliamentarians, it is important that we balance these matters and further study the labour impacts of the legislation before us today.

At the beginning of this debate, I quoted the Prime Minister promising to move major projects at a speed “not seen in generations”. Canadians have now heard that promise more than once. Bill C-39 would give the government another chance to prove that those words actually mean something in practice.

For Conservatives, the standard is clear: Projects should be approved faster, businesses should face fewer barriers and producers should have more competition to move their goods to market. If this bill helps deliver those results, Canadians will see it. However, if it only adds another layer of process in Ottawa, Canadians will see that too. Speed “not seen in generations” should mean shovels in the ground, goods moving and investments staying in Canada. Results, not promises, should be the standard by which Bill C-39 is judged.

● (2005)

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I come from a dairy farm. It seems my colleague is a farmer as well, so I understand the realities he faces.

He spoke about the port of Vancouver. We also have a port in Quebec City, and I understand the important role it plays in our trade strategy. At the Standing Committee on International Trade, we often heard about the port of Vancouver and the difficulties pork producers faced in shipping their products abroad because of the lack of predictability and certainty. I am pleased to hear his remarks because, based on what we see in Bill C-39, we will be able to move projects forward more quickly and provide greater predictability for businesses.

I therefore trust that he will support Bill C-39 and vote in favour of providing greater predictability for businesses across Canada.

[English]

Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I referred to it in my speech. There are still so many unknowns, especially when it comes to labour. If the track record is any indication of how the Liberals are going to perform in the future, my God, we have a long way to go.

It is absolutely ridiculous how many labour disruptions we have had under this Liberal regime. Hopefully, the member will stand in unison with us when we start questioning the fumbles that the Liberals are purposely putting in place.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the thoughtfulness of the member. He is a farmer and is a very hard-working MP, and I give a lot of credibility to what he says.

He talked about the certainty and predictability that farmers need from the interswitching provisions, but the government is only suggesting to bring them back for 48 months. Rather than putting in place a regime that has been proven to be successful under both the Harper and the Trudeau governments, the government is simply giving a bit of durable competition for a very short period of time.

Does he support making the provisions permanent? Would that bring some certainty and predictability to farmers like him?

Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I support predictability and stability, and that could mean locking them in. Ironically, when I was president at KAP, the main file that I worked on was interswitching. One thing I could not get over was that there was always the issue of the railways and trying to find a balance between the railways, the shippers and the people trying to do business with the railways.

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As for transparency, any time we are talking about interswitching in the bill, all members and everybody impacted by the bill need to be at the table whenever we are negotiating interswitching.

● (2010)

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague for his speech in which he talked about the importance of predictability, stability and transparency.

I want to focus on the word “transparency”. With Bill C-5, the government introduced the concept of creating projects of national interest and giving a single minister the power to circumvent legislation.

In this bill, the government takes things even further. Assessments used to take up to a maximum of three years, but now the government is reducing that to one year. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Will shortening a project's assessment period improve the project?

Is it not just the opposite? If we are being transparent, should projects not have to demonstrate why they are in the public interest?

[English]

Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, the hon. member referred to the culture of transparency. Sadly, the Liberal government defaults to secrecy and non-transparency. I know the member and I experienced and witnessed that when the Liberals had a manufactured majority. All of a sudden at the health committee, they shut off the cameras, shut down discussions and went into secretive mode because they could. If this is any indication of how they are going to deal with all the other stuff that is being brought forward in this massive bill, I fear for our future in Canada.

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in support of the proposed building Canada strong act. I was next to the Prime Minister when, in my home city of Calgary last spring, he announced our party's intention to speed up approval timelines while maintaining the robust environmental and social standards of which Canada is rightly proud.

He talked about needing political decisions to come at the start of the regulatory process rather than lurking out there as question marks until the very end. He talked about departments working through reviews concurrently and getting promptly to a yes or a no. He talked about certainty and clarity for businesses, workers, communities, indigenous partners and governments. He talked about pragmatism.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

The Prime Minister's stated aim, then as now, is to make Canada the best-performing country among the 38 members of the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. At the time, that meant reducing approval timelines to two years. However, the world will not wait for us. We have learned valuable lessons from the work of the Major Projects Office, for example. As Wayne Gretzky famously said, we must skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been.

We must continue to push ourselves. We must uphold the standards and ambitions that define us as Canadians, while acting quickly enough to attract investment, both from here and abroad. By doing so, we are contributing to our country's success. We are supporting good jobs, we are supporting strong communities, we are diversifying our trade and we are fostering the development of our industries here in Canada.

[English]

It would be one project, one decision and one year. If we do this right, and we will, we would set the conditions for a generation of smart prosperity.

The bill would find faster and better ways to reach the same objectives. We want to continue being a world leader in environmental and social standards, and we must continue to respect treaty rights and advance economic reconciliation, but we know we can do those things faster and better.

[Translation]

In any large organization, decisions inevitably accumulate over time. A rule is created in response to a new technology. A new rule is introduced to address an emerging technology. A court decision changes an established process. An event alters our understanding of an issue or exposes a weakness that we move quickly to correct. A new manager introduces a new approach, which is layered onto existing practices. It goes on like that, often for years. Viewed individually, each decision makes sense. It meets a need. It is appropriate. However, we do not always take the time to assess the cumulative effect of all these decisions. Processes can become complicated, frustrating and slow, sometimes even redundant and counterproductive.

[English]

Let us consider the expansion of consultation, which is a very good thing, and how it has intersected with our current system of reviews that occur one after the other: CER reviews, then DFO reviews, then ECCC reviews, and so on through all of the relevant departments, and at each step, a consultation occurs. While a billion-dollar company may be equipped to do four or five consultations, a concerned father of three, a first nation of 300 people or a rural municipality with a yearly budget of \$10 million might not be. Consultation fatigue sets in and consultation quality suffers. Participants in early stages do not benefit from understanding the accumulated benefits and impacts that are only apparent when all the reviews have occurred. We can all agree, I am sure, that a better approach is to have all stakeholders at the table and all considerations on the table, to respect everyone's time and capacity. That is better, and that is also faster.

● (2015)

[Translation]

This bill would also create regions of national interest. If we know that a region is important for critical minerals, clean energy, transportation or any other priority, regional planning allows us to look at the whole picture. That includes cumulative environmental impacts, indigenous peoples' rights and consultations, infrastructure needs, and areas where development should or should not take place. This way, we can establish common conditions, rather than starting the federal process from scratch for each new project. More planning up front means less duplication down the road.

Regional planning is not a new idea. Municipalities and provinces are doing it. As in those cases, regions of national interest provide clearer rules and greater certainty for investors. They also make it possible to better coordinate projects and have a coherent strategy. Imagine, for example, several mines using the same regional roads and power lines. That infrastructure would have already been considered for expansion in the planning process. Once again, it is a better approach and, once again, it is a faster one.

[English]

All Canadians want faster and better, but those who are considering investing billions have additional considerations and weigh projects against projects all over the world. Companies base investments on two criteria: return and risk. Faster decisions get projects to production sooner and in doing so increase return, and when they build in a Canadian way, they put Canadians to work. They strengthen our economy, they strengthen our communities and they strengthen economic reconciliation. Faster decisions also reduce risk. They mean we are not foregoing opportunities and investing for years with no guarantee of return at all.

Through shaping our policies, we can further reduce risk. The proposed building Canada strong act would move political reviews by cabinet from the end of the process to the start of the process, and in doing so, it would give companies the confidence that they will have political support if they can meet the regulatory rules. This is better, it attracts capital and it costs nothing. It simply moves one gate from the end of a process to the start. It would reduce no standard and would lessen no protection.

[Translation]

This bill contains many such amendments: thoughtful, practical and, in some cases, fairly self-evident. They are highly concrete measures, such as extending certain permits, starting negotiations earlier, making greater use of mediation and assigning primary responsibility to the department that already possesses the relevant expertise. These are practical solutions to specific problems. All of these provisions, along with many others I have not discussed, pursue the same objective: improving our processes in practical ways while maintaining the high standards Canadians expect. This is a well-designed, comprehensive bill that is targeted at the specific barriers holding back investment and growth, at a time when the world sees extraordinary opportunities in Canada.

[English]

I have a final thought. As a country, we are doing big things. The bill would support doing big things. We have transportation goals and electrification goals. We have trade diversification goals. Our ambition is to be a conventional energy superpower and a renewable energy superpower. Our ambition is to maintain our global lead in mining, nuclear, forestry and so much more.

I am aware of a study that shows that since 2006, federal regulatory burden has increased slowly but steadily. Through the Harper years and the Trudeau years, there was an unbroken increase to 37%. To be clear, it did not increase senselessly. It increased in response to events, challenges, evolved understandings and opportunities. It served a purpose. However, in aggregate, this increase is estimated to have lowered GDP growth by 1.7 percentage points and employment growth by 1.3 percentage points in the business sector.

We have created another opportunity now, one I hope all members of the House embrace. A rationalization of our processes and regulations is a healthy process any organization should do regularly. The proposed building Canada strong act is that rationalization for the federal government. It would let us build faster, build better and do that while maintaining and promoting the values that we hold dear as Canadians.

● (2020)

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that the Liberals like to say that they are against two-tier anything, but Bill C-39 would create a statutory authority for the regulator, or in this case the responsible authority, that would give the one year, one review. There would be exemptions. Obviously, there is proposed section 19(4), which would force a completeness sign-off that could be like Groundhog Day for someone.

In addition to the loopholes in the bill, there would be no statutory deadline for transportation projects. I would like to ask the member why transportation projects would have no statutory one year, one review equivalent like the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the Impact Assessment Agency or the Canadian Energy Regulator have. Why would there be a two-tier approach to big projects?

Corey Hogan: Madam Speaker, I think the member opposite will also appreciate that there are different considerations, both in transportation because of the nature and the concentration that ex-

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ists, and also in linear infrastructure and the challenges that are presented there as well.

I certainly welcome the member's comments, and I hope that at committee we can flesh this out. Perhaps there are opportunities to meet his concerns as we advance on this.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, there is something rather troubling about Bill C-39. It would allow projects to receive approval in principle, meaning a project could be authorized before any assessment has been conducted to determine whether it is actually a sound project. I would ask my colleague whether he would agree to buy a car before even taking it for a test drive.

Corey Hogan: Madam Speaker, I want to be precise, so I will respond in my mother tongue.

[English]

It is a question of where we put a political approval. It is not saying that we have purchased the car. In fact, it is saying that we will purchase the car if it looks like it did in the advertisement. What we see with this particular approach is that we would be removing the uncertainty that comes from politics but saying that approval would be conditional upon all the other regulatory approvals' being met by the decision document at the end of the process.

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's speech and his reflections, in particular, on the different capacities that organizations, large versus small, may have in participating in some of the review processes. I wonder if he could elaborate on how the bill would help level the playing field a bit.

Corey Hogan: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to. I think we can all appreciate, as we have grown in understanding about the complexity of projects, the impact on the environment and the impact on communities, that more federal departments have been brought into the conversation. Those conversations have become more robust. The challenge, however, has become that our organization as a government has presented additional stacking of consultations and demand on the communities that we are hoping to support through these initiatives.

What Bill C-39 would do is bring all that to one table and allow a robust conversation to occur that would take into consideration all the benefits, all the drawbacks, all the challenges and all the opportunities, and do so in a way that would be much more respectful of time. There are many horror stories of people having to be subjected to five or six consultations. Let us get it down to one and make it a better one.

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Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, in regard to the interswitching provisions of part 2 of Bill C-39, the whole idea is to give certainty and predictability, yet farmers and shippers, particularly in the natural resource sector, who would depend on that competition created by the interswitching measures, would have it for only 48 months. Does the member believe this should be made permanent? This has been tried under the Harper government. It has been tried under the Trudeau government. Why would we not be putting that and making it a permanent program?

Second to that, many Liberals have talked about the transportation project office as if it were something that would add to this, but like the Major Projects Office, it would not have any authority. In fact, the minister of transport would be given the discretion to open said office. Does the member think that putting forward offices that may or may not happen and putting forward provisions that are simply temporary and, again, subject to good U.S. relations, would be creating certainty and predictability in the transportation sector?

• (2025)

Corey Hogan: Madam Speaker, I certainly believe it would increase certainty within all those sectors.

What I would put back to my colleague is that, just as under Harper and just as under Trudeau, these rules would be provisional. There are challenges we want to work through in the longer term, and we want to make sure we can get to a transportation sector that is stable and well working. I certainly welcome the member's additional commentary at the committee stage.

Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC): Madam Speaker, as we discuss Bill C-39 in advance of its likely going to committee, I want to raise some concerns about how I think the bill would be used to further the current government's airport privatization agenda. I believe that is an agenda that deserves some severe scrutiny, and it is one that I oppose wholeheartedly. Sometimes it is difficult to get people to pay attention in this job to what is going on in Ottawa, but I do hope that, with my comments today, I can encourage Canadians to pay attention to just how bad airport privatization would be for our country and why Bill C-39 is a problem because it would further that agenda.

When I was doing research on this topic, I learned that when I was five years old, the federal government, in the House of Commons, had a debate about airport privatization. Obviously I was too young to pay attention at the time. I was busy watching Hulk Hogan and Ultimate Warrior on television. I learned that it was a Liberal prime minister, the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, who put an end to the airport privatization deal for Pearson airport at that time. There was a lot of back and forth, and in the record, we can see that ultimately, when he was elected prime minister of this country, Chrétien concluded that airport privatization does not serve the public's interest. I think he was completely correct.

It is interesting to see how much things have changed since then. We are now having this debate again with another Liberal government that is coming to a completely different conclusion from what Prime Minister Chrétien came to. In fact, the current Liberal Prime Minister has actually contracted help from big banks, such as CIBC and J.P. Morgan, to sell off four major Canadian airports, in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver.

I believe that the policy idea, the goal that the Prime Minister has set out, is bad news, not just for Canada's national interest but also for workers and for travellers. I am going to use my time to outline why I think that is such a concern and why Bill C-39 is of particular concern for how it would facilitate the selling off of our airports.

I will start with the national interest. Prime Minister Chrétien was correct to say that airport privatization does not serve the public's interest. The federal government is fundamentally altering the way that airports function in our country. Instead of treating airports as critical national infrastructure, which they are; instead of treating airports as necessary for our economy to function, which they are; and instead of treating airports as necessary for connecting people across our country, which they are, the government's current plan is to make airports a profit-seeking venture, a complete transformation from what airports are currently doing across this country today.

The International Air Transport Association has been clear in warning of the dangers of privatization, because of how it shifts the way that airports function. It has outlined in its studies of privatization across the world that it produces bad outcomes for a country's ability to preserve airports as critical national infrastructure. I would like to quote from some of its research. It states, "The primary focus of airports should be to support local and national prosperity as an economic catalyst." However, the IATA goes on to say, "in private hands, shareholder returns take top priority." That is the danger of the current Liberal Prime Minister's airport privatization agenda. By putting shareholder interests at the centre of how our airports operate, it is fundamentally changing the nature of how these very important economic, cultural and political institutions behave.

The IATA goes on to say, "When [airports] are privatised, the public entities...wash their hands about this infrastructure". That means that the record in studies done around the world is that once privatization occurs, governments tend to stop caring about making investments themselves and preserving the integrity of the infrastructure. They stop taking responsibility for making sure that maintenance is good or that the public interest is being served.

In the context of what is happening in Canada right now, multiple organizations have warned of what the government's agenda is going to do to airports in this country. The Air Line Pilots Association of Canada has echoed warnings of the dangers of airport privatization, warning that the federal government's privatization agenda opens up the country's largest airports to foreign private investment that poses significant risks not only to the independence of the country but also to the operation of the facilities, including safety risks.

● (2030)

The reason the Air Line Pilots Association raised that point is that it shares what Prime Minister Chrétien said, which is that airports have a duty to serve the good, and they will no longer do that if shareholder interests take primacy. The association also said, “Canada’s airports are important national assets, and the government must ensure they continue to prioritize the public interest, safety, and the needs of Canadians—not the interests of private investors and shareholders.”

The reason that all of this is very important to keep in mind when we take a look at Bill C-39 is that it is a violation of the direction that the government set last year. In passing the Building Canada Act, the government set out a definition of what constitutes national interest for infrastructure projects. That definition included a very important line from the government’s legislation, which said that it strengthens Canada’s autonomy, resilience and sovereignty. It is very clear that airports are essential to that. With that context in mind, it makes absolutely zero sense to sell off our airports in this country, because that does not serve the national interest, even taking the government’s own definition of that concept at face value.

Where does Bill C-39 come in to facilitate this? To advance the airport privatization agenda, the Liberal Prime Minister is exploiting the concept of national interest to change labour laws in our country. Through this legislation, the Prime Minister seeks to make it easier for airport privatization to move forward. Bill C-39 would hurt the collective bargaining power of airport workers, and the federal government would use this bill to ensure that private interests face lower labour resistance as they seek higher profit margins in their takeover of this industry.

The reality is this. We are in a scenario where the Liberals have a majority government. There is only so much that the opposition parties that occupy seats in this House are able to do, but one of the important lines of defence in ensuring that our airports do not become something we are not proud of is ensuring that unions are able to actively negotiate and fight for their own interests. This legislation would completely put them at a disadvantage. This legislation would, in fact, give the government the ability to railroad unions in its effort to hand over our airports to private interests. That should be of concern to all Canadians.

Unifor, which represents 17,000 unionized airport workers, has taken issue with some of the changes to labour law in this legislation. Specifically, Unifor has pointed to section 107, which would give the federal government, in particular the minister of labour, new powers to end labour disputes and force binding arbitration. Under section 107, the minister could direct the CIRB to end a strike or lockout, which would put unions at a disadvantaged position for negotiating and would limit their ability to hold private interests accountable.

The Air Line Pilots Association of Canada has also pointed out how its members would be affected by this type of privatization, citing potentially negative outcomes for “runway maintenance, de-icing capacity, staffing” and other safety measures. From a national interest standpoint and a worker standpoint, Bill C-39 would facilitate an agenda that threatens to bring harm and risk to our country.

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Lastly, with the remainder of my time, I want to talk about travellers, the people who are worried about how expensive it is to fly anywhere in Canada right now. Members know how hard it is to travel across this country, especially with the affordability crisis the way it is.

The International Air Transport Association, academics across the country and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission have all found constantly, over and over again in their studies, that privatization only makes air travel more expensive, not less expensive. In fact, in Australia, they have found that since privatization occurred there, travellers and airlines have paid \$1.6 billion more to travel around their country than they would have if privatization had not occurred.

For the good of our country and the good of people who are trying to see their families, we should oppose this agenda.

● (2035)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since the last federal election, which was about 18 months ago, Canadians have been genuinely concerned about Trump, trade and tariffs. They have been on the front burner virtually from day one, and Canada needs to be able to adjust as we build a team Canada approach that involves many different stakeholders, led by the Prime Minister.

The member opposite went down to the United States, and he had a meeting that upset a lot of Canadians. He told Canadians, as a mouthpiece, many would suggest, of President Trump, that we needed to stop having a “hissy fit”. I am wondering if the member would take this opportunity to provide clarity on that and apologize to Canadians for making that statement on behalf of President Trump.

Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, it is shameful for the member opposite to suggest that I speak for anyone but my constituents. I have fought very hard for a better relationship between us and the United States at a time when I believe the governing party is exploiting bad relationships between the two countries for its own political benefit.

The conversation we are having today is a perfect example. I just spoke for 10 minutes about the Liberals’ airport privatization agenda, and instead of responding to any of the legitimate concerns Canadians are noting, they want to draw attention to the United States. This is their political strategy in a nutshell: advance policies that under no other circumstances would have public support, but hope that if they fearmonger enough, they will get their agenda done. I am not falling for it.

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to say hello to the people of Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, whom I represent with pride and dignity. There were some things I found interesting in my colleague's speech, particularly when it came to the privatization of ports and so on. Bill C-39 seeks to do just that. The government even announced that it wants to privatize airports. That is certainly not in our national interest.

I would like my colleague to speak a bit more to the fact that the government is taking advantage of a crisis that should be temporary to implement measures that will be permanent and that will have harmful effects, particularly for the public interest.

[English]

Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, what a fantastic question that was from my colleague. He precisely pointed out what is going on, which is that we are facing a temporary crisis and the government is using it to bring in permanent measures and changes to our country.

The airport privatization issue is a perfect example. We have had very little public discussion about this and very little conversation here in the House of Commons, yet we are seeing massive changes being done to our country under the guise of responding to the current crisis. We will deal with the consequences of these decisions for generations, and that is exactly why we have to be vocal and oppose them every chance we get, even when the Liberals point a finger at us and smear our good reputations.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for talking about how the government tries to distract from core issues.

The member spoke a lot about workers' rights and the fact that in Bill C-39, the government has proposed a number of changes that seem to be running roughshod over many workers' concerns. Under section 4.2 of the Department of Justice Act, the Minister of Justice is legally required to table a Charter of Rights and Freedoms statement for every single government bill. This means the Department of Justice should weigh in and tell Parliament and the Canadian people exactly what its legal opinion is of the measures that are in Bill C-39. We have not seen that published on the government's website. The special committee that is organizing very soon to study this legislation has not received it.

Does the member believe the government needs to start being transparent with Canadians as to what its plans are in regard to the Charter of Rights and fulfilling its responsibilities under the law to Parliament?

• (2040)

Jamil Jivani: Madam Speaker, transparency is such a great word, and absolutely we need more transparency here. Unifor has raised concerns about how this bill would impact the constitutional rights of unionized workers. I would love to see the government produce an analysis of how this bill would affect the charter rights of Canadians.

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is my first time speaking to legislation since we came back in the fall,

so I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the pages, who are from all over the country, to this House. They are in for a spectacular year. I myself sat where they are in 1991, but do not do the math.

[Translation]

We congratulate the pages.

[English]

What an honour this is and what a full-circle moment it is to welcome the pages and to be here speaking to legislation that is transformative in this country.

I also want to thank everyone in Guelph for the conversations, meetings, site tours and community events over the summer. It is a real honour to represent Guelph in this House. As we approach Thanksgiving, I am so grateful for the privilege, the responsibility and the honour of serving my community and this great country at this historic time.

Guelph is the fourth-largest exporter to the U.S. per capita. This means we engineer, we make things and we ship things primarily by road and rail. Did members know that the city of Guelph is one of the few municipalities that owns a railway? In the 1880s, businesses in Guelph were frustrated with the freight rates and service provided by the Grand Trunk Railway, which held a monopoly on rail transport in the city, so local merchants and civic leaders decided to build their own. They believed competition was essential for economic growth, and they created the Guelph Junction Railway to connect Guelph to the growing Canadian Pacific Railway network, providing local industries with an alternative route to markets across Canada. Now, 142 years later, the GJR owns approximately 38 kilometres of track. It connects with both Canadian Pacific Kansas City and the CN network, serving local manufacturers and industries.

As Guelph heads into our bicentennial year, I want to celebrate those early industrialists and civic leaders who I think would agree with the building Canada strong act. They wanted to give themselves more certainty. They built a stronger, more resilient and more independent economy.

Everyone in Guelph I have met and have been working with for the past 18 months, including some of the largest employers in advanced manufacturing, agri-food, clean tech, packaged goods and consumer products, wants predictability and certainty. I heard this all the time when I was on city council. Of course, it is at a micro level, but people will tell us that they want faster processes, because sequential approvals and multiple reviews, and sometimes a change in municipal or provincial government, can derail a project. It definitely increases costs. It can delay a store opening. It can threaten the viability of an entire project. A lot of money and time can be spent in this churn that is not productive, and it is magnified when multiple jurisdictions are involved. This is what Bill C-39 seeks to address.

We are in a trade war with our largest trading partner, which is something the opposition has sought to minimize repeatedly. We did not ask for it. We do not deserve it. It is illegal and it is unjustified, yet here we are. We will not be complacent. We will have our own plans.

We cannot control what other countries do, but we can take down our interprovincial trade barriers, which the federal government has done and provinces are working on. We can control our own processes and regulations at home to get big things built, people working and goods to our own projects and to an expanding list of international markets. We can make sure federal reviews and decisions are completed within one year of a proponent submitting a completed comprehensive application, while upholding Canada's rigorous environmental standards and respecting indigenous rights. We can and we must do so. How? It is by removing duplication and conducting reviews and consultations concurrently rather than sequentially. We can accelerate these processes. In fact, already since December 2025, Canada has achieved co-operation agreements with seven provinces to advance a one-project, one-review framework to reduce existing duplication between federal and provincial assessments.

To be clear, the building Canada Strong Act would make no changes to federal environmental standards. It would be a change in process. All factors would still need to be taken into consideration, including climate impacts, species at risk, ecological and nature implications, and more. I know this is really important to folks in Guelph.

Let us remember that major projects, like electrification, massive hydro and wind projects, and critical mineral extraction and processing, also support our climate goals. They support Guelph businesses like Hammond Power, which makes the transformers that keep our industries humming and is key to cleaner energy and transportation, and Hitachi Construction Truck Manufacturing, which makes a partly electrified 150-tonne rigid-frame mining truck using Hamilton steel and manufactured in Canada by highly skilled workers.

• (2045)

Canada's new government has set an ambitious vision of major projects, electrification, nuclear, a defence industrial strategy, homebuilding and massive investments in infrastructure. Who is going to build all this? Who is going to fabricate the steel we need, make the moulds and build the ports, roads and towers? Canadian

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workers are. This government is so invested in our skilled trades-people that we are investing \$6 billion in the team Canada Strong initiative. Working with unions, we have set a goal to recruit, train and hire 80,000 to 100,000 new Red Seal trades by 2031 and to support them financially along the way.

We are a government that believes in labour, and we consulted with labour on this bill. Bill C-39 would modernize the federal labour framework and strengthen protection for workers in federally regulated industries. Changes to the Canada Labour Code will strengthen collective bargaining by helping parties address issues earlier, reach negotiated agreements and resolve disputes, while fully protecting the right to strike.

Section 107 has been in the Canadian Labour Code for nearly 50 years. This bill would create guardrails around its use, adding transparency and predictability while ensuring that it is reserved as a last resort tool for exceptional circumstances in which both parties have reached an impasse. Any decision to invoke section 107 would require the federal government to demonstrate significant national, economic and social risks.

The government will also be adding new health and safety officers to increase inspection capacity by 70%, hiring new staff at the Canadian Industrial Relations Board to clear the backlog of complaints by workers against employers and cracking down on worker misclassification with more inspectors. Together, these changes will ensure workers are treated fairly, are protected on the job and have greater income security, and they will promote stable labour relations. This is important to the workers, to their families, to people in my riding and to all Canadians.

Bill C-39 would also formally designate strategic trade corridors, remove bottlenecks and establish a transportation project office to coordinate federal permitting and advance priority transportation projects within one year. Guelph is a manufacturing hub. Advanced manufacturing is Guelph's largest employment sector, accounting for \$4.5 billion in exports every year. Getting raw material in and finished products out faster and more predictably improves productivity, reduces business costs and makes Canadian business more competitive. This includes logistics and shipping companies such as PDI and Traxxside, which use the Guelph Junction railway, and multiple trucking companies.

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Since last spring, Canada has signed 20 new economic and security agreements. We want to export to the world. To do that, we need modern border crossings, including ports and trade digitization. When I spoke with people from UPS operations this summer in Guelph, they told me that digital trade processes will reduce costs for exporters, improve supply chain resiliency and help small and medium-sized enterprises participate in international markets. These small and medium-sized businesses sometimes get lost in the conversation on major projects. They seem far from Guelph, but these faster supply chains and trade corridors are for small and medium-sized businesses too. They account for approximately 99% of all employer businesses in Canada. There are 444 CFIB members in Guelph alone.

I am so excited. I am so proud to be on the industry committee and the transportation committee at this moment in time. It is an awesome intersection. This is the most ambitious reform to how Canada builds in a generation. We are modernizing regulatory approvals, maintaining rigorous environmental standards, upholding indigenous rights and ensuring workers are treated fairly.

We can all work together to build Canada now, keep Canada moving and ensure Canada is strong for all.

• (2050)

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member is a member of the transportation, infrastructure and communities committee with me, so it is wonderful to see my colleague here today. She talked a lot about trade infrastructure and the need to get things done, yet the Minister of Transport and her colleagues keep talking about this transportation projects office as though it is a real thing. Bill C-39 would only give the minister discretion to start an office. I may not be opposed to a single window, as I think that might be a helpful introduction, but this particular new project office would have no formal authority, meaning that it could not grant a permit or force another part of Transport Canada to speed it up.

Why is there all this rhetoric about getting trade infrastructure done when they have an office that does not exist, is discretionary by the minister and does not have any authority? While I am on this topic, why the heck is there not a deadline, as there is in section one of the bills, to force these big transportation projects to get done quickly?

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, I believe my colleague from Calgary Confederation began to address it. First of all, when we are talking about linear infrastructure, it can take some time to assemble the land, to do the engineering, to get the partners onside, etc. That may be why. I would encourage my hon. colleague to support the bill and get it to committee, where we could have a more fulsome discussion.

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier, we were talking about infrastructure to promote international trade. I pointed out to my colleague from Halifax that division 3 accelerates pipeline construction. If we take a closer look at where our oil exports go, we see that most of them go to the United States. In fact, 91% of our oil exports go to the United States.

The government is scrapping environmental laws so it can send more oil to the United States to shore up that country's energy security despite the ongoing trade conflict. That makes no sense to me, especially since oil companies are largely owned by American interests.

Does my colleague agree that it makes absolutely no sense to scrap environmental legislation in order to supply more oil to the Americans, who are the main beneficiaries?

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, first, I would remind the House that no environmental legislation will be amended and that all existing requirements must be met. Second, thanks to oil and gas pipelines, our exports will not necessarily be going to the United States anymore; they may go to Asia and Europe instead. Given the geopolitical situation in Europe, our allies are very eager to access Canadian energy to heat their homes.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoulu, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent speech. I am very happy to know that there are so many manufacturers in Guelph. I come from a region that has many as well. For example, Quebec City is home to 27 industrial parks, and Beauce also has a large manufacturing sector.

My colleague spoke at length about predictability. Having worked in banks and lent money to businesses, I know that all banks need predictability. All businesses and businesspeople need it, too.

What does Bill C-39 contain that will help provide the predictability everyone keeps talking about, encourage investment and strengthen our supply chain?

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, as I said in my remarks, since December 2025, Canada has already entered into co-operation agreements with seven provinces, in order to advance the "one project, one review" approach. I do think Bill C-39 contains many initiatives that create certainty for business owners, workers and investors.

• (2055)

[English]

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the House this evening, as always.

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When I was growing up, I had four siblings. Members will be shocked to know that, as my desk often is today, my room was very messy growing up. My parents would, from time to time, insist that I clean it and then conduct a thorough inspection to ensure the room had been cleaned. I mastered the technique of cleaning my room. It involved picking up all my stuff and moving it into my sister's room across the hall. Following the inspection, I would move the items back. I say this to demonstrate to members that I know well the difference between getting something done and feverishly moving things around in order to create the impression of activity and results when nothing is actually changing. That brings me to the bill before the House today, Bill C-39.

The government is very fond of describing itself as a new government, of all the same people, more or less. Nonetheless, we are starting to get a bit of a sense of the character of this new government of the same people. Frankly, they are a bit slippery. They pride themselves on their slipperiness. I will give some examples. A year ago, before the House, we had the Build Canada Act, which was supposed to be transformational. It was going to make it so much easier to build things, and it was going to be transformational. It created the Major Projects Office. It did not create major projects, but it created a Major Projects Office.

It was so successful that a year later, the Liberals decided they needed a new bill. This is not the Build Canada Act; it is the building Canada strong act. The sequel is always a little worse. The bill would have even more offices. We would have the transportation projects office. We would have a national transportation council. We would have all kinds of new bodies and offices.

I hate to imagine what the name of the bill will be this time next year. Maybe all those watching CPAC at home can send their suggestions in to the Prime Minister. Maybe it will be the "build Canada even stronger act" or "the build Canada the strongest yet act". It will keep going as long as they have a chance, with the proliferation of new offices.

However, the reality is that they are calling Bill C-39 the building Canada strong act. It is the building Canada strong act in more ways than one. It is the building Canada strong act instead of the building Canada strong reality, because the government is continually talking about how this is really going to be the big one that actually gets it done. The government is just going to create five or six more offices. It is going to have more councils of different bureaucrats, and that will be the game-changer for now.

We can see the political utility of this. It is to constantly be putting in the window this new sense of engaging in feverish activity. The government is putting in place more instruments and more mechanisms. As I hope the anecdote I shared at the beginning established, that feverish activity is not the same as results.

Generally speaking, we need fewer offices, not more offices. We need less bureaucratic intervention, not more bureaucratic intervention. We need government to get out of the way so that major projects can move forward. We do not need to add to the number of offices and bureaucrats. We need to simplify the process.

• (2100)

We very much support the principle of one project, one review; of having efficient timelines for all projects to move forward. The approach the government takes is cherry-picking: "Okay, this is a major project we like and we are going to give it special treatment." The approach was better than nothing in the midst of the regulatory pile-on that Canadian companies have dealt with for so long, but we favour an approach that simplifies the approval processes for all companies, large and small, for all kinds of projects, and we favour processes that are focused on results. It is time to have a government that actually focuses on the results instead of the appearance of activity, and that asks to be measured by the results that are produced.

Increasingly, what we hear from Canadians is the challenging results in their lives. We are going to see job numbers later this week, but already, even before the escalation of the trade war with the United States, we had a significant increase in job losses. There was another big increase in youth unemployment last month. We continue to hear from people whose businesses are struggling as a result of overtaxation and over-regulation. Again, we need simplified processes. We need policies that actually deliver on the promises of this legislation.

Canadians, in general, welcome a certain change in tone that we have seen from the Liberals. At one time in the past, the Liberals were more explicitly antidevelopment. Now they talk in ways that sound like they are more supportive of development, but what really matters are the results. Again, we see the slipperiness of the current government, putting forward big acts with big names and repeatedly doing that year after year, but we are not seeing the results. Canadians will not long be fooled by a slippery government. They will demand a reality in this country that flows from the big claims and the big rhetoric.

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We saw another demonstration today of the slipperiness of the government, in bizarre and tragic terms. We had a colleague from the Conservative Party put forward an excellent bill to protect Canadians by ending the possibility of MAID for those with mental health challenges. The government, on the one hand, said it agrees with the principle of ending MAID for those with mental health challenges, and then almost universally voted against the bill. The Liberals voted to kill a bill that would have done something that they said they wanted to do, but they said that if they did it, they would do it with their own legislation, which has yet to be drafted and which would be paired with another further expansion of MAID, an expansion that raises all kinds of significant concerns at a time when Canadians are increasingly alarmed by the extreme and dangerous nature of the MAID regime in Canada. The government hears those concerns and is therefore trying to pretend that it is responding to them, while at the same time voting against a bill that would actually address the issue. It is a slippery government that is saying one thing but trying to bury the reality in the midst of what it is saying.

Our vision in the Conservative Party is for action that is genuinely pro-development; that unleashes the potential of this country's economy, of its people and of its natural resources; that creates review processes that are clear and are simple. Our vision does not use these kinds of moments as excuses for the greater proliferation of bureaucracy and administration, but zeroes in on the changes that would actually produce results.

There is some of the rhetoric around Bill C-39 and some of the stated objectives that we can certainly get behind, but I will believe it when I see it. We will believe it when we are no longer seeing year after year of bills with nice-sounding names that promise this is going to be the one that does it, and yet we never actually see those results. People want to see major projects and big investments built, and able to move forward in this country as used to happen in the past. They want to see jobs, opportunity and prosperity flow from that. That is what we are going to be fighting for on this side of the House as we move this bill forward, as we study it at committee and we scrutinize the provisions to try to push the government to actually deliver on the promise.

• (2105)

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I quite liked my colleague's anecdote about his messy bedroom. I think there was a bit of disorder going on in his thoughts this evening, because he talked about everything but Bill C-39. He even talked about another bill that had nothing to do with Bill C-39 when he was talking about streamlining and results. Those things are found in Bill C-39.

My question for my colleague is, will he commit to reading the bill in detail and returning to the House to speak to Bill C-39? I think he will find answers to many of his questions.

[English]

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I think the member was maybe not listening too carefully. He maybe listened to the anecdote at the beginning and then prepared his question before hearing the rest of it.

I do acknowledge that the stated aspirations in this bill are, in many cases, aligned with things we have been calling for for a long time. The question will be the results. I look forward to the study that is going to happen on this bill at committee and the constructive work the Conservatives will do to put forward amendments to try to deliver on that promise.

However, when I see the government emphasize that we are going to have more offices, councils and more processes, that again seems to be that push toward feverish activity instead of results.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to talk about the slogan “build Canada strong,” which the government repeats ad nauseam. Do they think they can build Canada strong by undermining accountability and weakening assessments? There is a fixed deadline for all projects, regardless of their scope. Within one year, the project developer must submit all assessments. Previously, the deadline was a maximum of three years. Now, they are cutting corners. I would like my colleague to explain this to me. Is this how they strengthen things, build something more solid, when, in reality, they just want to speed things up?

[English]

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, what we need in this country is project reviews that are appropriate, accessible and timely. We should expect and look for simplicity and timeliness. I think we can achieve effective reviews that are meaningful and invite the engagement of those who need to be heard from, within clear, reasonable and defined timelines.

I think sometimes there are those who just do not want to build things and who try to create these review processes that are complex enigmas that nobody can ever get through. The goal is to have a fair process that is timely and gets to results.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate what the Conservative shadow minister for employment has done, not just in this speech but across Canada, where he has been speaking to young people. In our discussions, I mentioned to him that Kelowna has had the highest unemployment rate in the country for four months standing. He was recently at UBC Okanagan speaking to young Canadians who want to participate in the economy.

I was wondering if he would enlighten the House a bit about what some of the students are thinking, because youth unemployment is much higher. I would like to hear what he believes would be good for not just these students, but for this great country.

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I was recently at UBC Okanagan, which is, I believe, either in my colleague's riding or very close to it. I have been now in six provinces, at many university campuses, asking students in public areas, as they go by, the question, "Are you better or worse off than your parents' generation?" That has been a starting point for lots of great conversations about economic issues, but also cultural issues and some of the different ways in which young people perceive their lives as having been affected and changed by various changes in our society.

Overwhelmingly, the concern about being able to afford a home and being able to find a job is driving a sense that young people have that they are worse off than their parents' generation. Starting out in life, pretty fundamental core things are whether someone can afford a home or find a job. That is much more difficult for young people today than it used to be as a result, in many cases, of the government's policies.

• (2110)

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Today, I want to speak about Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, and why it matters for Canada's future.

[Translation]

Canada is at a pivotal moment. The global economy is undergoing a major transformation. Countries around the world are competing to attract investment, create jobs and develop new industries. At the same time, Canadians are feeling the effects of the rising cost of living and economic uncertainty. To meet these challenges, we must grow. We must build roads, ports, clean energy projects, transportation networks and other infrastructure that will enable Canada to grow and create good jobs.

[English]

When we talk about building Canada, we must remember something important. It is not just about what we build, but also about how we build. That is why indigenous peoples must be part of this work. After all, first nations, Inuit and Métis are not only rights holders. They are business leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, employers and project owners. They are helping to shape Canada's economy and create opportunities for future generations. Simply put, we cannot build a stronger Canada without indigenous peoples. That is why we have taken steps to support indigenous participation in major projects. We have opened new consultation resource centres to help communities participate in project reviews. We have provided funding so indigenous communities have the expertise and capacity they need to engage in discussions about projects that affect them.

The growing role of indigenous ownership is reflected in the success of the First Nations Finance Authority, a first nations-led, not-for-profit financial institution created under the federal First Nations Fiscal Management Act. Earlier this year, the FNFA issued a record \$800-million bond, helping push total first nations investments financed through the institution beyond \$5 billion. Those investments are supporting housing, infrastructure, business develop-

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ment, clean energy and indigenous participation in major projects across Canada because participation is important, but ownership is even more powerful. When communities have ownership, they do not just have a seat at the table; they have a stake in what is being built and a share in the benefits that result. Across Canada, we are already seeing examples of what that looks like.

Wataynikaneyap Power is a first nations majority-owned transmission project. The project connected remote communities and Ontario's electricity grid, reducing reliance on diesel fuel while creating a long-term indigenous-owned infrastructure asset that will provide benefits for generations to come.

The Canada Nickel's Crawford project is showing how indigenous communities are becoming true partners in Canada's critical mineral sector. The Taykwa Tagamou First Nation made a significant equity investment in the project, helping ensure that economic opportunities, decision-making and long-term benefits are shared with the community. The project will help supply the critical minerals needed for batteries and other clean technologies that drive down emissions while also creating jobs and economic growth in the region.

In B.C., the Portland Canal marine terminal is a deep-sea port with the primary purpose of critical mineral transportation from the region to overseas markets. The terminal is jointly owned by the Nisga'a and Tahltan nations, as well as Arrow Transportation Systems.

These projects are among many across the country that show what reconciliation looks like in action. They demonstrate that indigenous communities are not simply participants in Canada's economy, but helping lead it.

[Translation]

Many indigenous communities have told us that consultations often start too late. Others have told us that they have to answer the same questions posed by different government departments. Some communities are experiencing consultation fatigue; in other words, they spend so much time navigating government processes that they have less time to devote to the issues that matter most. We have listened to these concerns. These comments have helped shape the building Canada act.

• (2115)

[English]

The goal of the legislation is simple. We want to make project reviews more efficient and more predictable while maintaining indigenous rights and environmental protections.

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One of the key parts of the bill is reducing duplication. Instead of having several federal bodies reviewing the same project separately, the legislation supports a more coordinated approach with the goal of having one federal review process and one coordinated consultation process whenever possible. We also propose creating a Crown consultation hub. We can think of it as a central coordination team. Its job would be to help federal departments work together, identify issues earlier and improve communication with indigenous communities.

The goal is not to have less consultation; the goal is to have better consultation. We want indigenous communities spending less time dealing with red tape and more time having meaningful discussions about projects that affect their lands, waters and futures.

I also want to be very clear about what does not change under the building Canada strong act. Canada's duty to consult does not change. Our obligations under modern treaties and self-government agreements do not change. Indigenous rights remain protected. Meaningful consultation remains essential. When more time is needed for consultation, the legislation allows for extensions or timelines to be paused.

[Translation]

There is another reason why it is important for good projects to move ahead faster. If Canada really wants to fight climate change, we need to build infrastructure that will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our future. That includes the renewable energy generation, power lines, energy storage and other clean energy projects. All too often, projects that could help communities reduce their dependence on diesel are subject to long, complicated approval processes.

[English]

By making reviews more efficient, reducing duplication and improving coordination, we can help move forward projects that Canadians need while continuing to uphold strong environmental protections and meaningful consultation with indigenous peoples. Building faster and protecting the environment are not competing goals. When done properly, they go hand in hand.

I also want to note that the situation in Canada's north is unique. In the Yukon, Nunavut and much of the Northwest Territories, project reviews are already carried out through modern treaty and co-management systems that were designed with indigenous partners and reflect constitutionally protected agreements. Bill C-39 does not replace those systems. However, in the Inuvialuit settlement region, where federal impact assessment processes continue to play a significant role, the improvements in coordination, consultation and permitting proposed in this legislation could help provide greater certainty and efficiency while continuing to respect indigenous rights and existing obligations.

Some people talk as though economic development and reconciliation were at odds. I see them as working hand in hand. Indigenous peoples are not just being consulted on major projects: They are increasingly owning, investing in and leading them. When indigenous communities are true partners, projects are stronger, communities benefit and everyone is better off. That is the vision behind the building Canada strong act. It is a Canada that builds, a Canada that

creates jobs, a Canada that attracts investment and a Canada that respects indigenous rights, honours treaties and advances reconciliation.

We can build the infrastructure our country needs. We can create opportunities for future generations, and we can do it together. That is how we advance reconciliation. That is how we create shared prosperity. That is how we build Canada strong for all.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, all is not well in the Emerald City. Earlier today, while speaking on the bill, the Liberal member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, a member from the minister's caucus, spoke about Bill C-39's shortcomings but stopped short of explicitly calling for amendments to the bill. We believe there should be amendments.

Among the issues that he flagged are that there is too much discretion for ministers to exempt projects from environmental regulations and that the compressed timelines may prevent indigenous communities and NGOs from giving meaningful input, allowing construction to begin before an environmental assessment is complete. This is coming from a Liberal member of the caucus who has his own concerns about Bill C-39. There are multiple concerns right across the country with respect to this piece of legislation.

How would the minister react to the member's comments?

● (2120)

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Madam Speaker, one great thing about this legislation is the opportunity to have efficiencies and to reduce duplication. For example, if there is an offshore energy project that is being proposed, right now it has to go through an assessment with the Impact Assessment Agency, as well as the Canada Energy Regulator. What is being proposed in Bill C-39 is that it would go from two agencies to one agency. It would be the Canada Energy Regulator doing the review. That would also be the federal department leading consultations and bringing the federal family in to do one project, one review, one consultation.

I would also note that the legislation allows for an extension, if need be, for further consultations. There are parameters in the legislation that allow for some flexibility, but the benefits of this legislation are really about reducing the duplication and having more coordinated consultation.

Another thing is that the minister's decision-making time goes from 90 days down to 65 days. Again, there would be no impact on consultation. It would just be with the minister for less time.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, maybe it is because it is getting late, but I feel as though the government members are trying to hypnotize us into believing that everything is fine, but that is not true.

What does my colleague have to say to the Assembly of First Nations, which is concerned that the approval of major projects could have an impact on indigenous communities? What does she have to say about the fact that 100 indigenous communities could be affected by Bill C-39? What does she have to say about the fact that 14 indigenous communities are currently challenging this bill in court?

It is not just the Bloc Québécois that is saying this. Indigenous communities themselves are speaking out against this bill and saying that if Bill C-39 becomes law, it could seriously infringe on indigenous rights.

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Madam Speaker, I have been talking about this legislation with indigenous leaders from across the country. Based on the feedback I am hearing about Bill C-39, it offers the possibility of a consultation process coordinated by a single department. The process would be more organized, sparing communities from having to deal with different departments at different times of year.

The duty to consult remains unchanged. Currently, two agencies conduct assessments: the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and the Canada Energy Regulator. The bill provides that only one agency will be responsible for assessment. That said, the factors to be considered and the duty to consult remain the same.

Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, how would Bill C-39 help attract more investment to Canada while giving indigenous communities and peoples a say in approval processes?

Hon. Rebecca Alty: Madam Speaker, I think that one of the benefits is that a lot of projects across Canada are led by indigenous communities or require their equitable participation. For them, the process is the same. With this bill, it will take less time and the work will move ahead faster.

[English]

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin talking about Bill C-39, I want to wish my mom, Doreen, a very happy 80th birthday today. Earlier this evening, she was celebrating with family in Barrie. We do not have to sing happy birthday to her, because I know she will get embarrassed by it. She is a terrific lady, and I want to tell my mom I love her.

The second thing I would like to say tonight before I begin is that on this day, the third anniversary of October 7 and the massacre in Israel by Hamas, I want our Jewish community in Barrie South—Innisfil to know that I am here in Ottawa thinking about them today. To the members of the Am Shalom congregation, the Chabad Jewish Centre of Barrie and Chabad Innisfil with Rabbi Kaplan, we are all thinking about them today. I know this is a difficult day for our Jewish community. I know the thoughts of all parliamentarians are with our Jewish friends all across Canada today, not just in Barrie South—Innisfil.

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In the time that I have, I want to focus on a couple of areas in Bill C-39. In particular, I want to focus on part 3, and I will explain what that is. I want to talk about the bureaucracy that would be created and the apparent lack of transparency and accountability that this bill would create, given the scope of ministerial power it allows.

As I said in a previous intervention, all is not well in Oz. The Emerald City is restless; there are many people who are dissenting against what Bill C-39 represents. Among those dissenters are labour organizations that have fought for generations for the types of gains they have had through the collective bargaining process.

As a proud former member and president of a firefighters association, the International Association of Fire Fighters, I believe in the collective bargaining process. I believe that negotiation is the best way to get a deal, not necessarily government intervention, which we have seen a lot of over the past several years with the Liberal government. There are many labour unions that have come out and spoken against what the bill represents.

Bill C-39 is an omnibus bill. By bringing it forward in the way that the Liberals have, they are effectively trying to force the opposition to support the bill in an all-or-nothing scenario. Earlier, we called for the Liberals to separate out part 3 of Bill C-39 for obvious reasons, as it is the most contentious part of the legislation, so that it could be scrutinized and voted on separately and not be part of this omnibus piece of legislation.

As I said earlier, there have been several labour organizations that have spoken out against the proposed changes in part 3, particularly those involved in federally regulated industries, including those of airline employees, airport workers, rail workers and dock workers. Many of them have spoken out about this.

The charge has really been led by the Canadian Labour Congress. In a document that it produced, it said that Bill C-39 would effectively give the Canadian government the broadest strike intervention powers in the entire G7. Not only has the Canadian Labour Congress come out but so too has the International Trade Union Confederation; United Steelworkers; CUPE; Unifor; OPSEU; the International Association of Fire Fighters, of which I was a member; and the Air Line Pilots Association of Canada. They have all come out and opposed this piece of legislation, particularly as it relates to part 3.

Here is what the Canadian Labour Congress said:

If passed, Bill C-39 would give the Canadian government broader unilateral power to end a legal strike than exists in any other G7 country, according to a comparative legal analysis commissioned by the Canadian Labour Congress....

That includes Donald Trump's United States, where even the President cannot unilaterally end a national-emergency strike and impose a binding settlement. U.S. law requires a threat to national health or safety, court approval and a temporary limit on intervention.

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• (2125)

"Canada should be setting the standard for workers' rights, not falling behind every other G7 country.... If passed, Section 107 would give one minister extraordinary power to shut down a legal strike, with no parliamentary oversight and no one with the power to stop them."

There are many unions, as I said, that are speaking out against this, including the Air Line Pilots Association. I bring that up because the riding I live in, Barrie South—Innisfil, is also known as "terminal 4". There are two terminals at Pearson airport, 1 and 3, and Barrie South—Innisfil is known as terminal 4 for obvious reasons: because there is a large proportion of airline employees, pilots, flight attendants and airport workers who live there. They would be significantly impacted by the legislation and, in particular, the ministerial power that the legislation would grant to effectively end strikes or lockouts or actually preclude the negotiation process in a way that undermines workers' rights.

I talked about the G7 powers to intervene in legal strikes, and from the most limited to the broadest, if we compare France, for example, what triggers intervention is an urgent threat to public health or safety. In Germany, it is life or health risks. In Italy, it is serious and imminent harm to protected rights. In Japan, it is emergency adjustments. In the United Kingdom, there are none. In the United States, it is threats to national health and safety, as I said earlier. In Canada, if Bill C-39 is passed as is, it would be the minister's view of national interest. In that case, the minister could order work to be resumed and order binding resolution. The minister would retain the final decision, with no emergency threshold or fixed time limits.

Bill C-39 would effectively limit the ability of workers and unions to negotiate fair collective agreements and basically bring a sledgehammer to the negotiation process in an "either take it or leave it" offer. Worse yet, under the threat or guise of ministerial power, the bill could force those workers to accept a deal because the minister says it is in the national interest. That is quite concerning.

Look, there are good parts of the bill that we can support, but the omnibus nature of the bill really causes me concern as the MP for Barrie South—Innisfil, for the reasons I stated earlier, like having a lot of federally regulated employees who live in my riding. I know Conservatives will be seeking amendments at committee to ensure that the issues that have been addressed by these labour groups are thoughtfully considered when the bill gets to committee.

I hope, given the newfound manufactured majority at committees, that Liberal members will understand the broad concern that has been brought up by labour groups and will have those labour groups at the table so we can fully understand the impact of what Bill C-39 represents and make the appropriate amendments to the bill to ensure that labour rights and the collective bargaining process are protected in this country.

As I mentioned earlier, there are also concerns within the Liberal caucus. We heard a member earlier today speak about his concern in relation to the bill, the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country. I will repeat what he said. He spoke about there being "too much discretion for ministers to exempt projects from environmental regulations, compressed timelines which may prevent Indigenous communities and NGOs from giv-

ing meaningful input and allowing construction to begin before an environmental assessment is complete."

The other concern I have, and it is a significant one, is oversight, transparency and accountability on many of these decisions that would be made. When decisions are made in closed quarters, made by ministers or perhaps in backrooms, this prevents Canadians and MPs from ensuring that money is being spent and decisions are being made in the interests of our country, not in the interests of big business. As chair of the ethics committee, I will be keeping a very close eye on all of this to ensure that Canadians are getting the best bang for their buck.

• (2130)

[Translation]

Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if my opposition colleague claims to stand up for workers, why would he not support measures that increase health and safety inspections and strengthen the dispute resolution process?

• (2135)

[English]

John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I think I gave the reasons I am concerned, in particular about part 3 of the bill. It would give broad ministerial discretion over the collective bargaining process and workers' rights under the guise of national interest. What is "national interest"? It is not defined. I am speaking here on behalf of the people I represent: the Air Line Pilots Association, flight attendants and other federally regulated workers who have expressed grave concern over this piece of legislation.

There are public sector unions that are not federally regulated that see this as a wedge and an opening to potential implications for the entire collective bargaining process in this country. That is what concerns me the most about this piece of legislation.

It is part of an omnibus bill. The Liberals included it in part 3 so that it would be an all-or-nothing approach. I resent that, and I hope that when the bill gets to committee, the voices of labour will be heard, and amendments will be made that correct this situation.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciated my hon. colleague's speech very much, particularly the commitment to address this bill and to make amendments in committee.

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I do not know if the hon. member is aware, but I did contact all party whip offices, PROC and the Speaker's office to ask to be added to the special legislative committee that will be studying the bill. That request has been rejected, but I would appreciate any support from any member in this place to assist in pressing for amendments when it does get to committee.

I appreciate the hon. member's concern for labour rights. Would he also agree to try to add to the list that is in former Bill C-5 acts that they are not allowed to exempt?

John Brassard: Madam Speaker, we have had a fulsome discussion at caucus about the bill. We have a strategy in place. We have shadow ministers who are leading that strategy, not just our shadow minister for transportation but for the environment as well. Our labour critic is certainly aware of what is needed to make sure this bill does not have unintended consequences. They will be doing everything they can to ensure that the rights of labour are protected, the rights of the environment are protected and certainly that transportation issues are addressed. I have full confidence in our transportation critic.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague on his speech. I would like to make some historical references this evening, because what we are living through is a historic moment. Bill C-39 is not anodyne. It is a bill that takes a bulldozer to environmental laws. Just a few days ago, the former minister of environment and climate change, for those in this Parliament who still believe in climate change, said that Bill C-39 goes further than what Stephen Harper was prepared to do in his day to defy environmental laws.

I would like my Conservative colleague to tell me whether he agrees with the former environment minister, former Liberal MP Steven Guilbeault, that the Liberals are currently going even further than Stephen Harper was prepared to go back when he was in power.

[English]

John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I have heard the reference that this is a bulldozer rather than a building bill. It would certainly have an impact on environmental laws, labour laws and all of the things I said.

The one thing we have to watch, and the one thing, as I said earlier, as chair of the ethics committee that I will be watching from an oversight and transparency standpoint, is the impact that these decisions, which would be made for the most part by ministers and in large part in secret, are going to have on the Prime Minister's financial holdings. I am very concerned that public policy is aligning with not only Brookfield's strategy but also the Prime Minister's personal holdings, as it relates to the Brookfield Global Transition Fund I, and the impact that many of these projects, including carbon capture, ocean mapping, all of these things, will have on his personal holdings. It is incumbent upon not just me but all members of Parliament, in fact all Canadians, from a transparency standpoint, to watch very closely how the bill plays out.

• (2140)

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to stand here today with my hon. colleagues in the House as we turn our attention to the proposed building Canada strong act, a bill, as we know, that would modernize regulatory reviews of major projects in this country and eliminate costly delays and uncertainty for proponents while ensuring that the rights and interests of indigenous peoples are upheld and that we maintain Canada's world-class environmental standards.

Canada has a simple question. Can we turn our enormous potential into real jobs, real projects and real prosperity? We have what the world wants. We have the energy, the resources, the technology, the workforce and what cannot be found in many other jurisdictions: We have the trust. However, it is not enough if it takes too long to make a decision, issue a permit or get shovels in the ground.

I do not think I need to remind anybody here that Canada faces an unprecedented economic threat, uncertainty and instability, circumstances that we did not create, that our workers did not create, but that have forced us to change in order to protect those good jobs, our economy and our sovereignty. That is exactly why we are bringing forward the building Canada strong act. This is about moving with urgency. It is about giving Canada a regulatory system that is clear, credible and capable of delivering. It is about doing it without in any way compromising Canada's world-class environmental protections and while upholding indigenous treaty rights.

We must move faster, but we cannot cut corners. We must protect the environment, but we also must create good jobs. We must build responsibly and with urgency because in the world we face today, delay is not an option. When a responsible project does not move forward, the investment will go somewhere else, the jobs and the opportunities will go somewhere else, and our government will not let the future be defined by missed opportunities because of delay.

The building Canada strong act proposes changes to a lot of things. We understand that. There would be changes to the Impact Assessment Act, the Building Canada Act, the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, the Fisheries Act, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Species at Risk Act and the Canadian Navigable Waters Act. That is a lot of legislative titles, but the purpose is clear. It is to make federal decisions faster, to make the process clearer and to give communities, indigenous partners, workers, investors and Canadians greater certainty about what happens next.

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We have heard from the public that we do not need weaker standards, and we will never have those. We need a government that can organize itself and coordinate things to work more responsibly and more expeditiously. That is the balance in this bill: speed and responsibility, growth and protection, ambition and trust.

The proposed amendments would create a more coordinated federal process for all major projects, with clear timelines and more predictable decisions. Once a proponent has submitted a complete application with all the required information, federal reviews and decisions would be made within a year. In simple terms, the work would happen together instead of separately, not one step after another. Impact assessments and permit reviews would proceed at the same time, federal experts would be brought in earlier, duplication would be reduced, and problems would be identified sooner, not at the end of the process when they are hard and, frankly, expensive to solve.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada is already helping proponents get ready before formal assessment begins. It is ensuring close coordination with federal departments and agencies, enhancing co-operation with provinces under landmark agreements for one project, one review, and focusing assessments on key issues within federal jurisdiction. This bill also introduces amendments that would ensure the federal regulator, with the most relevant experience and expertise, is carrying out impact assessments, putting the right expertise in the lead.

Under this proposed approach, pipelines, transmission lines and certain offshore renewable energy projects regulated by the Canada Energy Regulator would solely be assessed by the CER through its process under the Canadian Energy Regulator Act. For nuclear and uranium projects, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission would, logically, conduct impact assessments by following the rigorous process and requirements set out by the Impact Assessment Act. This is all common sense. These regulators understand these technologies. They understand the risks. They understand the full life cycle of these projects that they regulate.

• (2145)

However, let me be clear: Environmental, health, social, economic and indigenous considerations would continue to be assessed. The standards would remain. The oversight would remain. What would change is the unnecessary duplication between federal processes that slows things down.

Another important improvement being introduced through the bill would be the creation of a federal review coordination function and a Crown consultation hub, both to be housed inside the Impact Assessment Agency.

The federal review coordinator would be responsible for ensuring that impact assessments are led by the Impact Assessment Agency and federal permits meet the new timelines. That is key. It would also work with experts in different federal departments to ensure that everything stays organized and on track.

The Crown consultation hub would coordinate one clear consultation process for each indigenous group affected by a major project. This would replace multiple overlapping and repetitive federal processes and help reduce, essentially, consultation fatigue.

Meaningful consultation matters, but it need not be repetitive. It should not require indigenous partners to repeat the same work for different parts of the same government. Better coordination would ensure the Crown upholds its obligations and would provide indigenous partners a process that is clear, coherent and more respectful of their time.

Furthermore, to ensure clearer, more streamlined project decisions, the government is also proposing legislative changes to move toward a single comprehensive federal decision for major project permits and for approvals, which would result in one federal decision document that would be issued by the Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature. This document would include all federal decisions required for a project to move forward if it is undergoing a comprehensive impact assessment, while the federal review coordinator would ensure that all relevant federal experts across the government would provide timely advice and any key recommendations needed for that decision.

For too long, proponents have had to move from department to department, process to process and decision to decision, creating unnecessary delays and a lot of uncertainty. The cost has been that this country has not remained competitive. This bill is practical and would make practical changes for that. It would move certain decisions, not all, from cabinet to the responsible minister. Conditions imposed on proponents would need to be technically and economically feasible. Some early construction activities could actually begin before final impact decisions, but only when the necessary permits have been approved. These are common-sense improvements that would help the federal government make the sound decisions we need to make.

When companies choose Canada, workers benefit. When responsible projects move forward, communities benefit. When we build the infrastructure, energy systems and nation-building projects the world needs, our whole country benefits. We have worked very hard with every province that supports our goal of one project, one review. That matters. This is a team effort. Provinces, territories, indigenous rights holders, municipalities, workers, industries and communities all have to play a role, and the changes proposed in Bill C-39 would give us a stronger, more efficient system.

[Translation]

As the Prime Minister said, Canada has what the world wants. It is now up to us to take action, to build our country faster and to create the jobs and opportunities here that will strengthen our economic sovereignty and our country.

*Government Orders**[English]*

We are turning Canada and our potential into prosperity. It is common sense. There would be no compromise on the environment. There would be no compromise on consultation with indigenous communities. This is about building stronger, building Canadian and building together.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals keep talking about one year, one review, but it is not consistent, it is not predictable and it is not certain in Bill C-39.

I have asked Liberal members time and time again why major transportation projects are not subject to a statutory deadline of 12 months, as is purported for projects under the Impact Assessment Agency, the Canada Energy Regulator or the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. Some have said that transportation is too difficult. That is ridiculous.

If we can require the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to come up with a reasonable result, a yes or a no within 12 months, we can imagine that it would go for it. This creates a lot of questions, because someone could get a writ of mandamus and force a regulator to come to a decision if it went past the statutory deadline.

Can the minister take a look at his notes, maybe fire up Copilot and answer the question: Why is it two-tier, and why is transportation not getting the same treatment as other types of projects?

• (2150)

Hon. Evan Solomon: Madam Speaker, that was a great question, and I would welcome the hon. member's support as we build great transportation projects like high-speed rail. If he wants to help expedite those kinds of things, I would be more than delighted to welcome him and his support to move some of the major projects in transportation forward. We will count on his support. I look forward to the foreshadowing of his support for expediting great projects like high-speed rail.

Through this particular bill, Bill C-39, it is absolutely important that we are doing one project, one review, one year for major projects while keeping the regulations, the safety of the environment and the consultation with indigenous partners in place.

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Madam Speaker, I hope to have better luck with the minister than I did with his two colleagues, the member for Halifax and the member for Guelph. I asked them earlier how fast-tracking the Pacific link pipeline was going to help us sell more oil to other countries. His colleague from Guelph told me that there would potentially be customers in Europe and Asia, which is completely false.

I would like to remind the minister that 91% of our oil exports go to the United States. We are in the midst of a trade crisis. The government wants to use public money to build infrastructure that will benefit the Americans.

I would like to know, once and for all, and especially from him, whether he thinks it makes sense to make Canadian and Quebec taxpayers foot the bill for infrastructure that will mainly benefit Americans.

Hon. Evan Solomon: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

First of all, I want to point out that the projects of this government have supported Quebec, as we saw with Churchill, the largest clean-energy infrastructure project in North America, which benefited Quebec. This is absolutely critical.

To the member's question, and it is a good question, as the member knows, we sell oil now to the United States at a discount because it is the only customer. This project would allow us to expand our markets to have the revenue to support the very projects we want to build and to support all Canadians and, of course, the people of Quebec.

Tom Osborne (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, part of the problem we are facing in the country in these current geopolitical times is the fact that a proponent must go through a process where in one department, a silo, a number of boxes need to be checked, and in another department, another silo, a number of boxes need to be checked. Some of those are duplicates. I am asking the minister to comment on the importance of ensuring that we are competitive as a country so that we can attract business in this country, as opposed to it going to other countries, such as south of the border.

Hon. Evan Solomon: Madam Speaker, we know that delays have made Canada in some ways less competitive. The purpose of this bill is to have one project, one review, one year. This would give certainty to investors, get projects built and make Canada more competitive.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Madam Speaker, about a year and a half ago, the Liberal government told Canadians that Bill C-5 would fundamentally change the way major projects were approved and built in this country. Canada was going to build “at speeds not seen in generations”. We Conservatives allowed Bill C-5 to go through because we thought that the grandiose promises we were hearing would improve things even a bit. We were wrong, because the only thing of any importance that has been produced has been a cloud of MOUs and bucketloads of promises.

Eighteen months later, here we are again discussing another bill promising to do the same thing. What exactly has changed? There are a couple of projects that Bill C-5 was supposed to speed up. The Pacific link oil pipeline has not been built. The LNG Canada phase two expansion has not been done. The Coastal GasLink phase two construction has not even started.

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Then I looked up projects around the world that had been finished in 18 months, and not just the building portion, but all the way from planning to completion. First of all, there was the Space Needle in 1962. There was also the Empire State Building in 1930, the Pentagon in 1941, the Alaska Highway in 1942, Tesla's gigafactory in Shanghai in 2019, and the Crystal Palace in London in 1851. Even the Eiffel Tower took less than two years from planning to completion. Why did these projects get built? It was because people actually wanted them to get built. They all shared a hard completion date, and on that date they were complete.

Unlike builders that want things to get built, the Liberal government seems to measure progress by announcements and handouts. By that measure, the Liberals clap themselves on their backs and announce that they stand behind Canadian workers, but Canadian workers and businesses measure progress by construction sites and paycheques. They want a society where people can succeed without depending on government handouts. They would prefer that the Liberal government not stand behind them if it means that the government will have its hand in their wallets.

At some point, loud media announcements have to become construction projects, and so far we have seen very few. Investors can manage even Liberal red tape when the rules are clear and predictable, but it is an impossible minefield with this degree of uncertainty. A company considering a multi-billion-dollar investment needs to know what information will be required, who will make the decision, how the federal and provincial processes will interact, and when the process will actually end. If Canada cannot provide that certainty, investors have other choices. We are competing for capital with jurisdictions around the world, and having enormous resources is not enough if companies will not invest because it will take too long or cost too much to develop projects.

Let us look at the Trans Mountain expansion. It was first proposed in 2012, received federal approval in 2016, had that approval quashed by the Federal Court of Appeal and was finally purchased by the federal government in 2018. The expansion itself did not get rolling until two years ago, in 2024. Until the Liberal government gets serious, projects will spend years navigating regulatory processes and government decisions before Canadians actually see shovels in the ground, if they ever do.

Let us take a look at one false promise. Bill C-39 promises a one-year period once an investor has submitted the required information and studies. This is sheer nonsense. I have been around government bureaucracies long enough to know that the step Liberals are promising in Bill C-39 should take no more than a week because the bottleneck is not there. The bottleneck comes long before that.

Do members remember the phrase "once an investor has submitted the required information and studies"? Those steps, the expensive studies, the arbitrary interpretations by bureaucratic middle managers in government, the lost reports, the forgotten files and the endless red tape are where the bottleneck is, long before the final step comes. That collection of documents, reports and permissions can take years and millions of dollars for any large project, and in a climate of grudging and self-sabotaging "hurry up and wait", it is not looking promising.

• (2155)

In this political climate of overpromising and underdelivering, if the project ever does start, it will be in spite of the government, because so far, the speeds not seen in generations, the speeds promised by the Liberal government, have turned out to be speeds so slow that they have not been seen since the last ice age. Here we are again, lighting the fuse to a promised Liberal rocket ship of economic activity a year after the last one sputtered out in an ashtray.

I want to be optimistic. I want to think that this time, in spite of all the very real drawbacks, in spite of history and in spite of common sense, Bill C-39 will magically succeed where Bill C-5 failed so dismally, but it is a faint hope.

I want to give an analogy. We have a drought back home in my riding. One proposed solution is to raise the local dam by two metres to retain the freshet in the spring so the supply lasts all summer. The regional district argued that since no water has spilled over the top of the existing dam for the last couple of years, raising it will not actually help. On the face of it, this is reasonable logic. If the water does not even come up to the top of the existing dam, what is the point of raising the dam even higher?

That common sense leads me to ask, if the Building Canada Act, which gave the Liberal cabinet almost unprecedented power, did not manage to build anything, why should Canadians think for a minute that giving the Prime Minister's Office even more power with the building Canada strong act would work any better? Is this really about getting Canada working, or is it more about gathering power in the Prime Minister's Office?

Here is the thing. During the 2008-09 financial crisis, the Harper government introduced measures intended to do much the same thing, with the stated objective of shortening approval times for major projects. That proposal was much less hyped than Bill C-39 and much more effective. Back then, when Canada faced another economic crisis, the very idea of speeding things up set Liberal hair on fire. To take just one example, my very esteemed colleague, the Minister of Defence, at that time the Liberal environment critic, described the Conservative government as a "far-right Reform, Republican, Conservative regime...undermining the very environmental assessment that Brian Mulroney brought into this country in 1992".

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Apparently the minister is now not bothered by that prospect and has no concerns whatsoever, nor is any single member of the Liberal caucus concerned about a concentration of economic power or decision-making power almost oligarchic in scope. Does the minister now believe that his own Liberal government is aligned with the far-right Republican government in another country, the very country that his party blames for the dismal economy in Canada?

We have gone from the Building Canada Act to the building Canada strong act. I sincerely hope the second one works better than the first, but if we are back here in another year, debating another bill with “build Canada” in the title, Canadians are going to be disgusted, as they should be. Ultimately the test should be results. Canadians do not need handouts and school lunch programs, and loud announcements cannot replace jobs and the self-respect that comes with providing for a family.

I will approach the legislation with an open mind but also with the skepticism that comes from having heard promises before about accelerating major projects. The government has said it wants Canada to build at speeds not seen in generations. That is an ambitious standard, but ultimately Canadians should not judge this legislation by the number of announcements it kicks off. They should judge by what they can actually see being built, and so far it is not looking good.

• (2200)

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the room did not all jump up at once, but what a great speech that was. The member has really brought some things to mind. I know that the Prime Minister tweeted the other day, “In September last year, we referred LNG Canada Phase 2 in Kitimat, B.C., to the Major Projects Office. Now, it’s moving forward”.

This points out what the member has said. This was a final investment decision by the proponent. The Major Projects Office the Prime Minister talks about did not approve or advance the project. It is a form of regulatory Kabuki theatre. In the bill, the Liberals like to talk about creating a transportation project office, saying that this thing would help get projects done. The funny thing is that it would have no authority. It would be completely discretionary and optional for the minister. He could choose not to go ahead with it. Worse than that, unlike part 1 of the bill, which actually says that we would have a timeline, for which, of course, there are exemptions, it does not have any timelines for transportation projects.

Does the member feel, as I do, that there is so much regulatory Kabuki theatre going on?

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I was taken by the last speaker's claim that this would get rid of duplication and would make for more coherence. I am wondering why, after 11 years, there is so much duplication and why our process is incoherent. How can that be? We talk about these things, and I guess it feels almost as if we were talking about it in the abstract. No member of the House is sitting around the kitchen table wondering if they can make their mortgage. No member of the House is worried about their next paycheck. These are things that matter to people outside the House.

• (2205)

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke at length about the current government's lack of transparency and less democratic approach.

Thanks to work done by my colleague, the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, we included a five-year sunset clause in Bill C-5 to review the act. Strangely, the Liberals reversed that clause in Bill C-39. This move even drew criticism from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

What does my colleague think about the fact that Bill C-39 removes this five-year sunset clause?

[English]

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before, I think we treat this as an abstract problem. We use big words, and we talk about how we are going to cut regulation and do all these things. Very few of us live in the real world as we work in the House. We do not have to worry about a paycheck. We do not have to worry about a mortgage. We do not sit around the kitchen table worrying about the future as people outside the House do. What we talk about in the abstract are real bread-and-butter problems out there. I would like the bill to actually make a difference. I just do not have very high hopes for it.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's bringing us back to spring 2012, when the Harper government brought in the omnibus budget bill, Bill C-38, which repealed the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, fast-tracked a new act, set time limits on every single phase of environmental review and passed the whole thing over for the first time to the National Energy Board.

The Kinder Morgan project was a prime example of something that took longer because of the haste with which the omnibus bill was pushed through and the fact that the National Energy Board, a quasi-judicial body that was exempted from operating as quasi-judicial body, could not meet the timelines. As a result of all that, the project went off the rails, and the federal court found that it had not followed due process. Haste makes waste.

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I really did not get a question out of that. It was a statement. I have no answer to a non-question.

[Translation]

Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to express my support for Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

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As the member for Alfred-Pellan, I represent a community that is at the heart of a growing region. Laval is a vibrant city of workers, families and businesses that depend on efficient infrastructure to grow.

Bill C-39 is based on a simple reality: The world is changing quickly, so Canada must also be able to act quickly. We need to attract investment, build the infrastructure we need, diversify our trade and strengthen our economy. However, we must do so responsibly, upholding rigorous environmental standards and the rights of indigenous peoples.

That is precisely the balance that Bill C-39 proposes. This bill would establish clearer, simpler and more predictable processes for carrying out projects.

Our government is committed to issuing decisions on projects requiring a federal permit within one year. This stability is essential for businesses and investors. It allows them to plan ahead, raise capital and create jobs.

However, moving faster does not mean compromising on quality. Bill C-39 does not ask us to choose between the economy and the environment. We can build faster while maintaining high environmental standards. The bill provides for better coordination of processes and aims to reduce unnecessary overlap, particularly between federal and provincial assessments.

This approach is particularly relevant for Laval and my riding, Alfred-Pellan. Laval is at the heart of the greater Montreal area, and its economy depends on efficient transportation networks, both for citizens and for businesses. With over 13,500 businesses and nearly 165,400 people employed there, Laval is a community where infrastructure plays a central role in our economic development.

In addition, with Bill C-39, our government wants to improve the coordination of federal approvals and create a transportation project office that can move priority projects forward. For a city like Laval, that means infrastructure that is more predictable and that allows our businesses to access major transportation networks and markets more efficiently.

This is not just about the economy. It is also about jobs. Workers are at the heart of this legislation. Bill C-39 seeks to modernize the Canada Labour Code, encourage early bargaining and strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms. The bill also provides for the hiring of 100 new health and safety officers, which would significantly increase inspection capacity.

In other words, we are not just building infrastructure. We are also building an economy that must provide good jobs and protect workers. Bill C-39 provides for several safeguards. It upholds Canada's strict environmental standards and indigenous rights. It also protects the right to strike, while encouraging the parties to resolve disputes more quickly through mediation and bargaining.

We want Canada to invest in its future, while doing things right.

• (2210)

We want a Canada where businesses can invest with confidence, where workers are protected and where communities benefit from better transit systems. Most importantly, we want a Canada that can

move from planning to action. For Laval, Quebec and all of Canada, this legislation represents an important step toward building a stronger and more resilient economy. It is time to build.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if my friend could provide his thoughts in regard to the overall approach that the government has taken since the last federal election.

When we think about Bill C-39, it is all about advancing what we have been talking about for the last year and a half since Canadians elected a new Prime Minister, and that was to build a stronger and a healthier economy here in Canada, an economy that works for all Canadians. In order to do that, we need a substantial piece of legislation like Bill C-39. It is to enable projects to actually go ahead. We can look at the 24-plus projects that have been handed over to the Major Projects Office. We can think of the half a trillion dollars of investment at a summit that was hosted by the Prime Minister just last month.

Can the member provide his thoughts on the bigger picture—

• (2215)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

Angelo Iacono: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague. This is the type of leadership Canada needs today. We have the resources, workers and businesses needed to build a stronger economy. Bill C-39 gives us the tools to move projects forward more quickly, attract investment and strengthen our supply chains, all without compromising our environmental standards or our commitments to indigenous peoples. We can protect the environment and create jobs, and we must do both.

[English]

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is pretty simple to my colleague across the floor. I appreciated his presentation.

I am fairly new at this. I have only been an MP for a little over a year, close to a year and a half. I just want to know what happened to Bill C-5. Why did it not work? The government was supposed to build at speeds unheard of. I cannot name a project that has come through; maybe the member can.

What happened to Bill C-5 and why do we need this new bill?

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

Angelo Iacono: Mr. Speaker, it is quite simple: real projects planned out with predictable permitting timelines. Any serious project requires planning. Businesses, workers and communities need to know when decisions will be made. That is why Bill C-39 seeks to make processes more predictable and efficient, with the goal of reaching a federal decision within one year when an application is complete. This does not mean projects will be approved automatically; it means we are providing a clear timeline while continuing to follow the rules.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I feel like we are playing a game of spot-the-lie tonight. How can my colleague say that this bill respects indigenous rights when over 100 communities are being threatened by the prospect of a western pipeline and when 14 communities are challenging Bill C-39 in court? How can he say things like that and not see that his nose is growing longer?

Angelo Iacono: Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree with my colleague's remarks. Bill C-39 does not release our government from its duty to consult indigenous peoples and respect their rights. On the contrary, it seeks to make consultations more coordinated and more predictable.

Our government is proposing a coordinated consultation process to facilitate indigenous participation in project assessments. Accelerating a process should not come at the cost of rights. Consultations must continue, impacts must be assessed and mitigation measures must be applied fully.

[English]

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to speak in this House on behalf of my constituents of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, especially on legislation of such national importance as Bill C-39.

I cannot help but feel some déjà vu. One of the first votes I took in this chamber after election last year was on Bill C-5. At that time, the Liberal government presented it because faster approvals for the Canadian economy were getting trapped in the Liberals' own rules and red tape. In my experience at the local government level, when we heard from builders that a piece of red tape was restricting their ability to get critical infrastructure built, we would do what we could do, and I would do what I could to remove it. However, the Liberal government passed new laws that allow them to ignore the old Liberal laws. Those burdensome regulations, like anti-development laws Bills C-69 and C-48, still exist and are still applying to projects that are struggling to get built. If the government would like to introduce legislation to repeal those bills, I would be pleased to help it pass quickly.

The Liberals chose to build complicated workarounds that sacrifice clear rules in favour of ministerial influence. In other words, there is a lot of red tape. Nonetheless, I supported Bill C-5 as the only available option to get around that red tape, because I support building the critical infrastructure that is needed to strengthen our economic sovereignty. However, here we are a year and a half later debating another law, Bill C-39, which again seeks to adopt a workaround to bad Liberal laws.

What happened to C-5? Is this because 18 months after we passed Bill C-5, zero major projects proposed under it have been built? With Bill C-5, the Liberals promised Canada would soon be building at unimaginable speeds. It has taken a year and a half and I am not seeing those projects. No one is. Instead, we are still stuck in the same delays and bureaucracy they created in their 11 years in office. For these 18 months under the Prime Minister, we have only seen projects stack up on desks around the city of Ottawa. Hundreds of proposed projects are stuck in bureaucratic processes across the many agencies and impact assessment offices we find across government.

The government now proposes Bill C-39 as a solution, another Liberal solution to a problem a Liberal bill caused. Too much of what the government claims as success exists only on paper and not in reality. There is no concrete steel rebar we can touch, just signatures on paper and MOUs.

Certainly, in my region, as a major centre of the Canadian economy when it comes to lumber, mining and agriculture, infrastructure upgrades are certainly needed but have seen no urgency. One example is that cellular reception remains critically poor in 90% of the communities in my very large riding, something I have raised with the Liberal government several times with no results or announcements.

Another example is that infrastructure links are vital in the south Okanagan, a growing region that is seeking to supply Canadian meat, fruit and agriculture products alongside critical minerals and lumber products from the Similkameen and Boundary to our country and the world. Our region is entirely dependent on transporting goods north or south on a two-lane highway, Highway 97, in a region heavily affected by both wildfires, as we heard about in Summerland and Penticton this past summer, and flooding, where there are regular landslides, accidents and the like, and the road is blocked or closed on the one artery we have between the north and south Okanagan.

● (2220)

The Minister of Transport has heard and seen the proposals made by myself and my colleague, the member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, for a partnership of investment between the province and federal government into constructing a permanent secondary route between Kelowna and the south Okanagan to expedite transportation times through the Okanagan in times of crisis.

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Similarly, the minister is aware of my advocacy for the upgrades needed to the Castlegar airport that services the Selkirk College Ion-source Research Centre, which drives particle acceleration and ion-source technology innovation for global medical, semiconductor, clean energy and research markets. Yet, no concrete action on the upgrades that the Castlegar airport requires have been followed up on.

Will these projects be better served under Bill C-39? These are just examples. The bill promises to accelerate the Liberals' complicated project approvals, but will it? On first reading, it seems it would only create more delays instead of completions.

The Liberals opposite have been saying that Bill C-39 would create a one-year approval process, but when does the clock start on that process? It would not be until the subsection 19(4) completeness determination is issued by the responsible authority. What is the timeline or deadline for that assurance? There is none. The bill sets no deadline for making that determination. It is no good saying that we will deliver a pizza in 30 minutes if the pizza shop cannot decide when that 30 minutes starts. A one-year timeline for project approvals is not a finish line if we cannot tell the applicant where and when they start. Those looking to apply need certainty and predictability, especially when we are talking about projects that may cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

The government is also promoting that Bill C-39 would create the transportation projects office, another office perhaps for my local regional districts or airport authorities to apply to, which is more red tape. However, nothing in this legislation would provide this office any authority. It seems to be yet another concrete filing cabinet where applications go, but never come back out. This is no different from the current process and the hundreds of proposals stranded in office towers all around this city.

Real legislation to open major construction, private investment and industrial development would require eliminating the industrial carbon tax, which increases the cost to build with Canadian-made steel and aluminum. It would also require repealing the Liberals' antidevelopment law, Bill C-69, which gums up our major infrastructure projects in constant reapprovals to satisfy vague rules. How vague? The legislation states that project applications would still have to consider, "any other matter relevant to the impact assessment that the Agency...requires to be taken into account." That is about as vague and unhelpful to a private developer or a municipal planner as we are bound to find.

Lastly, I want to touch quickly upon the issue of labour and the changes proposed to the Labour Code, which are extensive and merit scrutiny. I have heard from many residents opposed to the bill because of these changes, and I appreciate them sharing their feedback with me and my office. Any time Parliament touches upon workers' rights in their workplace or in their union, we owe workers an extensive right of response. It is my hope that when the government passes its bill on to the committee stage, workers can have a seat at that committee table to have their voices heard. I will certainly look forward to following the debate as it continues.

● (2225)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague does us a great favour.

I would ask the member if she can remember the rush that everybody was in, in June 2025, that Bill C-5 had to be passed before we rose for the summer. We went from second reading to royal assent between a Monday and a Friday. There was no time to study it, and no time to think. It was just important to get it passed, because we were in such a hurry, and exactly as she said, not one single project was listed under Bill C-5 until about two weeks ago when the Liberals decided, in cabinet, to say that what they are now calling the Pacific link is the first project. After more than a year, after the rush to pass the bill we could not study, they have now put forward a pipeline, which they could not even accurately describe in the Canada Gazette.

Does the member have any thoughts on this?

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, I remember Bill C-5 because it was one of the first bills I voted on. I was happy to support anything that would bring infrastructure to our country and infrastructure to create a more sovereign country. I think because of the criticism that the government has had for not creating any projects with Bill C-5, even though it was rushed through so fast, the Liberals made an announcement last week. Is it actually going to happen? Is that project going to come through? I doubt it.

● (2230)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, imagine this. The Prime Minister was elected 18 months ago with a new government and said we were going to have a new projects office, which was set up a few months later. We passed legislation and worked with premiers and indigenous leaders. A lot of collaboration took place. There are already half a trillion dollars' worth of projects at the new office located in Calgary. The member opposite and Conservatives are asking where all the buildings are and where they were all built. We are talking about multi-billion-dollar projects. We do not just click our heels and they appear out of nowhere. It takes some time. Canadians understand that. The Conservatives are out in the wilderness, and they do not understand that fact.

Does the Conservative Party not realize that it does take some time? I will give my personal guarantee that there will be thousands of things built within the next year by—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I am sorry, but I have to give time to the member to respond.

The hon. member for Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague needs to remember that there were promises that Canada would soon be building at unimaginable speeds. Instead, what we are hearing now is that the Liberals need another layer of bureaucracy in order to start building at those unimaginable speeds.

The member promises there will be thousands and thousands of projects coming forward. I would like to see one thing built. I am looking forward to it.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a quick question for my colleague. I thank her for her interesting speech. She drew a connection to Bill C-5, which, I repeat, was a massive bill that repealed other democratically enacted laws. Bill C-39 is also a bill that repeals a whole host of laws.

What message does that send about democracy?

[English]

Helena Konanz: Mr. Speaker, the message being sent is that there can be promises made and not kept, and that is not a good thing for democracy.

If the Liberals would like to introduce legislation to repeal Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, I would be pleased to help them pass that legislation really quickly. I would trust that they have Canadians in mind and are here to help us, but since they are not, those bills are plugging up infrastructure being built, and I do not see how it can be done.

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to this very important bill today. I want to start with the context of the legislation and the context that became quite apparent during the election campaign. I want to start with that because it is important to establish the “why” of this piece of legislation and what is guiding the government's agenda.

I am going to start with a quote from our campaign manifesto because it identifies very well the calls that Canadians had around the items in this bill and that indeed motivated many people in their support of our campaign. It is on the very first page of the manifesto:

Canada is the best country in the world. Our sovereignty is under threat. America's unjustified trade war is an attempt to weaken us. We will not let that happen. It's time to build a future that makes Canada strong. We can give ourselves much more than any foreign government, including the United States, can ever take away. Building one Canadian economy, for example, can expand our economy by up to \$200 billion—proof that we are strongest when we are united.

To unite this country, [we] will build one economy where Canadians can work wherever they want. Where goods can move freely from coast to coast to coast. Where the government's significant purchasing power buys Canadian goods and supports Canadian industries and workers. Where we use domestic strength to grow a strong economy that can never be taken away.

As Canadians, we have our own unique identity, history, and geography. To keep Canada strong, we will protect our culture, protect our environment, and protect our core values. And continue to build in true partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

That was the context of this campaign, and that was the context that resulted in the questions and encouragement I was hearing

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from constituents in Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park. It really came down to three or four things that were underlying the arguments we were making and the support we got.

First, Canadians and people in Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park were looking for a new generation of economic growth in the context of the attack on our sovereignty and in the context of the realization that we needed to do some things differently. They were also looking for climate policy that works, that gets results, that continues to achieve the greenhouse gas reductions we need and that gets us to net zero by 2050.

They also observed, especially in contrast to the economic growth that they were seeking and the sovereignty that they expected us to express, some frustrations with the ways that we build. Indeed, in this bill, we have been talking about projects that cover vast distances. In cities, we also build. The residents of the city of Toronto and the residents in my riding have been getting frustrated on occasion by the slow pace of building, whether it is building transportation infrastructure in particular or building the other kinds of economic goods that maybe are not as visible. On transportation infrastructure, there is the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and other transportation projects that are taking a long time to build. However, we have other economic and transportation projects that are delivering results to people in our ridings and to people in cities.

It is an important question when we look at the kinds of projects that this bill is contemplating, like the natural resource projects and the energy and electricity projects. They might appear to be far away from urban residents, but people in our ridings and people in urban Canada see the benefit of these projects that are being built sometimes far away from them because we have nuclear engineers in our ridings. We have tradespeople. We have people who work in the oil and gas sector. We have people who work on electricity, on renewable energy and definitely in ports and transportation. I have people in my riding, in a beautiful corner of west Toronto, Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park, who work in the services sectors that are covered by the kinds of projects we are talking about in this bill.

We can talk about how we build in cities, especially in a city like Toronto, the capital of the largest province in Canada, the financial capital of this country, a centre for research, a centre for innovation and a centre of not only the services economy but the goods economy. There is manufacturing that happens within our borders, including in my riding, and people are looking at those things and the broader picture of how economic growth happens. They were asking us the question during the campaign, “Can we catalyze a new generation of economic growth while asserting sovereignty and achieving climate policy results?”

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• (2235)

This bill is a very natural response to the kinds of things that people in west Toronto, in my riding of Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park and indeed across the country were responding to and expecting when the campaign was unleashed and when the words that I read in our party's manifesto were written. I think it is really important to share some of the things the bill would do and some of the things the bill would not do, because I think there has been a lot of misinformation and a lot of misconceptions about what the bill would and would not do. I will give some examples.

For instance, the bill would allow an opportunity to formally designate strategic national trade corridors. I think a lot of Canadians would be surprised that the federal government does not have this power already. This is a very important thing to be able to do if we are going to be building transportation infrastructure.

This bill would also give the power to declare regions of national interest. I see this as part of good planning. Cities already have the power to do land use planning. Provinces often have industrial regions. We have Alberta's industrial heartland, and there are many parts of cities that provide a set way of doing regional planning for economic purposes, while also including the full set of environmental considerations for certain species and other considerations. The bill would simply bring that lens to the opportunities that the federal government might identify with partners.

I think a lot of people would be surprised that these powers do not exist already. Where the bill says to do those kinds of things, it would not mean we end consultations. In fact, before and after permits are issued, there would still be consultation involved. This bill would not mean we would disregard cumulative effects. In fact, when we do regional planning, the kind of planning that is contemplated by the processes in this bill, land use planning cumulative effects would still be very much at the fore.

Enabling digital trade is another key part of this bill. I think Canadians would be very surprised that digital documents in the transportation sector are not already recognized as being equivalent. This is a very positive measure to help the federal government help people who are involved in trade and transportation-related trade to catch up to the ways of doing business that we would expect.

The bill would provide for one year for reviews for pipelines, designated power lines and offshore renewable energy projects. That is what it would do. It would not presume the outcome of any review. It would not say that a project will or will not go ahead. It would provide a one-year timeline, and it would provide that opportunity for, in particular, designated power lines and offshore renewable energy projects. I am going to get to those in a second.

Bill C-39 would provide, as my colleague from Calgary Confederation and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations mentioned, the coordination of indigenous consultations. It would not end UN-DRIP. It would not change our obligations under the charter in section 35. Those are entirely preserved. The bill would provide the coordination that makes it easier for indigenous peoples, and especially smaller communities, to take part meaningfully in consultations.

The bill would codify existing practices, including some economic and other considerations in the species at risk determinations. It would not end or gut the Species at Risk Act in any way. In fact, one of the major things we did from the consultation we did at the outset of this bill, which resulted in reports over the summer that were published in the early fall and that helped inform this legislation, was remove the limited exemptions to the jeopardy test that were of rightful concern to many Canadians.

The legislation would do a lot of things that would provide economic certainty and provide certainty to investors, but it would maintain high standards. This piece of legislation would not do a lot of the things that some of the fearmongering that I have heard in this House alleges.

This is also in the context of an incredibly rich set of climate policy achievements that this government has brought forward. They are achievements like the national electricity strategy, which is going to double our electricity generation with major projects like Churchill Falls. It is a very exciting project that has been mentioned repeatedly in my riding of Taiaiaiko'n—Parkdale—High Park.

The bill would tackle the methane emissions that we have been looking to tackle for a long time. We have an industrial carbon price that has been preserved despite the complaints from the members opposite. It has clean energy tax credits. We have a nature strategy, an oceans protection strategy, EV rebates and a whole set of climate policy objectives that are an important piece of context for the bill. They are not in the bill, but they all create the permission space for us to do the kind of work we need to do, especially in electrification. In fact, I would argue that if members want to accelerate the move to net zero and do more electrification, then they should get behind this bill 100%, because it would create the permissions, opportunities and timelines to get electrification done faster.

That is the context of the bill. It would mean that we can build in the right way, build towards net zero and we can build sustainably.

I appreciate the chance to participate in the debate.

• (2240)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 does not have to gut the Endangered Species Act, and it does not have to gut the federal Impact Assessment Act, because Bill C-5 has already done that, and Bill C-5 is in place, allowing maximum discretion for whenever a project is dreamed up by cabinet with no guidelines or criteria. As for a project in the national interest, it is allowed to exempt that project from the application of all the other acts that are mentioned, except the specific ones that I will mention in my speech that it is not allowed to exempt.

Bill C-5 and Bill C-39 together mean bulldozing through decades of progress in knowing how to plan a project to succeed. This is reckless fiscal irresponsibility.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague opposite and her history of engagement on these files, including her engagement on the proposed Harper-era changes that she was involved in and that, indeed, I was involved in when I was a journalist covering that government.

I would submit that this is very different, that we have a coordination of approvals. We have eminent protections on either end of the process. We have an important cabinet directive that was published at the same time as the introduction of the legislation and that would prioritize the mitigation hierarchy with respect to projects.

I think there is a lot in this legislation regarding the protections we have in place, combined with those other elements of our climate policy that I described, that I would commend to the member for further consideration.

• (2245)

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands' comment when it comes to Bill C-5. In Bill C-39, proposed section 102 would effectively make the powers that were given to the executive, to exempt under Bill C-5's framework, absolutely permanent. The Liberals said, when they came under fire for seizing such tremendous powers that have been well written about, that they could originally exempt any project from almost any law that we have on the books, but now, it would essentially take that away.

The Liberals originally said, "Trust us. Give us a five-year sunset because of the emergency." Now they would be taking that power and making it permanent. What—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, I would refer back to the provisions included on either end of the approvals process, which would provide a lot of protections, I believe, for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about disinformation. I would like to clarify the facts regarding Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. In division 1, which amends the Impact Assessment Act, clause 53 states: "The Minister may amend a decision statement issued by the Minister under section 65, including to add or remove a condition, to amend any condition or to modify the designated project's description".

What this means is that if the minister designates a project as being of national interest, he can remove any conditions he wants under the Impact Assessment Act, including conditions related to the environment.

My colleague says that the government is not trying to circumvent existing environmental laws. If that is the case, then why is the government creating a loophole that allows conditions under the

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Impact Assessment Act to be removed? I would like my colleague to explain that to us first, and then we can talk about disinformation.

[*English*]

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, if I understand correctly and we are talking about clause 53, it includes the following language: "the Minister is not permitted to amend the decision statement to change the decision included in it."

Again, I believe that some of the allegations being made about what this legislation could do is not supported by the facts in front of us.

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague works with the Minister of Industry. He started his speech by talking about the situation with our neighbour to the south, but businesses have long been calling for projects to move faster. Often, they want to invest, but the process takes too long, and there is no predictability.

I would like my colleague to briefly explain what kind of predictability Bill C-39 will provide to our businesses to encourage them to invest more in their growth.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, I think there are two aspects. There is the type of project that companies can participate in, but there is also the aspect of participating in the environmental economy and the economy as a whole by assessing the impacts. There are companies that can participate that way.

[*English*]

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more than 10 minutes to deal with this. I will do my best, but this omnibus bill, Bill C-39, represents an extremely large threat to this country and to our economy, because it would allow billions of dollars of tax money to be thrown at projects that would not have to clear even the most basic cost-benefit analysis before being declared projects of national interest.

I want to first of all clarify that this bill is enormous and I will not be able to give equal attention to all parts of it. In terms of part 3 and the threat it represents to collective bargaining and respect for the trade union movement, I want to make it clear that the Green Party completely supports the concerns of the Canadian Labour Congress, and wants to work hard to see part 3 substantially amended.

Part 1 of Bill C-39 and part 2 of Bill C-5, the so-called Building Canada Act, are built on fallacies without evidence. This is a fundamentally important point, because all our debate takes place in a dream world where everyone accepts a bunch of fallacies without evidence. The primary fallacy is that moving fast is desirable and smart. Sometimes old truisms are actually true. Haste makes waste.

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If we want something that is not built on fallacies but has abundant evidence, I recommend to government members a book by Bent Flyvbjerg and Dan Gardner called *How Big Things Get Done*. They had a database of, believe it or not, 16,000 megaprojects that they studied, and most of them failed. Why did they fail? Small projects often succeeded. Bigger projects failed. When I say “failed”, I mean that they were not just a little bit over budget but something like 300% and 400% over budget and years late. I will just very quickly summarize what the book tells us: Most projects fail because people rush into execution with weak plans, optimism bias and political pressures. Does that ring any bells around here? The authors' advice is “Think slow, act fast.”

What we have here is a rush to get things done, without examining how and why. As a matter of fact, if anyone looks at *How Big Things Get Done*, they would look at Bill C-5 and Bill C-39 and say we had better pull the plug on those before we make massive mistakes that will leave us deeper in debt and without getting progress for our economy, while certainly leaving the environment and indigenous rights in tatters.

The fallacies are really important to at least talk about before we once again rush through a process to pass a piece of legislation that, like Bill C-5, is based on massive political discretion, decisions made in cabinet with no transparency and without even the kind of evidence one would need for a business case or a cost-benefit analysis. In the case of Treasury Board guidelines before regulations, the cabinet directive for cost-benefit analysis for regulations would give the government a template one would need to know.

We have, in our first example of a project referred to the Major Projects Office, as designated by cabinet as the first since Bill C-5 passed in late June of last year, the first time cabinet has said this is a project in the national interest. There were not any criteria in the legislation to guide them, and then they said they would let us know what the criteria were later, but they have approved the project with no cost-benefit analysis and no information.

I mentioned earlier tonight that in the Canada Gazette, the government actually mis-characterizes the project in the description, which is not long. The description the government put on the Gazette website for Canadians to respond to claimed that the project is a pipeline to deliver crude oil. It may not matter to people in the PMO what the difference between crude oil and diluted bitumen is, but in fact, they have very different markets in different countries. Some refineries can handle some, but most cannot. In any case, there is a very significant difference in the kind of hazard that diluted bitumen represents. If the Liberals cannot describe it right when they put it out for public consultation, it does not inspire a lot of confidence that they know what they are doing at all.

On top of that, we had no cost-benefit analysis, no further information as to why the project is in the national interest. I remember that on the floor of the House in June last year, the Minister of Energy said it would not be politicians deciding what projects are in the national interest. There would have to be a private sector proponent. If there is a private sector proponent, the projects are going to make money. There is no private sector proponent for the first project the government picked out of Bill C-5. It is the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta and a company called Pem-

bina Pipeline, which is willing to maybe stake 10% of the whole project.

● (2250)

We are on the hook for this, and it is going to plow through and bulldoze through some of the most sensitive marine ecosystems on the coast of British Columbia, but that is okay, because the Prime Minister's Office press release says that we are avoiding ecologically sensitive areas. Again, this provides no confidence whatsoever that the government even understands the basics of what it is supposed to do as a responsible government.

I am going to go back to Bill C-5, because it is really important to understand. Again, to point to my friend, the member for Taia-iako'n—Parkdale—High Park, go back to Bill C-5 and look at the exemptions that are listed in subsection 21(2).

I know I do not have a lot of time, but I have to read them so the public understands that cabinet is not authorized to make exemptions under the following acts: Access to Information Act, the Canada Elections Act, the Canada Labour Code, the Conflict of Interest Act, the Criminal Code, the Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act, the Investment Canada Act, the Lobbying Act, the Official Languages Act, the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act, the Indian Act, the Auditor General Act, the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act, the Railway Safety Act, the Trade Unions Act, the Explosives Act and the Hazardous Products Act.

Guess what laws are not on the list that the government cannot make exemptions to. It is the laws that would also be amended in C-39, and I will tell members how they would be amended. They are the laws that I specifically tried to have added as amendments to Bill C-5, which were rejected by the Liberals and the Conservatives, to add that exemptions could not be made under the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the Species at Risk Act and others of that nature.

We absolutely know that the Liberals thought about it and decided no, that they wanted to be able to run through those with a bulldozer. That is okay. They are going to do that, because they have done that in Bill C-5, and I sometimes feel like I am watching a soap opera and everyone forgot season one. Season one was Bill C-5.

We are now in a Möbius loop, where we are still talking the same fallacies with no evidence, but we are in season two. In season two, it is more of the same, only worse, because they are really hoping that people were so bedazzled by the drama of season one of the soap opera that they are not keeping track of the cumulative impact of two omnibus bills with so radically different titles that we should be able to keep them straight: the Building Canada Act and the build Canada strong act.

What the Liberals have done in Bill C-39 with the Species at Risk Act, the Impact Assessment Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the Fisheries Act and others, is to add for the first time that governments, when adding conditions to approvals of projects, would have to consider whether these conditions are economic, feasible or practical.

The previous transport minister, my friend whose name I will say because it gives the time context, was Omar Alghabra. When the government did the wrong thing and approved Roberts Bank, he said not to worry because they had 320 binding conditions that will protect the environment. Everyone knew they would not protect species at risk, but they were supposedly binding conditions.

With Bill C-39, if it passes, there would be no such thing as binding conditions because the proponent could come back and say, "Wait a minute. I don't see evidence that the minister considered that we can't afford to live up to your conditions." They cannot be managed. That is why Bill C-39 would further erode laws that the government has already done in Bill C-5 as discretionary if they are in the way of building some big thing with no evidence it is going to make sense.

I really do think that deep geological disposal of nuclear waste actually happens to be one of the projects that the government has talked about, which is actually specifically referenced in the book I mentioned, *How Big Things Get Done*, as where we never want to be: developing a prototype for something that has never been done, such as, for instance, deep geological disposal of nuclear waste.

My God, are the Liberals not embarrassed? Can they read legislation? I am sorry, but I can. I went to law school. I learned legislative drafting and statutory interpretation. They would get an F on this in law school if they submitted it as a term paper. It cannot be tracked. It cannot be read. We cannot keep track of what one goes to the other. Is anything defined?

• (2255)

It is a pile of political discretion and spin. It is fiscal recklessness disguised as economic wisdom. I suppose it is something that only the current Prime Minister could get away with.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate my fellow British Columbian, the member of Parliament for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and her intervention today. I know she is very passionate. She is a parliamentarian because she cares about this place. Part of the tradition of this place is making sure that there are reasonable expectations on the executive and she talked about the massive powers the Liberals justified in Bill C-5 that gave them essentially the ability to exempt almost any law. At the time, they justified it under an emergency, so Parliament set a five-year sunset clause on it. Clause 102 in Bill

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C-39 removes that stop, giving future governments complete access to all of those powers from there on in.

What does she have to say about those expanded powers for the executive at the expense of Parliament?

• (2300)

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, honestly, I was shocked because not only is this bill badly drafted, it is also deceitfully drafted. Usually when we look at the summary of a bill and what it says it is going to do in the front few pages it would say that it is amending Bill C-5, although it is not called Bill C-5 anymore, the Building Canada Act, in the "following ways" or "including the following". We would think the important things are going to be listed when we do A, B, C, D, but the Liberals forgot to mention repealing section 5.1 of the Building Canada Act, which is the exact point my friend has raised, which is repealing the sunset clause without any effort to draw anyone's attention to it. It is absolutely shocking.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands' indignation. She provided an excellent summary of the bulldozer that is Bill C-39. As she explained, Bill C-5 allowed certain laws to be set aside for a period of five years. Bill C-39 would make that change permanent. However, the Prime Minister is not just anyone: He is the former United Nations Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance.

What is he doing through Bill C-39? He is permanently repealing or amending environmental legislation. Do members see the hypocrisy? It is the same individual, but he is no longer advocating the same cause. His role has changed.

I would like my colleague to explain how she sees this hypocrisy. What does she think of the fact that a person who once championed environmental protection is now granting himself extraordinary powers to circumvent environmental safeguards?

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. I would add that the word "hypocrisy" may actually be a little too kind.

There is one thing that troubles me. During last year's debates, Liberal members argued that the five-year sunset clause could be problematic because a future Conservative government might use these extraordinary powers improperly. At the time, the bill contained a provision that would have limited those powers to five years. Under this bill, however, these powers would remain in the hands of the Prime Minister and cabinet indefinitely, regardless of which party forms government.

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Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech and intervention. I want to draw her attention to a part of the bill that I think she is also aware of, which is the inclusion of offshore wind and electricity transmission projects as the kinds of projects that might benefit from some of the processes that are outlined in the bill. I know she has a lot of concern with respect to the processes outlined in the bill. I wonder if, upon reflection of the inclusion of offshore wind and electricity transmission projects, whether that changes her view at all.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, as the first project recommended to proceed being a dilbit pipeline running through the most sensitive ecological areas of my riding, with objections from indigenous nations throughout coastal British Columbia, I would love to see some wind-powered projects, but not at the expense of destroying the Salish Sea, the wild salmon and the southern resident killer whales. No way.

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ) Mr. Speaker, what a great evening we are having.

I have a question in mind that we may not have addressed in our debates. We have indicated that we will be voting against the bill, but I think there is an important question to consider regarding Bill C-39. Who benefits from this legislation? According to the bill's title, it aims to strengthen the economy. Does the bill achieve its objective? Who does it benefit?

I ask that because, this evening, I have heard some of my government colleagues talk to us about national interest and tell us that it is important to diversify our economy in the context of a tariff crisis. I would like to come back to this concept of national interest. I do not know whether my colleagues understand it very well, because it is a term that is generally used in international relations. I am drawing from my past life as a political science teacher. It is a term that is used in international relations and that is mostly based on the public interest.

Domestic policy involves the public interest. Foreign policy involves the national interest. Public interest usually refers to all specific interests in a nation. That is the public interest. An effective policy, such as a health or education policy, meets the needs of the entire population. It is not meant for a tiny segment of privileged people in a society. As a rule, when we talk about public interest, we always think in terms of a rational state that works in accordance with its interests.

The same goes for the national interest. When we talk about that, we are thinking of a state that wants to ensure its security, its economic development and its collective wealth. Ultimately, when we talk about the national interest, we are talking about a government that is trying to act in the best interest of its people. That is what makes me laugh, because I wonder whether the government's nation-building projects are really in the interest the people of Canada and Quebec. I am not so sure.

Let us ask ourselves a few questions. Take the Pacific link pipeline project, for instance. Is this a project of national interest

aimed at the well-being or economic development of the people of Quebec? I am not so sure. Let us ask ourselves two or three fairly simple questions. If Pacific link is built, it will cost \$43 billion in public funds. That is a huge amount. We also have to factor in that \$36 billion has already been put into another pipeline. Let us think about that. It is a massive use of public money to feed the greedy oil and gas industry. If I were one of my Liberal colleagues, the first question I would ask myself is where these energy exports are going.

If we look at this more closely, in 2024, we exported \$197 billion in energy. Of that \$197 billion, \$147 billion came from oil alone. Roughly speaking, Canada exports between 75% and 80% of its energy to the United States each year in all forms: gas, oil and electricity. However, when we look at oil exports alone, 91% of all oil exports in 2025 went directly to the U.S.

I do not understand the magical thinking that somehow by just building pipeline infrastructure, we are going to export more oil to Europe. There was even talk of Asia earlier. Certain members said that this evening. I heard the member for Halifax and the member for Guelph answering questions and saying that we are going to export more oil. I do not know how they are in a position to say that, but the president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers appeared before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources this week and said that, no, our main market will always be the U.S.

The Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation said the same thing earlier. He said that if we export more oil, we will be able to sell it at a higher price because, right now, we are selling it at a discount to the Americans. No one supports that. Even the deputy minister of international trade, whom I saw this week, cannot say whether the government has a target.

● (2305)

Does the government have a target? Does it want to reduce oil exports from 91% to 40% or 50% by diversifying our markets? No one in the government can tell us whether there is a target.

Therefore, when I ask myself where our energy exports go, the answer is without question the United States. Furthermore, when it comes to oil, 91% of our exports go to the U.S.

Why build a pipeline? Why undermine certain environmental regulations, as we see in section 3, to ensure the Americans' energy security? How is it in Canada's national interest to ensure the Americans' energy security? I find this completely outrageous.

Next, we can ask ourselves another question: Who owns the oil companies?

When we look at the ownership structure of all the major players in the Canadian oil and gas industry, we see that, while 80% of these major companies are owned by foreign interests, 60% of them belong to American interests, so the major oil and gas companies are mostly American-owned. I would remind members that oil is one of the only consumer goods that we export that is not subject to tariffs. There are no tariffs on oil. Ninety per cent of Canada's oil exports are sent to the United States tariff-free, and the owners of the major oil and gas companies are American.

From 2021 to 2024, these people made \$131 billion in profits. That means that they sent \$80 billion in dividends outside Canada. That is a capital flight of \$12.5 billion a year that leaves Canada and mainly goes to the United States.

We asked ourselves two very simple questions. Where are our oil exports going? Who owns the oil companies?

In both cases, I have yet to find anyone here who was able to show me that it is in Canada's national interest to put \$44 billion into a pipeline. We are certainly not the ones who will benefit from it. We are helping to keep the Americans energy secure and helping them make more profits, and it is Quebecers and Canadians who are paying for that.

I was saying that dividend profits totalled \$80 billion from 2021 to 2024. The latest figures are even worse. This past summer, in July, Cenovus said it was going to post record profits in the second quarter. We are in the second quarter now. It made \$2.8 billion. That is four times more than it managed to earn in 2025.

When I look at this, I really do not see how anyone can argue that this legislation will strengthen the Canadian economy, when it is actually about undermining environmental laws to give Americans greater energy security and provide American companies with more revenue, even though those greedy companies have made record profits in recent years.

Worse still, what is even more shocking is that the major unions that came to see us at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources told us that the increase in oil production does not come with an increase in jobs. The government often says that the oil sector is important because it supports so many jobs. The unions tell us that this does not translate into more jobs, because companies are investing in automation. They do not want to invest in their infrastructure. It is sheer idiocy. The government is destroying the environment so that, during a tariff crisis, American companies can rake in more profits on oil while ensuring American energy security.

Can any Liberal member explain the logic to me? I would appreciate that. Otherwise, I would ask them to forever hold their peace. There we go.

• (2310)

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague gave a fine speech about the opinion of his political party.

Can he explain to me how he would do a better job defending the benefits of this bill? This bill does not remove standards. Instead, it sets out guidelines to fast-track the implementation of projects so that Canada can be the master in its own house.

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My colleague argued at length about his opposition to the pipeline, while Canada is diversifying its markets so that it is no longer dependent on a single market, the American market. Why would he not want to support this bill?

• (2315)

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleague to do a bit of research and take a look at the information that is out there. Where do our energy exports go? Who owns the gas and oil companies?

I always find it amusing when Liberal colleagues talk about being masters in our own house. This has nothing to do with that. When Quebec decided to buy hydroelectric power to secure its future, that is when we became masters in our own house.

The government is not buying our oil resources; it is leaving them in American hands and paying for the infrastructure. To me, that is being subservient in our own house, not being masters.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my Bloc Québécois colleague made an excellent point in closing. We are not masters in our own house because, as he said, U.S. companies own the oil sector. The market is in the U.S. The latest spring economic statement indicated that 90% of our fossil fuel exports go to the United States. We have no market diversification.

Why does he suppose the Liberals are unaware of this reality, of our role? We are not owners; we are serving U.S. companies.

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I cannot fathom why. I cannot understand why the Prime Minister, who is supposedly a genius when it comes to international trade, fails to grasp the fact that we do not collectively own oil resources; we exploit them primarily for the benefit and profit of Americans.

I do not understand why the government is putting all our eggs in the oil sector basket at a time when our relationship with the Americans is in crisis. As I said off the top, the national interest demands that we be aware of our own interests. Liberal Party members are clearly unaware of their interests. In that sense, they have the mindset of a colonized people.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague did a thorough job of showing that this proposed pipeline will not benefit us and is not in the national interest.

Is it also in the national interest to fight with unions and violate their rights when businesses depend on workers? How is it in the national interest to alienate workers?

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. At the beginning of my speech, I asked who will benefit from this legislation. It is certainly not the workers.

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Worse still, as I have said, we experienced first-hand what happens when an oil and gas project is turned down. That is what happened in Quebec with GNL Québec. When the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement said no to GNL Québec, the company turned around and sued the Canadian government. It is not hard to imagine how much trouble a piece of legislation like this could lead to.

Imagine how many lawsuits will be filed against the federal government if the Pacific link project is rejected on environmental grounds. This is all completely irrational.

[*English*]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise tonight to speak to Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act.

This debate is about what kind of Canada we want to build and about government priorities. We all agree that Canada needs to build. We need housing. We need clean energy. We need transmission lines. We need public infrastructure. We need good union jobs, and we need to plug economic leakages. We need to diversify our economy and stand up to the economic threats coming from Donald Trump, but we do not want to stand up to Donald Trump by using Donald Trump's policies. A bill like Bill C-5 would not even have come forward from Stephen Harper.

Someone from the Conservative bench said earlier that this is like using a bulldozer and a sledgehammer. Bill C-39 is asking Canadians to accept an enormous transfer of power in the name of speed: more power over workers, more discretion over environmental protections and accelerated timelines for decisions affecting indigenous rights. My colleague from Vancouver East said that beneath this bill “are serious questions about who gets power, who gets certainty and who bears the risk.” We are going to talk about that.

Let us start with the workers. The Canadian Labour Congress commissioned a comparative legal analysis that found Bill C-39 would give the federal government “broader unilateral power to end a legal strike than exists in any other G7 country.” Think about that. Even in the United States, the president cannot simply end a national emergency strike and oppose a permanent binding settlement, as the Liberals are proposing here today. There are legal thresholds, court involvement and limits on intervention that would stop this from happening, yet the government wants to give a Canadian minister, any minister, extraordinary power when a strike is deemed to adversely affect what they deem is in the national interest.

A strike is supposed to create economic pressure. That is the point. Workers do not have the power of a multinational corporation. Their power comes from standing together when necessary and, if needed, withholding their own labour. If the government can intervene whenever that pressure becomes too effective, employers have less incentive to bargain fairly.

We have heard from the CLC, CUPE, Unifor, the United Steelworkers and other labour organizations that have raised serious concerns about these changes. Instead of dismissing those concerns, the government needs to listen to the people who actually represent

those workers. It needs to listen to those labour unions. The Liberals keep saying that they are friends of labour. Why are they not listening to them?

The same principle needs to apply to our environment. Environmental assessment is not red tape. Asking what happens to our water, our climate, endangered species and human health before approving a project is basic due diligence. A one-year deadline does not make nature move faster. It is not acceptable to first nations. We cannot undo extinction. We cannot simply restore contaminated water or destroyed habitat after the fact. Environmental organizations have specifically warned that the provisions in Bill C-39 could weaken protections for species at risk, including the critically endangered southern resident killer whale, which my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands has raised repeatedly.

Indigenous rights cannot simply be squeezed into a government project management schedule. Meaningful consultation requires time, resources and genuine participation before decisions are made. Is it the government that is going to decide when a consultation is complete? Is that how it is going to work moving forward?

We want to build Canada, but let us build Canada where workers have the power at the bargaining table, where indigenous rights are respected, where environmental protection is part of the national interest and where communities do not carry the risk while corporations collect the rewards. Building Canada strong cannot simply mean building Canada faster. It must mean building Canada better, building Canada fairer and building Canada together.

My riding, Courtenay—Alberni, is about a 10-hour trip door to door. My riding is 7,900 square kilometres and represents 34 communities. There are 184 elected officials in my riding, and we are tired. We feel like we are not being heard. It is crazy that I am going to refer to Brian Lilley, but he highlighted that Alberta has 5.1 million people, and it has six senators. We know that they need to be heard. That is clear.

● (2320)

I come from Vancouver Island. We know that we are better off and stronger together. Absolutely, separation is not something we talk about, but on the other side of the Rockies, we know it is harder to be heard, and on Vancouver Island, I can tell this House what it is like. We have not had a Senate appointment since 1970. Brian Lilley highlighted that Alberta has six senators and Atlantic Canada has 30. We have not had a single Senate appointment since 1970. What does that mean? It means we do not have a Senate seat on the fisheries committee at the Senate. Why is that important? I am going to talk a bit about that.

I am talking about building Canada strong. Building Canada strong includes rural communities. Wealth starts in rural communities, but it leaves rural communities. That is what we are used to. When Liberals talk about regions of national interest, why are they not talking to regions and making us part of the national interest?

They promised to fix our fisheries. On the east coast, they fish it or they lose their quota. They do not have foreign ownership of their quota. They do not allow it. We also know who owns their quota. On the west coast, there is no public registry, we allow foreign ownership, and we allow concentration of licences.

A lot of my friends in rural Canada, a lot of people in my riding in coastal British Columbia, go out fishing. They lease from people we call “slipper skippers” who represent the corporate interest that owns the quota. We do not even know who they are. A lot of them could be from Russia or China, could be our adversaries or organized crime. It is unbelievable that this is allowed. In 2018, a study at the fisheries and oceans committee unanimously supported changing it so we could come up with an independent fishery model that reflected the east coast. Nothing has changed. For decades, we have seen this happen.

I am going to quote Dan Edwards, who wrote this week in his *Substack*, “The value of that asset can rise while the security of the person doing the fishing declines.” That is exactly what is happening. Another thing he said was, “Government policy helped produce those losses. Government has a responsibility to help repair them.” What happened to fast-tracking in dealing with that issue?

When they want to talk about building Canada stronger, what about us on Vancouver Island? Here is what I hear from first nations when they hear about fast-tracking projects: What about fast-tracking their treaties? What about fast-tracking their agreements? How come the government is not prioritizing that? Is that not nation building?

We have 65,000 homeless people in this country, including in my riding. It would cost \$14 billion to house them. The Liberals can find \$45 billion for a pipeline that increases our GDP by 0.6%, but when we look at the impact on people who are homeless, it is much greater than that. The Mental Health Commission did a study and said unaddressed mental health is costing us 5% to 6% of our GDP, \$200 billion a year.

The PBO also did a study and said it would cost \$4.9 billion to ensure we had parity with mental and physical health, that we could make mental health an insured benefit, based on my bill, under the mental health parity act, but the government chose not to do that. These are economic leakages and economic opportunities, but they impact every home, every community, including in my riding.

We can talk about ferries. Colleagues have heard me talk about this repeatedly. Right now, the east coast gets \$182.5 million for operating its ferries. We get \$38 million in B.C., despite the fact that we move 22 million passengers and the east coast moves 365,000. Let us go back to Confederation. When we joined Confederation, Vancouver Island had 15,000 people, while P.E.I. had 97,000 people. Today, Vancouver Island has more people than Newfoundland and P.E.I. We get six dollars per capita for ferry operating costs; they get \$125. If the government wants to build back

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stronger, it needs to include the rest of Canada and make sure we have fairness and equity. That is all we are asking for.

When it comes to shipbuilding, ship recycling and ship repair, we can build back better. We can look to Norway, where they take small communities, places like Port Alberni, underused deep-sea ports, and make them shipbuilding, ship repair and ship recycling facilities. We could lead the world since we have the longest coastline in the world.

We are tired of being ignored. If we want to build back stronger, we need to make sure that places like Vancouver Island are included in building back stronger, that the government actually takes the time to listen to us, that we have proper representation from Vancouver Island that reflects that, and that we get acknowledged and not dismissed when we bring forward ideas of unfairness and inequities or when we feel that the government is not acting on the things it has promised to do for too long.

● (2325)

[*Translation*]

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

I have a question for him, but I also want to add to what he said at the end of his speech. He mentioned Norway, which I had the opportunity to visit this year. As we know, Norway is one of six countries in the world that has no debt and that is developing its resources in order to shift toward electrification, for example. In fact, 100% of the cars sold last year were electric. Norway is a good example in many ways. It develops its resources and sells them abroad.

I sit on the Standing Committee on International Trade, where the word that comes up the most often is “predictability”. That is what Bill C-39 provides. If my colleague is not in favour of Bill C-39, what other ideas does he have for speeding up projects, providing predictability for businesses, encouraging investment and ensuring that projects in Canada move forward, as is the case in Norway?

● (2330)

[*English*]

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague talking about Norway, because Norway, as my colleague knows, also has a sovereign wealth fund. They have taken a portion of finite resources from their oil and gas industry, and they have created a fund that is \$1.7 trillion right now. In terms of royalties alone, they earn over \$200 billion a year off those royalties. They have taken leadership on EVs. What did the Liberals do? They rolled back their commitment on the EV mandate.

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They created a sovereign wealth fund, but they did not fund it with an excess profit tax or by taking royalties from oil and gas. They are letting them have a free ride. I keep bringing it up in the House. We have this generational opportunity right now. Oil and gas are posting record profits. Carve off some of those profits, invest in future generations and invest in projects for the future, like clean energy and like a transmission line. Instead, they are just letting it flow to CEOs and their investors. That is exactly what this bill is like.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it feels like quality time with other British Columbians tonight because I get to ask the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni a question. I know that the NDP members, as well as many labour unions, have raised issues with Bill C-39 when it comes to workers' rights. The government likes to claim that it is the party of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Liberals constantly talk about how they respect the charter. They could start by respecting the charter and by respecting this place, because under subsection 4.2(1) of the Department of Justice Act, the Minister of Justice is legally required to table a charter statement for every single government bill. That means that the Department of Justice would give its legal opinion on the constitutionality vis à vis the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 2(d).

Does he believe that the committee that will be studying this should have that document before its study begins?

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate working with my colleague as a fellow British Columbian. He is absolutely right. Not only are they fast-tracking the bill, they are trying to fast-track everything: fast-tracking rights, fast-tracking the duties and responsibilities of this place, and fast-tracking over environmental organizations, over local communities and over first nations. Again, Stephen Harper would not even think of bringing forward legislation like this and moving at this speed. The streets would be full.

This is unacceptable. It is time for the government to take a step back, listen to labour, listen to environmental organizations, listen to first nations, and make sure it is listening to government lawyers and doing what is responsible and what we have done traditionally in this place.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Courtenay—Alberni for his speech.

It is clear that the government wants to move quickly, but it is also doing things that run counter to workers' rights. For example, the proposed amendments to section 107 of the Canada Labour Code could potentially prevent the use of strikes and job action.

Quebec was an innovator. It successfully enacted anti-scab legislation. We have been waiting for years for this to happen at the federal level.

I would like my colleague to explain why he is concerned about the proposed amendments to section 107 and the right of workers to use job action in a dispute with the employer.

[English]

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asks excellent questions in here. I will highlight this, that when we talk about section 107, we were actually pushing the government to get rid of it so that it stopped overriding the rights of workers. Instead, what are the Liberals doing? They are making it even worse. I completely agree with my colleague. The government needs to sit down with labour. It is ignoring their requests, completely ignoring them. It is ignoring so many other stakeholders when it comes to the legislation. It is fast-tracking and ramming this through. It is like Bill C-5 repeating itself.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise again this evening to speak to Bill C-39, which, I would remind the House, represents a crushing setback for workers' rights, the environment and democracy. In short, it weakens workers' rights, limits the right to strike and represents a major step backwards, as I said, for workers' rights. It pre-approves projects by turning the environmental assessment process for pipelines and nuclear power into a mere afterthought. It centralizes more powers in the hands of the executive branch, that is, ministers, while diminishing the role of Parliament. In addition, regardless of what some people might say, this is a mammoth bill, a nearly 250-page omnibus bill that further weakens democracy.

It feels like the Liberals are using the tariff crisis to pursue an agenda that sets society back significantly. When it comes to the environment, it is clear that these are setbacks that we will never be able to undo. However, the Bloc Québécois is resilient, and we will continue to fight for workers' rights and ensure we can leave behind a healthy environment for future generations.

I will speak more specifically about the setbacks to workers' rights, then the environmental setbacks and, lastly, the democratic setbacks.

First, I want to talk about the issue of workers' rights, as a number of trade unions have expressed concerns. Last week, I received a letter of objection by email from the Seafarers' International Union of Canada. Just yesterday, I met with representatives from the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada, the United Steelworkers and the Canadian Labour Congress, who are deeply concerned about workers' rights. Today, I received confirmation that members of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec are concerned and are therefore keen to participate in the work on Bill C-39.

The Liberals deny it, but a red line has been crossed regarding workers' rights to strike and to collective bargaining. There is, in fact, a consensus among the country's trade unions that this is an affront to workers' rights. If the amendments set out in part 3 of Bill C-39 are implemented, the proposed section 107 of the Canada Labour Code would allow the minister to consider potential economic or even social impacts when deciding whether to intervene under a vague and unrestricted criterion known as the "national interest". This is an entirely subjective criterion. It is worth noting that, under this bill, we would be the only G7 country in which the executive branch could bring an end to the entirely legal right to strike.

For example, according to the proposed section 107 set out in Bill C-39, the same general power to encourage understanding and conflict resolution is there, but it is framed by the new subsection 107(2) for ending a work stoppage.

It gives the minister the express power to make an order providing for the resumption or continuation of operations, extending the term of the collective agreement, or imposing a binding method of resolving the issues in dispute. As a trigger, yes, a legal strike or lockout in progress requires a special mediator's report to be considered, but only the minister's opinion of the national interest counts. The problem is that the concept of the national interest has not been defined, and certain factors are not exhaustive. There is still no prior vote, but the administrative route is now explicitly codified. Concerning any potential disputes, the text would provide an express statutory basis that could undermine challenges that are based on the current interpretation. In short, this weakens the right to settlement, and the mediator is not independent, because they are appointed by the minister.

The unions have a few questions. They want to know where the balance of power is in Bill C-39 because, no, it does not contribute to social peace and economic security. Unlike in other countries, there is no longer any accountability to the House of Commons or to elected officials. The United States was even cited as an example, where Congress has a say in a strike. Basically, the bill does not abolish section 107, but it does sharpen the government's weapon.

The Minister of Jobs, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and all the Liberal members keep saying that the bill does not weaken the right to strike, but that is not true. Nothing could be further from the truth. The unions are confirming that the opposite is true and maintain that, no, there are no safeguards.

I would also like to return to one provision regarding section 107, which is the worst attack on the right to strike and to bargain collectively. It is one of the most serious attempts to roll back decades of labour struggles in this country's history. The right to strike is a fundamental right that is recognized by the courts and protected by freedom of association. The Bloc Québécois believes that this right must never depend on the political goodwill of a federal government. In May, I spoke about Bill C-247, which would repeal section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. We thought that bill was interesting. I would like to quote a few of the things we said about it. We said that section 107 "gives the Minister of Labour extremely broad powers to intervene in labour disputes in the federal jurisdiction. The minister can go so far as to ask the Canada Indus-

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trial Relations Board to intervene or impose any measures the minister considers necessary".

● (2335)

We also said that "the existence of section 107 directly alters the balance of power between employers and workers. It encourages employers to stick to their guns rather than bargaining in good faith. The Bloc Québécois believes that disputes should be resolved at the bargaining table first, not in ministerial offices". That is what we said about the bill in May. We did not want premature political intervention.

We also said that, since 2024 alone, "Ottawa has used section 107 to intervene in at least seven major labour disputes." I will give some recent examples: WestJet, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific Kansas City, Air Canada, the Port of Montreal, the Port of Québec, the Port of Vancouver and Canada Post. What was supposed to be an exceptional power has effectively become a standard tool for managing labour disputes. More than 55,000 workers were affected by the dispute at Canada Post.

Lastly, we said that "when a government limits a fundamental right, it should always do so openly, in front of Parliament. For a long time, when a government wanted to end a strike, it had to introduce special back-to-work legislation. This entailed a public debate, a vote by elected officials and political accountability. Section 107 circumvents this debate, this democratic process, by employing a much more low-key administrative mechanism." A right that cannot be exercised is not a right.

Let us get back to Bill C-39. We said, "If the bill remains unchanged, it will harm non-unionized workers. Compromises between employers and unions establish acceptable norms and standards across many economic sectors. Stifling the unions' right to strike is tantamount to stifling negotiated agreements and reasonable compromises". In short, it is more of the same. All the government is doing is releasing the minister from his responsibilities.

My time is running out, but I could go on for a while. I want to touch on the fact that this bill is a brutal setback for the environment. Greenpeace is even accusing the Liberal government of bullying nature.

Last week, I attended the general meeting of Appalachian Corridor, an organization with many environmental concerns. This group needs renewed funding for land protection organizations, not a law that could lead to long-term ecological damage, higher rehabilitation costs or literally impossible repairs, and irreparable damage to our land. The government needs to stop greenwashing. If the mandatory deadline for environmental assessments is shortened to one year, it will not be possible to guarantee the quality and scientific integrity of the assessments. This is a disaster for the environment.

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This bill is a setback for democracy. In a liberal democracy under the rule of law, laws passed by Parliament and elected officials are essential, particularly for determining what the national interest is. In Canada, laws will now be made to be suspended and circumvented. As my colleague asked earlier, what is the national interest? We get the impression that this has become more of a personal interest for the Prime Minister. With Bill C-39, as with Bill C-5, the laws passed by Parliament over the past decades will no longer apply equally to everyone. While some development projects may continue to be subject to formal environmental assessments conducted by the Impact Assessment Agency in accordance with the Impact Assessment Act, others, such as oil, gas, or nuclear projects, will be exempt from these assessments.

In conclusion, I would like those affected by the bill to have a say. Several environmental groups feel that the government has not taken their comments into account. For example, the Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement is calling for Bill C-39 to be scrapped entirely.

Here are a few questions that organizations are asking. Will the one-year environmental assessments examine the impact these projects will have on greenhouse gas emissions? Will they really address climate change? I doubt it.

The west coast oil pipeline could affect over 100 indigenous communities. Fourteen indigenous communities, the Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement and several unions are challenging the legislation in court because they believe that the government is infringing on the right to strike.

I would like to say one last thing about democracy. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has criticized the Liberals for stripping my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères' amendment out of Bill C-39 to get rid of the five-year sunset clause on the minister's powers.

• (2340)

This is starting to be a bit much. The alternative facts, disinformation and misinformation have got to stop.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want more housing, robust infrastructure, energy projects and trade corridors. Bill C-39 is specifically designed to reduce delays and enable projects of national interest to be completed more quickly, while, of course, maintaining the consultations and safeguards provided for by law.

My question is simple. Does the Bloc Québécois actively support the objective of building faster here in Canada? If so, which specific measures would it like to see fast-tracked in Bill C-39?

• (2345)

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, as far as tackling the housing crisis is concerned, quite frankly, there are other solutions than those set out in Bill C-39. There are more options than simply passing laws that will undermine other laws. My colleague from Joliette—Manawan asked some excellent questions today about the homelessness crisis.

I would like to draw a connection to another question raised by the Bloc Québécois today: What is the national interest? Frankly,

investing money in programs that will help build housing and support organizations working with people experiencing homelessness would be a social project that would do far more to advance the national interest.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-15, the government granted Alto new powers to expropriate privately owned land. In Bill C-39, the government is granting itself new powers to allow preliminary work to benefit the Alto project.

What does the Bloc Québécois member think about that? Did the Bloc Québécois support these proposed new powers for Alto, or did it oppose them?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my colleague for making an effort to ask his question in French. When it comes to the government giving itself new powers, that is exactly what it is doing with Bill C-39. That is also what it did with Bill C-5. As I have shown, power is being centralized within the executive branch. The government is giving itself new powers. There is no longer any accountability. We see this in the government's approach to workers' rights, for instance. The government is effectively eliminating the opportunity for debate.

Too often, in the interest of expediting projects, it is clear that the government is more interested in giving itself new powers than in genuinely consulting communities.

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been telling us all evening that we might need to reduce the impact of regulatory constraints to promote trade corridors and infrastructure projects. However, the only infrastructure project they have mentioned so far is a pipeline that would cost at least \$44 billion.

I am sure my colleague can tell us everything we could do with \$44 billion to help people who are struggling with an affordability crisis and perhaps even seniors who are having trouble making ends meet. Increasing the old age security pension might be a good idea.

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, in any case, that \$44 billion would not be used to enrich U.S. interests or bolster U.S. energy security. Instead it would be used for projects that are truly in the national interest here. With \$44 billion, we could easily increase old age security for seniors aged 65 to 74 so that they get the same 10% increase as seniors aged 75 and older.

Someone was just talking to me about construction. I think that with \$44 billion, without violating any other laws, we could easily invest more in organizations working on social housing and homelessness, in projects that are much more promising and much more helpful to the people here. That would also help people.

Everyone is talking about inflation—all the more reason to help the people here get through this difficult time. There are countless examples we could give.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening. It is quite late, and we are debating this important bill, Bill C-39, an act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy. It will come as no surprise to learn that the Bloc Québécois strongly opposes this bill as introduced by the Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Let me be quite clear: We are not opposing it just for the sake of it. I can confirm that we would all be happier to be able to put our energy and time into serving our constituents rather than spending another evening in the House debating this bill, before a government that refuses to listen and pushes forward as though it were free to do whatever it wants. We oppose it because the proposed changes are simply unreasonable and unjustifiable to the public and our constituents.

That is what Liberal-style democracy under the Prime Minister looks like right now. The government is using a temporary trade crisis as an excuse to impose legislative changes that will be permanent. These changes are likely to follow us for decades, long after the end of the crisis that served to justify them. The government is exploiting a trade dispute to further centralize power in Ottawa. They want to allow themselves to circumvent certain environmental laws, they want to weaken workers' rights, they want to open the door to the privatization of our ports and airports, and above all, they want to compromise independent scientific analyses, even while infringing on the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces when it comes to natural resource management.

Let us start with a first example: workers' rights. The bill contains amendments to section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. These amendments are intended to authorize the Canada Industrial Relations Board to limit workers' right to use necessary job action in a labour dispute. A minister would be allowed to ask the Canada Industrial Relations Board to impose a binding settlement during collective bargaining when the minister determines that a strike or lockout would have a negative national impact or cause serious social disruptions. It is a roundabout way of telling employers that they can take a hard line during negotiations, that they should not worry, that there will be no strike. That is essentially what it does legislatively.

When negotiations between employers and unions break down to the point where one of the workers' only remaining options is to exercise their right to strike, we believe the very purpose of that right is to create economic and social repercussions that will encourage the employer to return to the bargaining table. To claim that these changes do not weaken the right to strike shows a striking misunderstanding of the history of the social movements that fought to secure that right in the first place. It took decades of social struggle to make progress on workers' rights and environmental protection, but with this bill, the government would like to be able to sweep away these gains in a matter of minutes.

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Then there is the issue of environmental assessments and major projects. I think that is a pretty important part of this bill. I would like to focus on division 1 of Bill C-39, which would impose a maximum one-year time limit on the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada for completing its reviews of so-called projects of national interest. Again, it is one thing to want to speed up the assessment process, but it is quite another to not even wait for the recommendations of those assessments before approving major projects.

If there is one thing I quickly understood as the Bloc Québécois critic for public accounts, it is that, when a political decision is made too quickly and needs to be reversed, the price to be paid is much higher than if the government had taken the time to do things right from the start. When it comes to the environment or biodiversity, the price is not always calculated solely in dollars.

Let me give another example. Changes to the Fisheries Act would allow proponents to pay money to third parties to offset habitat loss caused by their project. The government is making decisions that could have long-term consequences on the environment without even taking the time to consult the experts within the government itself.

• (2350)

I am referring to the chief science adviser.

I have sat as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Science and Research since it was first created. The chief science adviser came to see us a few months ago when the government introduced Bill C-5. She described it as a disaster, and said that the government was circumventing laws, especially legislation related to the environment and other measures, without even consulting scientific experts. The chief science adviser confided that neither she nor the other members had been consulted in any way about the selection of major projects said to be of national interest.

This is a government that simply wants to do things its own way, or listen only to people who share its views and want the same things it does. That is what we have come to. Once a decision is made, it has to be owned. Sometimes, by the time it can be reversed, it is already too late.

Certain things simply cannot be repaired. Concerning Bill C-39, we understand that the government wants to fast-track the new Alberta pipeline project. It could be approved even before environmental assessments are completed.

What is the plan if we have to reverse course? The government pre-approves a project, does not even know if it will be good, and then it is too late to backtrack. If the final recommendations from the experts were negative, would it really be possible to make changes to the project when it is already under way?

I think the answer is obvious.

Let me give an example. We build the foundation of a house and then realize that the ground is unstable and we have to rebuild somewhere else. Imagine the cost. That is for a house, but let us draw a parallel with a pipeline.

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That is precisely the problem with this bill. Right now, the government before us has exhausted its political arguments to persuade the public. It says that there are major projects of national interest and that it wants to create pathways and mechanisms by concentrating power in the hands of a single minister who could, by the government's own account, designate a project as being in the national interest, amend the Impact Assessment Act, weaken environmental policies and even permanently eliminate them.

Instead of continuing discussions in a democratic manner, bringing together the relevant stakeholders and the various levels of government around one table, the government decides to introduce a bill that is over 250 pages long and imposes the vision of just one man or maybe a few people in the Prime Minister's Office.

They want to build Canada strong, and that is the slogan the Liberals keep spewing every day. I do not really agree that undermining accountability and weakening the decisions made in Parliament is the way to build Canada strong.

Power is increasingly being concentrated in the hands of the executive. The government wants to limit the ability of elected officials to hold it to account.

Where else in any modern, industrialized country is this kind of legislation being introduced? If the Liberals can come up with an example of this, I would be curious to know. I checked. No G7 country has brought forward this sort of legislation. They are no worse off than we are. They too face challenges when it comes to the economy and assessment processes. What we are seeing today is more of an authoritarian drift than the application of sound economic and mathematical reasoning to projects said to be in the public interest.

I want to be clear for those watching at home. This government is not introducing these changes in the interest of Quebecers and Canadians. Its goal is to concentrate power in the hands of a small group of individuals or even a single individual.

Quebec's motto is "Je me souviens" or "I remember", and I can guarantee that we will remember this Liberal government's authoritarian abuse for a long time to come.

• (2355)

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, my colleague said that we were using a temporary crisis as an excuse to take action. I worked in the business world for over 25 years. I was involved in corporate financing, and I can say that the lack of predictability is hindering investment and growth. I challenge him to name any major projects that have been carried out in Canada in the past 20, 30 or 40 years. Large-scale projects are no longer being undertaken. Why? It is because the process takes too long. People no longer want to invest in these sorts of projects. The investments are going elsewhere.

I would like my colleague to tell me what he would do to find a way to finally get large-scale projects going again and think big for our country, Canada.

• (2400)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, what a great pass from my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou. I will remind him.

One project I completely disagreed with was the Trans Mountain pipeline, which the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau bought with nearly \$40 billion in taxpayer money. Are we any richer? Are we more prosperous? Are we more independent? That is what the Prime Minister likes to claim when patting himself on the back, but the answer is no. Gas has never been as expensive as it is now. Affordability has not improved much over the past few years either.

I want my colleague to think about what he just said. His government managed to buy a pipeline with taxpayer money without passing a bill that would allow it to sidestep laws or fast-track major projects of national interest. Now the government wants to buy another pipeline, but it wants to do it faster and without any accountability.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very tired. Could the Bloc Québécois member attack the government for me, please?

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I just mentioned what a nice pass I got from my colleague, but this one is a slam dunk.

I believe I summarized things quite well in my speech. The situation we are facing today is historic. First there was Bill C-5. That was the bill that allowed projects of national interest to be identified. Broadly speaking, the government, or even the minister, could bypass all laws, except the Criminal Code, for a period of five years. Then, people on the other side of the House realized that five years might not be enough, so they decided to introduce another bill to allow them to bypass laws permanently.

I just gave an example. The Liberals managed to secure a pipeline using \$40 billion of public funds without having to bypass environmental impact assessments. Now they want to secure a second pipeline and are trying to make us believe they need to bypass those assessments. Clearly, this is hypocrisy. They are trying to pull the wool over our eyes by claiming that, ultimately, they have our best interests at heart.

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is talking about things that are historic. What is historic is a government that was elected just 18 months ago and that has already started delivering on its promises. During the 2025 election campaign, we were very clear that we wanted to get building quickly. In addition to building and moving forward with the Major Projects Office, we also launched the electrification strategy, the nuclear strategy, the strategy to protect nature and Build Canada Homes. We are building.

I would like my colleague to tell me a bit about his solutions for helping Canada get through these times and really lay out a vision for Canada's future.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I have plenty of solutions. We can support the industries we have here, including lumber, aluminum and renewable energy. We already have that in place. We can invest in modernization. We can invest in innovation. These are all things that are possible. We can improve secondary and tertiary processing instead of selling our resources at a discount on international markets. These are all things that can be done.

I understand what my colleague is trying to argue. It is quite difficult. Once again, I would like the government members to explain how they managed to buy a pipeline without having passed the bill currently before us. They want to buy another one, but they just want to do it faster. It is utter nonsense.

● (2405)

[English]

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be closing out the evening on Bill C-39. Let me start with some great literature:

We have all some experience of a feeling, that comes over us occasionally, of what we are saying and doing having been said and done before, in a remote time—of our having been surrounded, dim ages ago, by the same faces, objects, and circumstances—of our knowing perfectly what will be said next, as if we suddenly remembered it!

That is from the great author Charles Dickens's work *David Copperfield*. Members will understand that he is describing that sense we have when the present moment feels like it has already happened. That is what it feels like tonight. More commonly, people might refer to this as *déjà vu*.

Déjà vu is what I have tonight because I remember being here in June 2025, when the Minister responsible for One Canadian Economy said, “The time for resolute action is now.” He said, “For far too long, major projects...have been stalled by assessments, challenges, and overlapping and duplicative regulations.” He said, “[Bill C-5] would introduce a new tool, a process for identifying, prioritizing and advancing transformative infrastructure and development projects.” The government House leader came out and declared, “It is time to build.”

The Prime Minister himself said:

The process to build in this country has become too arduous, it takes too long, and it is holding us back. With every year that a proposal to build a port, wind energy farm, or highway sits on an official's desk, we are leaving investment, prosperity, jobs—people's careers—on the table.

Well, I hate to inform members, but it has been 18 months since the Prime Minister spoke those words, and we have not seen a port, a wind energy farm or a highway approved, let alone built. It remains on desks or not even proposed.

Bill C-5 was supposed to give the government the powers that it said it needed, including some very significant King Henry VIII powers to allow ministers to go around existing laws in Canada. At the time, following the election, which the Liberals won, they said this was what their mandate was. We saw some merit in that proposal, and we supported it. We supported it in haste because that is what the government asked. Then we waited, and we waited some more. What did we get for waiting? What did Canadians get for waiting? We got nothing.

We have seen nothing. We have seen no projects, no ports and no wind energy farms, nothing. In fact, almost as if the Liberals knew they were going to get challenged on this, they had to approve at least one project through their new Major Projects Office and just two weeks ago had to say something about that with respect to a pipeline.

Now we are hearing the very same things. All this week, I have heard the exact same refrains from the government. It is teaching

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me that execution is just as important as the legal structures we change. Bill C-39 does have some new parts, and some good parts too, and I will get to one of them that I want to talk about. In fact, there are some parts of Bill C-39 that would make a member of the Conservative benches blush.

I have been pondering something for some time. I have been pondering whether the Liberals will actually show up. Will the real Liberals please stand up? In fact, I got my answer yesterday afternoon when the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country got up and, while he tiptoed around the issue, quite effectively I will say, broke ranks with his party respecting Bill C-39. He described some of the serious concerns he had about a lack of guardrails on environmental concerns, indigenous consultation and a host of other issues.

I bring that up not to drive a wedge within their party. They can do that themselves. I actually do not want to criticize the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for that. He should be applauded for engaging in independent thought on the other side of the aisle.

● (2410)

I am a big believer that members of Parliament should get up and say what they believe, even if it is different from what their party thinks sometimes. I applaud him for that. I am glad that a real Liberal showed up on this bill. I will remind my colleague from West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country that I share his perspective on that. He may recall that I was one of four members of the Conservative caucus to vote for his private member's bill. I read it and I thought it was a good idea, so I voted for it.

I do want to talk about one part of the bill that I think is a good idea, but in true Liberal fashion, it only goes halfway and it has some serious problems. It points out that this bill, and this specific part, really need some study but it will not get it, unfortunately. I am talking about division 8 of the bill, the enabling digital trade act. We can go through Hansard but I think only three or four people have mentioned this division because we are talking about a bill that is 300 pages long and being rammed through Parliament. Therefore, not all the sections of this bill have received their just due.

The digital trade act seeks to enact the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records. UNCITRAL is the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, and this model law was actually prepared in 2017. For everyone at home paying attention, electronic transferable records are commercial documents in electronic form that govern things like the payment of goods, the ownership of goods or terms of delivery. We might know them more commonly, or through their historic names, as things like a bill of lading, a promissory note or a bill of exchange.

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This proposal seeks to allow, business to business or business to government, use for import and export purposes or commercial arrangements, electronic documents. That is a good thing, one that I support. In true fashion, we actually agreed to this in 2021 in the G7 digital and technology ministerial declaration. I guess it is better late than never.

The bill follows a familiar pattern of the Liberal government: talk a big game, make wild claims, but when we peek under the hood, there is much less than meets the eye. It is very Trumpian, I would say. When we look at this proposal, there are some serious pieces missing and a few problems. These are problems that could probably be solved in committee and with study, but that will not happen with this. Let me describe two of the problems.

First, let us look at what is missing. The proposal for the digital trade act only goes halfway because it only applies in federal areas of jurisdiction. I understand Parliament cannot change provincial laws, of course, but without a plan from the government to address commercial documentation at the provincial level, like a sale of goods is a provincial responsibility, the proposal is incomplete. It is very much like the internal trade issues with a big promise: free trade by Canada Day 2025, yet I still cannot buy great wine from the Okanagan in Ontario. A big promise, but a failure to achieve.

The second problem with the digital trade act is an important one. It is the disclosure of company information. If we read the act, it abrogates pretty much every information protection that exists in Canadian law for customs and other proprietary information that is exchanged to government during the course of importing or exporting.

For example, with the Customs Act, when we import or export something, we provide proprietary information to the government and the government says, "I will keep that secret." If we look at this proposal, it actually says that the Customs Act will not apply and the government can give that information out as it sees fit. That is not much comfort for those who are dealing with the government.

We have a decent proposal, one with two glaring errors, and no time to fix them because of the government's haste. We tried this 18 months ago and we got nothing for it. I feel a bit of *déjà vu*, being here and having to receive a request to do the same thing again. I think we know the old phrase of doing the same thing twice and expecting a different result is the definition of insanity. What I have learned is that all this change, all this talk, does not mean anything if we cannot execute it. We have had 18 months and no execution.

• (2415)

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I really enjoy working with him at the Standing Committee on International Trade.

I would like to understand something. He talked a lot about major projects, projects of national interest. I think he is aware that projects of this scale take longer than 12 months to complete. I think it is important to keep that in mind. He sits with me at the Standing Committee on International Trade, and he knows very well that what we have heard most often is that businesses need

predictability to invest, to move forward, and to ensure growth. They need certainty.

I would like to know if my colleague believes that Bill C-39 will provide businesses with the predictability they need to invest.

[*English*]

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy having a discussion with my colleague from the international trade committee. I think he was one of the only other members of Parliament who touched on division 8 of this bill. I applaud him for taking his portfolio seriously.

The government has created so much uncertainty. The biggest portion of uncertainty right now is that we have no deal with the United States, so maybe the Liberals should put their elbows down, get back to the table and figure out that problem to give us some certainty.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the member for sharing his desire to see the free trade of Canadian wine across this great nation. Okanagan wine should be available to every province and every consumer who wants it. Canadians should be able to support and buy Canadian.

Are there any amendments the member would like to see when it comes to division 8, specifically on limiting privacy, particularly on data exchanges, whether it be between businesses or governments, that he thinks are missing in this piece of legislation?

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy a glass of Okanagan wine, and it should be flowing freely across this country. We were promised that it would flow freely across this country. In fact, we were promised it by Canada Day 2025. It is another broken promise.

To answer the member's question, there are two things I would like to see. I would like to see greater protections for companies' proprietary information, and second, I would like to see a real, ambitious proposal from the other side to deal with the half of the equation that is missing, which is the provinces. The Liberals say that this is about the provinces and it is not our problem. No. They are the federal government, and they should exercise leadership, use their constitutional powers and get the job done.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from York—Durham very much for drawing attention to division 8. I am going to put this to him bluntly. As I see it, in a couple of pages in an omnibus budget bill, not just a section of Bill C-39, they have created a separate piece of new legislation, the enabling digital trade act. Can the member see any reason we would not have had a separate piece of government legislation called the enabling digital trade act, with time to study it as a stand-alone piece of work, not part of an omnibus bill?

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, that is a very perceptive question. There is no reason I can see that this should have been in Bill C-39. This has been talked about since 2021. In fact, the Liberals agreed to do this back in 2021. My math is not too good, but we are five years later, and they are ramming it through in an omnibus bill. Why? There is no reason. It does not have anything to do with building major projects or pipelines. It has to do with moving goods across borders.

Maybe the government can explain why it chose to ram that through in here. It is actually not a bad idea. It could be made better. It should be a stand-alone piece that is presented to the House. It should go through the normal process, including to the trade committee and perhaps other committees, to be studied, made better and then passed. Why did the Liberals not do that? Only the government can answer.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to a response he received from our colleagues on the government side. They say we need the bill so we can ensure predictability. Let me just go over what happened. During the last election, the Prime Minister said that he would resolve the tariff crisis. He imposed tariffs, then removed them, arguing that he was doing it to strengthen our negotiating position, and then he imposed retaliatory tariffs. These are the kinds of problems that do nothing to provide predictability.

Does my colleague agree that, for our businesses to truly have predictability, we need to reach the best possible agreement with the U.S. as soon as possible?

• (2420)

[English]

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I actually completely agree with my colleague from Quebec. We need certainty with our largest trading partner. In fact, the government's rag-the-puck strategy has created 18 months of uncertainty, and that is why we are seeing companies choose to invest outside Canada rather than inside Canada. They need certainty that this issue will be put to bed, and the government is failing to do that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

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

An hon. member: On division.

(Motion agreed to)

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

Adjournment Proceedings

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

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Thursday, October 8, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I believe I see the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni rising on a point of order.

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to see the clock at 12:43 a.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am returning to a question I asked on May 1. It relates to the science around the climate crisis. I am very concerned that we do not actually talk about the position we are in as humanity on a planet that is undergoing dramatic, irreversible changes due to our own conduct. Too often in this place, it is a throwaway line, or someone stands up and says, “Well, we could talk about climate change years ago, but that’s over now.”

My question at the time was to say, “alarm bells are ringing of imminent global collapse of key climate systems, but the alarms are being drowned out by the cheering of Liberals and Conservatives for new and more climate-killing projects.” Key experts say that there is a 50-50 chance of the collapse of the massive and complex Atlantic Ocean current system with devastating catastrophic results. I asked: “When will the government stop shutting off the alarms and try to act before we pass the tipping points?”

Adjournment Proceedings

At that moment, I was referring to the publication of a recent scientific report at the time, back last spring. For any insomniacs watching CPAC, it could not have a worse name than the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation. Its acronym is, appropriately perhaps, AMOC, because we might be running amok. It is the major current, which people will know intuitively or from their science classes as the Gulf Stream. The ocean currents are vast conveyor belts throughout the oceans of the world. All the sea water anywhere around the world will eventually make the full circuit, which takes many years, all around the planet. However, what is happening is that with the shifting of temperatures with the overheating of the oceans in some parts of the ocean and the cooler water entering the system as we have ice melting in the Arctic, the cooler water depresses the warmer water so that the Gulf Stream is being depressed and slowed down.

I have been working on issues around climate science since I was a senior policy adviser to the federal minister of environment back in 1986, and so I had a lot of brilliant climate scientists explain things like this to me. I am not as good at explaining them after midnight, but it is critical that Canadians, particularly the cabinet of this country, understand the science, because we are running out of time.

There are tipping points, such as if we lose the Gulf Stream, if it stalls, if it stops, and it is very clearly slowing down. We used to think, back in 1986, that this was very unlikely to ever happen, but the most recent reports to which I was referring in this question said we are now at a 50-50 chance that it could happen by mid-century. If that happens, the effects are catastrophic and enormous.

This is directly related to the fiction that net zero by 2050 has anything to do with our Paris commitments. That is an invention for public relations purposes to avoid the fact that in order to avoid very significant tipping points that are irreversible, creating unstoppable changes, our emissions need to come down sharply. Last advice from the IPCC was, at the latest, before 2025. Here we are, it is 2026, and we are ignoring the alarm bells.

● (2425)

Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to rise today during this early show.

We are taking action as we speak. We recognize that Canadians are living through a period of economic, geopolitical and environmental disruption. With the impacts of climate change, including severe wildfires, floods and extreme heat; growing pressures on affordability and competitiveness; and the rising demands on our energy systems, Canadians are facing multiple challenges at this time.

Climate action is a key part of how we build Canada strong. Achieving net-zero emissions remains our commitment and strategic economic interest of Canada, supporting the broader goal of building a stronger, more competitive, resilient and economically independent economy, and the strongest economy in the G7. We are advancing a cohesive approach to climate action that reflects today's geopolitical and energy security realities: moving pragmatically and at a pace to advance decarbonization while working to make climate-smart choices the most practical choices for improv-

ing affordability, competitiveness, resilience and quality of life for Canadians.

To us, climate action, adaptation and nature protection are interconnected. Canada's forests, wetlands, oceans and other ecosystems help support biodiversity, strengthen climate resilience and provide important economic and social benefits. Our focus is on creating the conditions for long-term transformation, mobilizing investment, accelerating innovation and building the infrastructure and industrial capacity needed to support a competitive, resilient and low-carbon economy.

We are doing this through other elements of our agenda. The national electricity strategy will electrify our economy while making life more affordable for all Canadians. The nature strategy is a \$3.8-billion investment in protecting 30% of Canada's lands and waters by 2030. Our plan is advancing climate objectives along with broader economic objectives, laying the foundation for a cleaner, more competitive economy. At the same time, Canada's national adaptation strategy emphasizes that reducing emissions alone is not enough. Communities must also be prepared for the climate impacts that are already occurring.

The strategy provides a framework for advancing resilience in areas such as disaster preparedness, infrastructure, nature and biodiversity, health, and the economy. The costs associated with climate impacts will continue to rise, reverberating throughout Canada's economy and driving up the cost of housing, food, energy, insurance and other essentials. This is why climate action cannot wait until future decades. The Government of Canada is moving with urgency to fight climate change while working together to build the energy security, industrial capacity and strategic autonomy that will define this century for Canada.

● (2430)

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, there is no indication of urgency whatsoever except the urgency with which the Liberal government is turning its back on climate commitments.

As Steven Guilbeault said before he left the House, the platform on which all the Liberal members ran mentioned climate change 28 times but did not mention pipelines once, and in approving the pipeline recently, the Prime Minister claimed that the increase in greenhouse gases would not be material. My God, we are on track to be well above the Harper target that was selected in May 2015. We are miles from reaching the targets that are legally binding under the Paris Agreement, and we are running out of time that really matters.

I will not turn my back on future generations, and shame on anyone on the other side of the House who does.

Wade Grant: Mr. Speaker, climate change is already affecting communities across Canada through increasingly severe impacts, including wildfires, floods and extreme heat. This is why climate policy must continue to be informed by the best available scientific evidence. It is both an environmental imperative and an economic necessity in a world that continues to decarbonize. The Government of Canada continues to support climate science, modelling, data collection and environmental monitoring to improve our understanding of climate change and its impacts. They are fundamental to understanding climate risks and informing decision-making.

Canada remains committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. We are taking a long-term approach focused on building resilience, supporting clean economic growth, protecting nature and creating the conditions for Canadians to benefit from reliable energy systems, cleaner technologies and more resilient communities for the future.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know people at home are wondering, as it is 12:32 a.m., why we are here. A lot of people do not understand what a late show or an adjournment proceeding is. It is the opportunity for an MP in the opposition to ask for a 10-minute late night debate with the government on very important issues at the end of the sitting day. Of course, our sitting day finished at midnight today, so here I am.

I will note the reason this is so important and why I am here at this hour. I am sure the government did not expect me to show up. The Government of Canada formally recognizes its obligation to care for military veterans and RCMP veterans. It has a solemn obligation. I rise today because the government is about to dismantle an employment policy that has supported Canadian veterans for more than 80 years.

Since the end of the Second World War, the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires has had the right of first refusal on federal security guard contracts. This was never simply a procurement arrangement. It was created for a clear social purpose: to provide meaningful employment for veterans transitioning from military service to civilian life. However, effective April 2027, the Liberal government plans to end that policy and move approximately \$330 million annually in federal security contracts into competitive procurement.

The Commissionaires is Canada's largest private sector employer of veterans, employing about 3,500 veterans across this country. This matters enormously, including in my riding. I recently met with Mark Breslauer, the CEO of Commissionaires Victoria, and Katelyn Anderson, the north island client services manager. In the Comox Valley alone, the Commissionaires employs over 100 people. They talked about the impact this is having on their employees' mental health and families. This is a community that is home to 19 Wing Comox and thousands of serving members, veterans and military families. These are not just numbers on a procurement spreadsheet. They are our neighbours. They are veterans. They are people who have served our country and found another meaningful way to continue to contribute.

Adjournment Proceedings

I am calling on the government to not abolish the program. If it needs improvement, the government should work with the Commissionaires. The Commissionaires is Canada's only national not-for-profit security company. Its pure purpose is fundamentally different from that of a private security company, whose primary responsibility is generating profit for its owners and shareholders. If the federal government is going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on security services anyway, why would we not use that purchasing power to support Canada's veterans? After all, federal procurement should serve the public interest.

Every person who joins Canada's armed forces or police services makes a promise to give up their life if necessary to keep Canadians safe. The right of first refusal with commissionaires is one small way for Canada to thank them, ensuring veterans have a job that allows them to continue to serve if they need that job. The government is now breaking that commitment. It offers nothing to replace it. The government's own policy, public briefing materials and standing offer say that Veterans Affairs should work with the Commissionaires to study and modernize the right of first refusal. Instead, this 80-year promise has been broken without consultation, without a transition plan and without a replacement measure.

Canada's defence, intelligence, law enforcement, border, and corrections sites should be guarded by the best people. Why is the public interest being sacrificed? Canada does not benefit from cancelling the right of first refusal. Veterans do not benefit from it. Taxpayers do not benefit. Who does? It is time for the government to tell us who is benefiting from this and reverse this decision.

● (2435)

Wade Grant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise early on a Thursday morning. There is no doubt in my mind that I knew that my hon. colleague would show up for this early show. I appreciate this opportunity to speak today on the government's behalf as we debate the very important issue of veteran employment.

The Corps of Commissionaires has a long history with the Government of Canada, going back to 1945 when it began providing security guard services in federally owned or operated buildings across the country. Back then, with thousands of veterans returning from the Second World War, it was crucial for the federal government to help them translate their military skills into stable employment, while also meeting growing security needs across federal sites.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Corps of Commissionaires addressed these dual issues as one. Its members were largely former service personnel whose training, discipline and experience made them ideally suited to safeguard federal properties and infrastructure. Thus was born the arrangement to give the Commissionaires priority access to federal guarding contracts, commonly called the right of first refusal, RFR. This reflected a post-war commitment to veteran reintegration delivered through the practical tools of federal procurement.

On April 1, 2023, Veterans Affairs Canada implemented the policy of procurement of guard services to continue the RFR until March 31, 2026. During these years, VAC completed a reassessment of the policy and its requirements, engaged with stakeholders and evaluated the RFR's continued relevance in supporting veteran employment. The policy was then extended for one more year, until March 31, 2027, with the understanding that it would end as of April 1 next year.

It is important to note that one of the main stipulations of the arrangement is that veterans are to work a minimum of 60% of all hours worked under RFR contracts. Since at least 2013 to 2014, the corps has not been meeting the standard. Reports it has regularly submitted have confirmed a continuous decline in the number of veterans working under the RFR and that they are well below the required 60% benchmark. In fact, in Q1 of the 2025-26 fiscal year, that number had fallen to only 27%.

The RFR was designed to respond to a very specific post-war context that has evolved considerably over the past 80 years. The government must therefore ensure that its approach to veteran employment reflects today's realities. We know that veterans are highly skilled. They are highly capable individuals whose service and experiences are assets to Canada's labour market. We want to keep tapping into that potential in ways that reflect the full range of opportunities available to veterans today.

Veterans Affairs Canada has a national veterans employment strategy for this very reason. It brings government employers and partners together so that veterans can better connect with meaningful employment opportunities and so that employers can better understand the skills that veterans can bring to our businesses. The department also supports targeted initiatives that provide education, training and career transition services to ensure that veterans are equipped to succeed across a wide range of sectors in today's economies, whether that is defence, technology, logistics or in security roles on federal properties. This approach reflects a continued commitment to veteran employment that recognizes the evolving nature of both the labour market and the needs of those who have served. The government will continue to work with partners, including the Corps of Commissionaires, to support veteran employment in meaningful ways.

• (2440)

Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I have a ton of respect for the parliamentary secretary for environment and climate change, but the bottom line is that this is exactly what we are talking about.

They did not send the minister in here for the debate. They did not send the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs. The Commissionaires have not had any meetings scheduled with the minister or representatives of Veterans Affairs Canada

since the spring. I can assure members that the minister or representatives of Veterans Affairs Canada have met with GardaWorld.

The government has known about veteran numbers declining for over a decade. The government did not care. They renewed the Commissionaires repeatedly because Commissionaires do a good job guarding our critical public infrastructure. They could have worked with them. Cancelling the right of first refusal does not help veterans. It hurts them. It increases costs to Canadian taxpayers.

Who benefits? Have they met with GardaWorld since the spring?

Wade Grant: Mr. Speaker, the government understands and appreciates its long and valued relationship with the Corps of Commissionaires. The decision to not renew the RFR policy reflects the evolving labour market and the need to ensure that policies remain effective and aligned with today's realities.

With a national veterans employment strategy, along with other supports available through Veterans Affairs Canada, the government is broadening opportunities for veterans across the Canadian economy, helping them transition into meaningful careers and ensuring employers can fully benefit from their skills and expertise. We remain firmly committed to veteran employment and will keep working with partners, including the Corps of Commissionaires, to support this objective.

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to follow up on a question I asked during question period about the performance of the Canada Revenue Agency. As I pointed out in my question, the CRA shows no quarter to average Canadians while it regularly fails at its own metrics or even pays out millions of dollars to fraudsters. Most Canadians have a dim view of the CRA. At least, that is my experience. On the one hand, it is understandable; nobody likes the tax man. On the other hand, it does a pretty bad job sometimes, so some criticism is warranted.

Adjournment Proceedings

I want to share two stories, and hopefully the parliamentary secretary will listen to them and perhaps give some answers. The first is from a resident in my riding, Carolyn. She was recently approved for a CPP disability credit. This required that she refile taxes going back several years. She did that, and she consistently followed up and looked at the status. It consistently told her the adjustment request was received, but there was no more information.

She called in, time after time. Eventually, she got to a CRA agent who told her she would just have to wait a bit longer, perhaps a couple more months. It could even be eight months, she was told, and if no one was assigned to her file, then she would have to file a complaint. How long should she have to wait to get a resolution?

In the meantime, while she was waiting to get a decision there, the CRA reassessed her on another issue and said that she owed the government money. Like any good taxpayer, she paid when she had to, because the CRA shows no quarter to average Canadians. She had to pay on time or face the consequences. On the other hand, the CRA can wait for months and give taxpayers, residents, no answers on their issues. How long should she wait for a response?

The second example is from Justin, an accountant in my riding who was helping businesses during a sale of some assets. Several companies were involved. The CRA, unfortunately, made a mistake. The CRA capitalized some expenses incurred during the sale rather than expensing them. I am not an accountant. I am not an expert here, so I am going to take him at his word on this. Assuming the CRA did make this mistake, Justin estimated it would take 18 months and thousands of dollars to file the necessary objections to get the CRA to correct its very own obvious mistake.

My question to the parliamentary secretary, who I hope can provide some clarity here on the CRA's insufficient behaviour, is this. How long should residents have to wait for responses from the CRA, and who should pay when the CRA makes a mistake and costs taxpayers money?

Brendan Hanley (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the questions from my colleague, the member of Parliament for York—Durham. The stories he provided were very compelling stories. In my role as the member of Parliament for Yukon, I have heard stories as well and real cases involving real people and their frustrations with CRA.

First and foremost, I want to assure the member that the Government of Canada takes the concerns raised about the integrity of our tax system and the accountability of the Canada Revenue Agency very seriously. Certainly, recognizing the individual case frustrations is something that I am happy to bring back to the ministry to ensure that we continue to improve and work on the services and accountability of the CRA.

Upholding the integrity and fairness of Canada's tax system is one of our top priorities, and on the flip side, combatting fraudulent claims remains a part of those efforts. The CRA takes this responsibility seriously and works tirelessly to uphold the trust placed in it by Canadians. The CRA actively pursues those who fail to comply with tax laws and takes action to recover funds owed, ensuring fairness for all taxpayers. Understanding the root causes of taxpayers who are non-compliant is essential to preserving the integrity of the

tax system and protecting Canada's revenue base, which supports the public programs and services that Canadians rely on.

I also want to emphasize that the Canadian tax system is based on voluntary trust-based compliance and self-assessment, assuring that everyone contributes their fair share. In order to safeguard the integrity of the tax system, the CRA has implemented strong controls that are continually strengthened to address evolving risks.

I also want to highlight that the CRA has implemented additional safeguards to ensure greater consistency and accuracy in refund processing. These include strengthened controls, intensified quality assurance oversight and tightened authority levels. Another means of addressing evolving risk includes collaboration with multiple partners, such as law enforcement and financial institutions.

The CRA also employs technological tools, such as enhanced business intelligence and advanced data analysis, to improve risk assessments and to detect and deter the most serious instances of non-compliance. In fact, better data and more advanced analytics have allowed the CRA to better target its audits on the files with the greatest impact for Canadians.

The CRA also collaborates with international organizations such as the OECD, the forum on tax administration, the FTA, and the joint chiefs of global tax enforcement, the J5. These partnerships enhance the CRA's ability to combat offshore tax evasion and ensure that multinational corporations and digital economy participants pay their fair share of taxes. Furthermore, the CRA maintains a strict approach to non-compliance, which includes publishing all convictions on Canada.ca.

Despite these efforts, fraud tactics continue to evolve, which is why the CRA remains vigilant and committed to consistently enhancing its processes. When fraud occurs, the CRA has established processes to recover funds, including reassessing returns, recovering refunds, applying civil penalties and, when warranted, referring cases to the criminal investigations program. This commitment reflects not only the CRA's mandate, but also the trust that Canadians place in our tax system.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (2445)

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's acknowledgement and his sympathies for my residents, but respectfully, I would request better performance from the CRA rather than sympathy. He has tried to paint a picture of actions that the government is taking to try to make things better or get better, but respectfully, the data does not back that up.

Just this year, after the 100-day service improvement plan, which ended in December, the Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsperson's annual report in June showed that the problem remains. It was the most complaints they had received in three years. They are up 27% from last year. The ombudsperson said that the complexity of the tax system is one of the biggest problems, and I see that all the time. They made one recommendation that the CRA itself could not accept. It was to expand automatic tax filing to taxpayers who are in simple tax situations. Will the government do that?

Brendan Hanley: Mr. Speaker, I again want to reiterate that the CRA is committed to accountability, continually improving service delivery, addressing fraud and upholding the integrity of our tax system. The CRA has strong controls in place and continually strengthens these measures to address evolving risks. As fraud tactics evolve, the CRA remains vigilant in enhancing its processes to prevent unwarranted refunds and recover any funds lost to fraud.

• (2450)

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

(The House adjourned at 12:50 a.m.)

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