



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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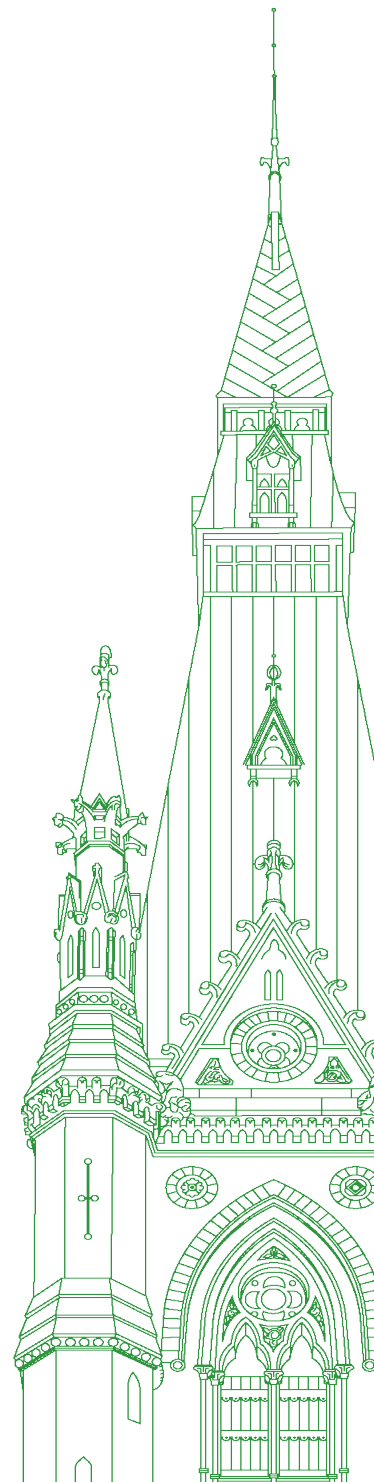
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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 23, 2026

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[Translation]

CANADIAN SPACE LAUNCH ACT

The House resumed from April 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauce.

[English]

Before I start, I want to again acknowledge the unfortunate terrible tragedy in Wainwright this past week and send out my condolences and prayers to all the families of those fallen soldiers, but in particular to all the injured families and those injured soldiers who are still recovering. It is my understanding there are still approximately a dozen of them who are in critical condition and fighting for their lives. Any thoughts and prayers that we can send to them would be of the utmost importance as they continue to carry on. Those thoughts are a reminder to the House and all Canadians listening that we know our soldiers are required to train as they fight. They still have to get out the door. Those soldiers who were implicated in this terrible tragedy are set to deploy in the coming months to Latvia in service to our nation.

We are here to debate Bill C-28. Really, the debate has just started. I think we are only on the second day. There has barely been any debate on this, so I am looking forward to ensuring all members of the House who want to speak to this piece of legislation will have the opportunity.

What is Bill C-28? It is an enactment that would amend the Aeronautics Act to establish a legislative framework for space launch and re-entry activities in Canada. It would amend certain definitions to take into account new terms, such as “launch vehicles” and “re-entry vehicles”, and authorize those terms to be defined by regulation. It would also remove certain decisions related to the launch and re-entry from review by the Transport Appeal Tribunal of Canada. It would expand the tribunal's regulation-making

powers, including in relation to launches and re-entries and the operation of launch and re-entry sites, as well as in relation to the application of certain international agreements and standards. This enactment would also introduce new authorities related to the liability and indemnification for launch and re-entry activities.

Here is a bit of my own background. I spent 25 years in the military. When I was at university at the Royal Military College of Canada, I received an honours degree in space science. I had the pleasure of being exposed to this stuff, and I am going to date myself, back in the mid-nineties. In particular, we had a lecture or course, which I remember well, on space law. I am not a lawyer. I do not pretend to understand what has evolved, but I remember the fascinating discussions and debates we were having 30 years ago on the challenges of space and how it applies to aeronautic laws, etc. It all comes to some of the challenges with the arming of space, how we protect it and how we maintain that international peace that is evolving around there. I do not think 30 years ago we could have predicted just how industrialized space has become.

I want to talk specifically about why I personally think having domestic launch capability is important, but it needs to be done right. If we go back 20-some years ago, we had the XPRIZE. Elon Musk even competed in this competition and did not win, but we had Canadian companies involved in it. One in particular was the Canadian Arrow. As part of their requirements to launch their rocket as part of that XPRIZE competition, they needed a launch site with a coastal area with open water at least 100 feet deep with a range footprint of 40 miles by 30 miles. The team lead was Geoffrey Sheerin out of London, Ontario, and they started this back in 2000.

As to their mission and goals, I will quote Geoff: “We entered the competition to build and fly a manned suborbital vehicle. The XPRIZE makes it possible under the umbrella of a race to motivate and consolidate help from industry. We hope to make Canada into the space shuttle capital of the world.”

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I have a personal connection to that team as well, because Gregg Mackay, the structural engineer and the vice president of engineering for Canadian Arrow, is on that team, and Gregg graduated from RMC with me in 1997. He is from Fenelon Falls here in Ontario, and he now resides in my beautiful riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. He is a high school teacher, and I know he is likely listening this morning, with 32 of his students, so I think we have actually likely tripled the number of normal watchers here for the House. It is great to have individuals and those students listening.

I am going to quote Gregg here:

• (1005)

"We were a very proud Canadian team. The choice of the name 'Canadian arrow' was no mistake. (An obvious nod to the Avro Arrow). We were insistent on a Canadian vehicle, designed by Canadians, built in Canada, based in Canada, launched in Canada. Without the need to go suborbital, a very limited down range capability, and with a water landing, there is no reason why many locations in Canada would not have suited. As we neared completion of ground testing, and vehicle development, we started to look at launch sites. We were very quickly offered space at American launch facilities. It became equally obvious that we were up for a very enormous challenge in acquiring permission to launch from Canada. Despite months of negotiation with various departments, we were turned down for all our requested launch locations. With a slim possibility of a Churchill launch site. We had been leading the competition (in the eyes of many experts who were following the competition) but the delay in locating a launch test facility within Canada eventually played a major part in an American team winning the prize ahead of us. We never gave up on being a 100% Canadian team, but that ultimately cost us the prize."

I am saying that just to outline that this is something important, but we need to do it right. Here are my concerns with Bill C-28 as it is currently drafted. It does not address basic national security safeguards needed in statute. It does not address the possibility of foreign ownership. I do not see anything in law, even within the bill itself, that would allow for the screening of operators and payloads.

I find it interesting that the government is constantly speaking about sovereignty and security while promoting this bill, yet the legislation, as I mentioned, would fail to embed basic national security safeguards into statute. There would be no statutory requirement for foreign ownership or control screening of launch operators or payloads. There would be no requirement for beneficial ownership transparency. There would be no statutory tests within the legislation for payload mission profiles or end use. There would be no mandatory integration of intelligence or national security assessments into the approval process. Instead, these issues would be left to regulation or at the discretion of the minister in the public interest.

In a specialized industry like space, the risk of regulatory capture is high, so my question is really around this. This is why I am bringing it forth: Why would the criteria for approval and indemnity not be written into the law itself? Is it because the government, the Liberal government, wants to somehow reward insiders and take away the transparency and accountability that comes with parliamentary oversight? It is really hard for Canadian innovators, or

any innovators, to invest the necessary capital in a black hole of uncertainty. How would this framework that is built on undefined future regulations give confidence to new Canadian start-ups or does the government really just want to keep this controlled within the industries and companies that are already tied in directly to the Liberal government?

I would note we have one example with the Maritime launch site, I believe it was called, where the government committed \$200 million to that project earlier this year, and included \$20 million per year backdated for a year. I would note that the first \$20 million was paid upfront, despite no operational milestones being met by the company yet.

In principle, and in conclusion, I personally support the need for domestic space launch capabilities here in Canada. The example I provided of the Canadian Arrow is just one example of why this is so important. That being said, my initial analysis of Bill C-28 indicates that instead of setting the conditions for a transparent, accountable framework that would enable Canadian ingenuity and entrepreneurship, the Liberal government is actually asking Parliament to waive parliamentary oversight and fails to adequately address national security concerns.

I am going to be listening intently to the many more days of debate on this bill, specifically for the speeches that I can expect from the Minister of Industry, the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of National Defence, as I am anticipating they will be keen to provide answers to these important questions.

• (1010)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his service to our country and for his speech, and echo his condolences to the families of those who lost their lives at Wainwright, or are injured and recovering.

Interestingly, I did not know that the member had a degree in space. I always knew he was smart, but now I know he is a rocket scientist. I also know Geoff Sheerin, who the member talked about in his speech, because he now lives in my riding. He is a real rocket scientist. What he is working on now with AlumaPower is a battery-powered portable kit that can be taken to the front lines of the battle to power the medical tents with no heat signal and no noise. It is just a super invention. I love to see technology move forward.

The member talked about the gaps that he sees. Could he summarize the kinds of amendments that he would like to see brought to this bill when it goes to committee.

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Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I will first address the point of the member opposite about Geoff Sheerin, the founder of the Canadian Arrow team. It is great to hear that he is still here in Canada using his brilliance and his ingenuity to continue to grow Canadian innovation. If she was to ask Geoff, he would say that unfortunately many members of that team of Canadians actually had to go to the United States and moved to the United States in order to find employment opportunities going into the future.

To specifically address the member's question around the types of amendments I would suggest, I sort of highlighted some of them. This needs to be reported to Parliament. There needs to be better oversight. It needs to be written into what is going to trigger things like national security assessments on to the review process and for the government to make a firm commitment, so that for a payload or ownership of companies launching from Canada, we would have the appropriate oversight over anything that would be flying over Canadian national territory.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is great to see you in the chair this morning.

The Bloc Québécois has some concerns, even though we support this bill. It is a good thing that we are becoming more independent from the United States. However, since this project is going to take place in Nova Scotia, will the federal government negotiate properly with Nova Scotia, or does it believe that, since this is more of a federal responsibility, it can do whatever it wants without talking to the Government of Nova Scotia?

I would like to know my colleague's analysis of that. Does he think the bill is well thought out in that regard, or should it come with some caveats?

[English]

Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I have my own cynical opinion of the government's willingness to collaborate and negotiate with most organizations, including respecting provincial jurisdiction. At the same time, I acknowledge that when it comes to things like national defence, there is a time and place where sometimes we have to do things in the best interest of the country.

The importance around this does have to be communicated. It has to be open and transparent about what the requirements are and how the provinces and the federal government can work together. We are in a position now where if the government does not provide that transparency, it is just going to create additional potential waste and challenges that will undermine the importance of an initiative like this.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his condolences for the fallen and their families and the injured in Wainwright, a training area he and I know well from our time in the Canadian Armed Forces. It is hard to imagine that our men and women who are preparing to go into the battle space are now having to deal with the recovery and the loss of their brothers and sisters in arms.

On the legislation, I am just wondering if he can quickly tell us why he thinks it is so important for us to get the legislative frame-

work right when it deals with our national sovereign launch capability.

• (1015)

Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, it is very important to get this right because, ultimately, if we do not, it undermines our ability to continue to go forward. I talked briefly at the opening part of my speech about when I was studying this stuff 30 years ago and the laws around it. We know for a fact that there are other states or foreign-owned companies that are going to use that technology for nefarious reasons, so we need to make sure we have the measures in place to prevent that type of stuff from occurring.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, when families in Beauce sit down to make their budget, they naturally begin with the essentials: groceries, housing, electricity, car payments, school supplies, clothing and all the other basic necessities. Then they look at what is left in their wallet and, unfortunately, they are forced to make choices. There are always choices to be made. They may have to postpone a repair, delay a purchase or cut back in one area simply to make ends meet in another.

Meanwhile, in Ottawa, the Liberals are asking Parliament to approve a costly space launch bill that will grant the minister broader powers that could ultimately increase the burden on taxpayers. The Liberals talk about ambition. I want to talk about accountability. Before asking Canadians to finance its ambitions in space, the government should first confront the realities here on Earth. The people of Beauce work hard for every dollar they earn. They have a right to know how their money is being spent. More importantly, they have a right to ask questions before they are handed the bill.

Bill C-28 seeks to establish a legislative framework for space launch and re-entry activities in Canada. I believe that Canada has amazing engineers, researchers and businesses that are capable of doing great things. We can be proud of their work, and we do want to develop our capabilities, but an ambitious project must be based on sound rules. It has to pass a very simple test: Will taxpayers get good value for their money? Is the Liberal government managing the money properly?

Take the case of Maritime Launch Services in Nova Scotia, which I have mentioned here before. The government announced a \$200-million agreement over 10 years to lease a specialized launch site and related services before even introducing Bill C-28. I repeat: It committed \$200 million.

To understand why this announcement raises questions, let us come back to the issue that my colleagues from Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources and Montmorency—Charlevoix and I raised here in the House before.

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The situation we described is based on observations made on March 21 by Marie Lumsden, a resident of Canso who went to the area with her camera. There is a gravel road, two shipping containers and a 25-foot-by-35-foot concrete pad. For reference, that is just about big enough to put a 21-foot trailer on. That is a striking image. Then there are the numbers. Maritime Launch Services, a company in which a former Liberal holds shares, is leasing the land from the Province of Nova Scotia for \$13,500 a year. Those are the facts.

The federal government approaches this company with the great idea of leasing the property from it for \$20 million a year. That is a fact, not a joke. Let me repeat, a company that leased the property for \$13,500 is leasing it back to the government for \$20 million. I see one of my colleagues laughing, but the worst part is that someone had the bright idea to sign a 10-year, \$200-million lease for a bit of land with a 25- by 35-foot concrete pad on it. That tells us everything we need to know about the Liberals' financial management. Not a single business person in Beauce manages their money like that. If they did, they would soon go out of business.

Why are the Liberals more careless with taxpayers' money than a business person would be with theirs? Why are they not being transparent? We want to know the contract terms. Who set the price and evaluated the alternatives? Who signed the contract? Who is responsible? Was the minister aware? We all asked these questions. Who is responsible for this horrific expenditure of funds?

A minister can call it a historic investment if they want, but every dollar still has to be justified, and \$200 million is a lot of money.

• (1020)

Ottawa has announced millions of dollars, while families in Beauce are counting every penny. That is why we are so keen to make sure public funds are managed properly. When families are having to defer necessary spending, they expect their government to exercise sound judgment before making new commitments. Families are not asking for handouts. They just want their efforts to be respected. People work hard. They are asking the government to respect their efforts and invest their tax dollars wisely.

Bill C-28 raises another question. What other financial risks could taxpayers be expected to bear in the future? The bill gives the minister the power to indemnify certain owners and operators for their liability to third parties for damage, when the minister deems it in the public interest to do so. It also makes it possible to grant certain exemptions and reduce the minimum amount of liability insurance an operator is required to carry. It is a bit technical, but behind these provisions lie two very practical questions: If things do not go according to plan, who will foot the bill and how much could they have to pay? Will taxpayers end up footing the bill yet again? Are we going to put yet another expense on our grandchildren's credit card?

Canadians need to know the bounds of the commitments made on their behalf. They are the ones footing the bill, after all. They need to know how much of the risk falls on the company and how much may fall on them. If government protection is necessary, the minister must be able to justify it. He must share the terms and conditions and be accountable for his decision. He also needs to ex-

plain how the risk is assessed before offering such protection. If the government intends to make taxpayers foot the bill when things go wrong, then it needs to explain the risks to them before signing the agreement. Exercising this kind of caution is a normal part of everyday life for Canadians, Quebecers and residents of Beauce. It should be normal for cabinet too.

We also need to think about the businesses that would like to get involved in this industry. In Beauce, we are no strangers to taking risks. Sometimes business owners have to buy machinery, expand a plant, develop a product or seek out new markets. Before investing, they need to calculate their operating costs, purchases and expenses. Most importantly, they need to understand the rules.

My colleague from Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna raised this concern. When financial protections depend on a minister's discretionary decisions, different companies may find themselves in very different situations. What criteria will be used to determine whether protection is granted to one company and denied to another? How can a new operator verify whether it is being treated fairly compared to another company? The government must make these rules and criteria clear. A company must be able to plan its project knowing what requirements it will need to meet. Its competitors must be subject to comparable criteria. This is essential for attracting investment and enabling new players to establish themselves on an equal footing.

An entrepreneur should succeed through hard work and good ideas. He or she should not need a contact at the minister's office to secure contracts. Predictable rules instill confidence in businesses. Well-explained decisions and transparency instill confidence in citizens. The government has a responsibility to instill confidence in both of these groups.

The Liberals also talk about sovereignty. We agree this is a serious issue. Space technologies can be used for communications, research and, above all, defence. The Conservatives are calling for more explicit guarantees when it comes to national security.

Our demands are simple. First, the terms of the \$200-million agreement must be made public. Second, clear limits on the financial risks borne by taxpayers need to be established. Third, the government needs to lay out the same criteria for all businesses so they can invest with confidence and be treated fairly. These are basic requirements when spending Canadians' money.

Personally, I would approach this issue with the same common sense that the people of Beauce apply to their own finances. Before spending money, we do the math. Before making a commitment, we read the terms. When using someone else's money, we have to answer for how it is spent.

• (1025)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am a bit surprised at the Conservative Party's positioning on this and its constant criticism. I understand that Peter MacKay is someone who actually supports it. I realize he is more of a Progressive Conservative, as opposed to a far right Conservative, which we see across the way.

I also understand that the provincial government is supporting the—

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I do not know what that adds to the debate here, and quite frankly, I think it is a bit of name-calling.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is not a point of order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member might not like the description of his political entity, but that is the reality of it, quite frankly.

We have the province of Nova Scotia, which is, by the way, led by another Progressive Conservative, and it is not only supporting it but also investing in it.

Can the member tell us why the far right is in opposition to space?

Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I think you will find that ascribing labels to people in here that are neither proper nor recognized Parliamentary terms is going to continue to create disorder, and I encourage you to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I agree that it does create disorder.

I would ask the hon. member to not use those terms. We want to have a proper debate.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Beauce.

Jason Groleau: Madam Speaker, you will have to excuse him. He is new here and is struggling this morning.

We are all in favour of national sovereignty. That is clear. We are just asking the government to exercise discipline, but it never does.

I want to come back to the decision to spend \$200 million on a 24- by 35-foot concrete pad. It makes no sense. That should not happen. The government should be accountable for its decisions.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-28 mainly brings to mind a concrete pad in Nova Scotia. We are really wondering how it was chosen.

This week, we found out that the government had suddenly designated a new site, this time in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would like to know if my colleague has any idea how these sites are chosen. Is it done based on objective scientific criteria, or is it just at the government's whim based on who cozies up to whom?

Jason Groleau: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his question. I mentioned this in my speech. I asked what the criteria are. Does a bidder have to know someone in the ministers' offices to get a contract? It should not be that way.

There needs to be a lot more transparency on this file. Far too much taxpayer money is being spent haphazardly. There needs to be more discipline.

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Joël Godin (Saint-Augustin—Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the speech by my colleague from Beauce, and I found it interesting when he talked about responsibility. He explained how the provincial government is leasing the site to the company in question for \$13,500, while that company is billing the Canadian government \$20 million. It is absurd. Does my colleague believe this government is acting responsibly?

I heard the procurement minister say this week that dental care programs were being offered, while we were bringing up food banks and how much Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on whether this Liberal government is acting responsibly.

Jason Groleau: Madam Speaker, I have the utmost respect for my colleague. The words “responsibility” and “accountability” should be heard a lot more here in Parliament. As parliamentarians, we are taking action, representing taxpayers and managing public funds.

While people are struggling to put food on the table, the government is spending \$200 million on a 25- by 35-foot concrete slab. That is unacceptable.

• (1030)

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and his Conservative colleagues for highlighting this preposterous \$200-million payment for a concrete slab. It does indeed raise questions, and I think it is reasonable to demand answers from the government. These are public funds, after all, and it is important not to waste them.

The fact remains that Canada is currently the only G7 country with no satellite launch capabilities, even though satellites are practically indispensable to daily life, whether for travel or communications. Does that fact concern my colleague?

Jason Groleau: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, who is a great hockey player by the way. I have had to face off with him a few times.

That is a good question. Yes, the purpose is national security, and yes, we need launch capabilities. However, as I have been saying all day, people are struggling to eat and yet money is being spent with reckless abandon. It is important to manage Canadians' money responsibly.

[English]

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my first time speaking in the House since the tragedy at Wainwright in Alberta last Saturday, so I want to offer my condolences, certainly to the families of the soldiers who are deceased; to the families, loved ones and communities of the soldiers who are injured; and to all the personnel of the Canadian Armed Forces. We are with them wholeheartedly, today and always, and we will absolutely remember their sacrifice.

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[Translation]

I rise today to speak to Bill C-28. This is an essential bill because we are in a race. It is not a rhetorical race but rather a race for investment, infrastructure and legislation. Countries around the world are moving quickly. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, India and New Zealand have each built launch sites, passed modern space legislation and committed billions of dollars to securing sovereign access to space and data.

Government investment in space launches is increasing around the world, with government spending in the space sector reaching approximately \$130 billion globally in 2024.

If Canada does not act quickly, it may fall behind. That is why I am rising today to speak to the Canadian space launch act at second reading. This bill is long overdue, and it is essential to building Canada's legacy as a leading space nation.

[English]

Canada is not new to space. We are one of its pioneers. In 1962, Canada launched the Alouette I and became the third country in the world to place a satellite in orbit. We built the Canadarm. Our astronauts range from Marc Garneau to University of Guelph alumna Roberta Bondar, the first Canadian woman in space; Chris Hadfield; David Saint-Jacques; Jeremy Hansen; and just a few weeks ago, Joshua Kutryk, who is currently on the International Space Station. They have inspired generations, and their research informs important scientific discoveries.

Canada is known globally for excellence in robotics, earth observation and satellite communications. That is a proud legacy. Space is not out there; it is in every community. The University of Guelph, in my riding, is home to leading expertise in satellite earth observation and remote sensing. It uses satellite data to support precision agriculture, environmental monitoring and climate research. As Canada strengthens its sovereign space capabilities and AI capabilities, communities such as Guelph are already helping develop the talent and innovation that will turn that data into economic and public benefits. This is strategic data. Canada wants sovereignty over this strategic data. To have that, we must launch our satellites in Canada.

The industry has already made significant investments to grow the space sector and push the limits of innovation. Canada's own space sector now supports more than 13,800 direct high-scale jobs, a nearly 6% workforce increase in 2023, and sustains an additional 12,500 jobs across the broader economy. For growth in this sector, the sky is literally the limit, but industry needs government to provide the regulatory certainty and confidence companies require to attract and sustain new investment. My colleagues across the way confirm that.

• (1035)

[Translation]

Canada designs satellites, manufactures components and trains world-class engineers only to ship our work off to other countries so that they can launch those satellites, as my Conservative colleague mentioned. That results in higher costs, longer delays and greater uncertainty. The opposition party wants to move quickly

and innovate, but now all of a sudden it wants to put the brakes on. I cannot understand them.

Why is space important? It is important because satellites form the backbone of almost all aspects of modern daily life in Canada. When Canadians use their phones to get directions or to do their banking online, they are using satellites. Satellites provide Internet, television and telephone services to rural, northern and remote communities.

Space weather forecasts alert us to severe weather events, such as blizzards, heat waves and heavy rain. Satellite technology is also essential for monitoring sea ice, vessel traffic and marine pollution, especially in Canada's Arctic and coastal regions.

Satellites are essential infrastructure just like roads, hospitals and airports, but they are only reliable if we can launch, maintain, defend and replace them on our own terms, according to our own needs, without depending on another country.

A country that cannot launch its own satellites depends on the goodwill of foreign countries to keep its infrastructure running. That is a vulnerability that we can and must eliminate.

[English]

Space has become an increasingly hostile and contested domain, so there is a greater need to safeguard our critical space assets. Many of our allies have acknowledged this fact and are already investing heavily in space-based defence and sovereign space launch capabilities. There is no defence without space. Canada has an opportunity to provide a much sought-after service to our allies that can support several multilateral security objectives. In this new space race, existing global demand for launch far exceeds the supply of launch services, so foreign governments and international companies are actively seeking alternatives in stable, trusted countries like Canada. Once again, Canada has what the world wants, and part of that is our geography.

The proposed legislation would allow Canada to harness its natural advantages of land, coastlines and talent, and to build the frameworks necessary to support a viable, safe industry of space launch and re-entry. The Canadian space launch act is a framework that is necessary to ensure that all launch and re-entry activities in Canada would be conducted safely, securely, sustainably and in the public interest.

This is not strictly about science or industry. This is a fundamental question of sovereignty. Canada needs its own means to collect its own data. Our ability to lead in AI depends on good data, including strategic satellite data that powers everything from climate forecasting and agriculture to Arctic surveillance, while ensuring that Canadians retain sovereignty over critical data sets rather than relying on foreign providers to launch our satellites. A sovereign satellite and launch capability strengthens our security, economic competitiveness and resilience, enabling Canadian-made AI systems built for Canadian conditions and ensuring uninterrupted access to vital data during times of crisis.

Canadian innovators are ready to compete. They need legal authority and clear rules to follow so they can raise capital, build prototypes, test new technologies and attract international clients right here in Canada. That is what this act would provide.

The act would improve safety by implementing a modern, risk-informed approach to regulations that is aligned with international best practices and complemented by a robust regime of oversight, inspection and enforcement, exactly what members opposite were calling for a second ago. It would also require operators to carry insurance and to demonstrate, before any launch is authorized, the financial responsibility to cover any damages that may occur.

[Translation]

This is not a partisan issue, nor should it be. The question is whether Canada intends to compete in the 21st century or stand on the sidelines while others seize opportunities that should be ours.

If the House passes the Canadian space launch act, Transport Canada will act swiftly to advance the regulatory framework; work with the provinces, territories and indigenous communities that are already on board; coordinate with industry; and establish international partnerships to ensure that Canada is not merely a participant in the global space economy, but a leader.

The choice is very simple: Canada can lead, or it can fall behind. Let us choose to be masters in our own house. Let us choose our industries, our sovereignty and our security.

• (1040)

[English]

I hope all members of the House will choose to lead in sovereign space launch capability, because it is about our economy, science, safety and our sovereignty.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to address what happened yesterday in relation to Maritime Launch Services.

The RCMP raided an operation in Quebec, Lion, that has shown exactly the government's template for how it actually funnels government money, taxpayer money, to individuals it favours. How this relates to Maritime Launch Services is that it has taken two years for Lion to be investigated by the RCMP. Maritime Launch Services is doing exactly the same thing.

The government, in arrears, gave \$20 million of rent to Maritime Launch Services, before it even occupied it, for a \$300,000 lease that it actually had. It was \$20 million, for nothing at all, to give to the government's friends. The minute it did that, the president of

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Maritime Launch Services took a whole bunch of his shares and sold them, as they were pumped up to 60¢ a share, putting almost \$2 million in his pocket.

The government is continually using mechanisms through which it is funnelling Canadian dollars, almost illegally, as the RCMP showed yesterday, to its friends in their chosen fields. Can the member tell us that we will not see the same repeat of a raid from the RCMP on this operation?

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, those are extraordinary accusations and allegations in the House. I am certain, with the RCMP investigation, that we will investigate and get to the bottom of it, clearly.

I want to come back to the whole conversation, though, about how the land is supposedly just a little slab, how it was worth a tiny amount and how we are now paying this much for it. Anyone who knows a thing about zoning knows that every housing development and every factory starts in a field, a slab. It is about the geography. It is about the potential. The minute the zoning changes, the minute the economic opportunity expands, so does the cost. There are not a million places we can launch satellites from in Canada. This is one of them.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, in her last answer, my colleague said that it was to be expected that costs would increase once operations got under way. Fair enough. However, there is still a world of difference between \$13,000 and the \$20-million figure my colleague mentioned earlier. To me, those numbers are worlds apart.

Could the government not be a little more disciplined? I would be interested in hearing my colleague's thoughts on that.

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, I do not have the details in hand. I would say that, in many cases, these are investments in a site's potential. Anyone involved in development understands this. Although it is costly, the Conference Board of Canada, now known as Signal49, believes that the Nova Scotia spaceport could create 16,000 jobs and contribute \$300 million to the gross domestic product. That is just the minimum. The potential of this investment is enormous.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, before the government announced this sweetheart deal with Maritime Launch Services, the stock for this company was trading at around four cents a share. Following this government announcement, it went up to 60¢, and today it is at about 46¢. What that tells me is that this was an extremely risky proposition the company was putting forward, and the market did not ascribe a lot of value to it.

How can the government be so confident that it knows better than the free market how to allocate scarce financial resources, when a company that is essentially a penny stock is getting hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer funding? The current government does not have a good record of investing money in the private sector. How can the member be confident this penny stock is going to get a return for Canadian taxpayers?

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, the question is a good one and worthy of scrutiny, but I will say again that anyone involved in land speculation can have land that is basically worthless for generations, but when the zoning and the permissions change on that property, the value goes up exponentially. This is basic. This is what is happening. Because of the economic potential of this location at this time, there is increased value in the economic potential and benefits.

• (1045)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with respect to the \$200-million contract that is being spoken about, I asked questions about this as well because I was concerned. I found out it is not just for the lease, but it is also for the construction of several launching pads at that site. The reality is that there are only two locations in Canada, one in Newfoundland and this one in Nova Scotia, that are able to launch these kinds of satellites.

Can the member reinforce why it is so important for Canada to have sovereignty in this area?

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, there are only so many places in the world where we can launch satellites that provide us with really important data that we use every single day. When we have to compete or go to another country and get in line to launch our satellites, that is a problem. The member opposite was speaking earlier about jobs that are fleeing to those places where they can launch satellites, because a whole economic ecosystem develops around those spaces. This is important to provide a framework for our sovereignty, in terms of our launch capability and our sovereignty over data, and also our economic sovereignty of investing in ourselves to create our own, more robust space ecosystem.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, there seems to be a bit of a trend when the official opposition does exactly what oppositions are supposed to do: ask questions that bring accountability to bear on the government with respect to things such as the sovereign launch capabilities for our country. I have not heard anyone in the opposition say it is not important for Canada to have sovereign launch capability. I think it is tremendously important. I think there are security imperatives. I think there are economic imperatives.

However, would the member agree that it is also appropriate and important to ask questions to make sure it is done in the right way, so the public can have confidence in the deals that are being done and so that when we move forward, they understand that it was fair and transparent, that there was no preferential treatment given, and that this really was all about creating sovereign launch capabilities and the benefits that come with it?

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, I completely respect the opposition's role in challenging decisions and in making legislation better. I am going to point out another trend, though. It's the trend of saying that we know we need this, but let us really slow it down, as with Bill C-16. It is great legislation, but to them it does not go far enough, so they are going to vote against security for women.

I see the irony when the Leader of the Opposition says to call him when there is pipe in the ground. Before there is even a path on a pipeline, they want to hurry up on the pipeline, yet now we need a lot more frameworks and a lot more conversation.

What I am saying is that there is room for conversation. This is a framework. It will invite conversation, amendment and agreement. We already have agreement in Nova Scotia with the premier, indigenous communities and the municipality.

There are a lot of trends here, but let us try to be consistent.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the responses my colleague has been providing.

One of the important aspects to recognize is that the province not only supports it but is also investing in it. That speaks volumes in terms of how federal collaboration is ensuring that we have space sovereignty. It does not matter the region of the country. In Winnipeg, we have Magellan, which manufactures satellites. This provides us with even more independence in building an industry that is so vitally important to Canada's sovereignty.

I would like the member to give her thoughts on both or either of those comments.

Dominique O'Rourke: Madam Speaker, the question of our sovereignty, namely economic sovereignty, geographic sovereignty and data sovereignty, has never been more pressing. We have an opportunity here to harness our own talent and our own geography.

Part of the conversation here is about this location, its relationship to the Arctic and its orbital advantages, things that much smarter people than me know a lot more about. These three priorities are incredibly important at this moment in time. We have an opportunity to serve our own space industry and to invite other countries to launch here, because we are a trusted partner, we are stable and we have the geography. It is the time to invest in ourselves.

• (1050)

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I make my comments, as some of the other speakers have done, I want to offer my condolences to and prayers for the people at CFB Wainwright. What happened on the base last weekend is so tragic. While many suffered, I do not think people always appreciate, as in this House, the families behind the injured individuals and those who lost their lives. I also want to say a prayer for the families that have to deal with the uncertainty of those who are still sick and of whether and how those people are going to recover.

The same thing happens here. We are here all week. We are doing our thing and we are off to events, but there are always family members back home who are the ones holding down the fort for us. I think it is appropriate that every chance we get to stand up in the House, we thank our spouses and families for the ultimate sacrifice they make.

As we talk about this bill, and I know it has been mentioned in a couple of comments, it is not that we are saying we should not be dealing with space and an opportunity for people to create a great industry. Our problem comes from the fact that the government does not have a great track record on transparency. Part of the challenge we have right now is what we find when we start looking at what is going on and things that have come before. The government will announce a bill, and parts of the bill will be excellent and we will be supportive of it, and then what ends up happening is that this small piece called “transparency” seems to be an issue.

I could rhyme off 100 instances of things right now. We could talk about the green slush fund that happened last year, or others from recent times. They were programs that seemed to make sense. Of course, we are transitioning and trying to figure out some of these things, so maybe we should be spending money on them. However, the problem that happens as we are dealing with them is that there is a huge disconnect when it comes to accountability, how we are going to follow up and how we are going to make sure that these things are follow through on.

Our challenge is not that we should not be looking at doing more in space. I think all my colleagues around the House would agree that that seems reasonable. Our challenge is always that what we see happening more and more with the Liberal government is that Liberal ministers and those who have the ability to write cheques are the ones making sure that insiders profit, with little transparency. That is our challenge as we look at these things and as the Liberals announce program after program. We can go back to the WE sponsorship scandal. There are so many things that have happened over the years that I think most Canadians should be concerned about when we start talking about legislation.

Maritime Launch Services in Nova Scotia has been mentioned by my colleagues before. The question is, with all the Crown land available and everything that is made possible, how did it happen to be that particular piece? Why was that piece picked and not anything else? That is what we are talking about here. As we look at the process of what happens in this House, the challenge is not that the idea is a good idea or a bad idea. The challenge is how we are going to be accountable and transparent. The government has not been very transparent in recent years.

Government Orders

As we look at these things, we are looking at how we deal with them. We see more and more power. We see more and more Liberal insiders seemingly doing better as a result of that while Canadians are struggling. We see that food bank use is at an all-time high in this country. We see that and think to ourselves, “How do we have money for all these things?” I am not talking about this one thing in particular, but we are writing all kinds of cheques all around the world. We spend money on foreign aid. Not all foreign aid is bad; we are not saying that is the case, but the challenge is that we have struggles here at home that we need to deal with. We have struggles here at home that need our attention.

When we look at bills like this one, our challenge is not that we should not be looking at space travel in Canada. It is about who should be dealing with it. How should it be brought forward? Parliamentarians should also have opportunities to look at these things.

Canada has a proud history of exploring space; there is no question about that. We have launched satellites, like the Alouette I, which was launched under the Diefenbaker Conservative government, making Canada the third country to design and build satellites. As mentioned in the House already, we have had astronauts like Chris Hadfield, Roberta Bondar and Jeremy Hansen. We have also had technology like the Canadarm. We have definitely had a proud history in this country of being able to deal with and work in space.

When we look at these things, we have to keep going back to how we are going to make the government accountable. How are Canadians going to make sure that we have an opportunity to see what has gone on and see what has happened? We realize there is a real market for space launches; there is no question about that, but when decisions are made behind closed doors, that is the challenge we have.

We can look at other programs. We can look at some of the things that have gone on so far in terms of censorship. There have probably been at least a dozen bills since COVID through which the government has tried to introduce some form of censorship in what it is doing, whether it is looking at metadata or setting up different types of things to keep an eye out and do more around that.

We will look at the challenges as we continue to question legislation. That is our job as opposition: to question legislation. We should not be challenged, we should not be chastised and we should not be given a hard time for wanting accountability.

Statements by Members

As we move forward on this, one thing we need to constantly remind people of is that we are definitely in favour of enhancing our sovereignty and space capabilities, but we are certainly not supportive, and never will be supportive, of laws that could potentially give Liberal insiders and foreign agents blank cheques.

I would just like to remind people that we were all sent here for a reason, and that is to do the best job we can when it comes to legislation in this House. As the opposition, we are required to ask questions. We are required to scrutinize bills. We should never have to worry about being challenged because we are asking too many questions or are not asking the right questions.

I said at the start of my speech that the Liberal government does not have a great track record when it comes to transparency, so we are going to continue asking questions on this side of the House. We are going to keep challenging legislation. As I said, it is our duty as opposition to make sure that we are able to do that.

● (1055)

In closing, once again, as we look at other legislation that is going to come forward over time, we are not going to slow down. We are not going to stop challenging. We are not going to stop asking questions. We are going to continue to do our job, which is our due diligence. We were sent here by Canadians to ask questions and to challenge the status quo. As long as we are here in opposition, we will continue to do just that.

I want to thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me time here. I see my time is almost up, so I will just finish with that. I appreciate the opportunity to speak once again in the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1100)

[English]

WORLD POLIO DAY

Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on October 24, we mark World Polio Day to recognize the remarkable progress made against a disease that once threatened children around the world.

Thanks to decades of hard work, polio cases have dropped more than 99.9%. Canada has been a proud leader in this effort, working alongside international organizations and civil society partners to expand immunization and strengthen public health systems. However, the fight is not over. Polio remains endemic in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As we mark World Polio Day, let us recommit to finishing the job and achieving a polio-free world for future generations.

TRAIN ROUTE CANCELLATION

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago, Via Rail announced that it is cancelling train route 641. Since the announcement, I have received countless emails, phone calls and messages. I have heard from students who

cannot get to class, from patients who cannot get to their doctor's appointments and from folks with jobs in Toronto who bought homes in our beautiful community with the hope of travelling to work on a commuter train. For some, this might just be another train route cancelled, but for my neighbours and friends it is an incredible disruption.

The Liberals are ready to spend billions on a high-speed dream while at the same time cutting needed services to my community. I am calling on the minister to issue a directive to Via to reinstate a commuter train option for our community. It makes no sense to talk about high-speed dreams while at the same time cancelling trains my residents depend on. I urge the minister and Via Rail to listen to the voices of our constituents and act now to restore this critical service.

CANCER RESEARCH

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Kent Stobart from CancerCare Manitoba. He and his staff members truly care about what is happening in Canada, and particularly in Manitoba, with respect to how we treat cancer. It is so critically important that as a nation, we invest in research for cancer. It could help save lives and make lives that much better.

One example that was demonstrated to me was taking a cell out, injecting it with something that combats cancer directly and reinserting the cell to fight the cancer directly, as opposed to having chemotherapy. The point is, research gives us results.

Canada made a commitment of \$5 billion over three years. This is the type of thing we can use to build the capital infrastructure to ensure we get more research on things like cancer and the cure for cancer, which are vital to Canadians.

[Translation]

COST OF LIVING

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, after 11 years of Liberal taxes and inflationary spending, Canadians are facing ever-higher costs for food, housing and transportation while their wages are not keeping up.

Food banks recorded an all-time high of 2.35 million visits in March, including nearly 776,000 visits by children. Inflation hit 3.1% in September, and gas prices jumped 27.8% in one year.

When fuel costs go up, it is farmers, truckers and families who pay the price. Meanwhile, the federal debt continues to weigh heavily on future generations, and interest payments are swallowing up billions of dollars that could be serving Canadians.

Conservatives want to put money back into families' pockets, extend the federal fuel excise tax holiday, eliminate the GST on gas and diesel, scrap the industrial carbon tax and scrap the costly clean fuel regulations.

Canadians work hard. Canadians deserve better. They deserve a future Conservative government.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARD

Ginette Lavack (St. Boniface—St. Vital, Lib.): Madam Speaker, earlier this week, I was honoured to join Dr. Sandra DeLaronde at Rideau Hall as she received the 2025 Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case.

[Translation]

It was a very proud moment. For decades, Sandra has championed the rights and dignity of indigenous women and girls, survivors and families.

[English]

Through her leadership with the Giganawenimaanaanig, her teaching and her advocacy, she has worked tirelessly to ensure that voices too often silenced are heard and respected, because being heard matters, being respected matters and having a voice in decisions that shape one's life matters.

Sandra's courage, compassion and determination are making a difference.

• (1105)

[Translation]

I thank her for reminding us that true change begins with listening, but takes shape through action.

[English]

I congratulate Sandra on this remarkable achievement.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Madam Speaker, British Columbia has everything we need for a strong, prosperous forestry sector for decades to come. There are 200,000 Canadian loggers, mill workers and forest product-makers who feed their families thanks to our forestry sector, including thousands in southern British Columbia. However, a decade of Liberal mismanagement has seen B.C. lose more than half of its pulp and paper mills. Ottawa has become numb to our mill closures. When a mill dies, it puts a whole town at risk.

My message to the Liberals is simple: focus on what Canada can control, prioritize lumber in all trade talks, invest in biofuel to keep pulp mills alive, and treat this sector as the critical part of our economy that it is.

Statements by Members

CELTIC COLOURS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Mike Kelloway (Sydney—Glace Bay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week for nine days, Cape Breton Island was alive with the sounds of fiddles, step-dancing, singing and celebration. This year marks the 30th edition of the Celtic Colours International Festival. It is a remarkable celebration of the music, culture and traditions that make Cape Breton so special.

Across our island, communities have opened their doors and welcomed musicians and visitors from near and far. What makes Celtic Colours truly a special event are the people behind it: the volunteers, performers, organizers, local businesses and families who share our island's hospitality with the world. For 30 editions, this festival has helped preserve our traditions while introducing them to new generations.

We thank everyone who contributed to this year's festival for sharing the spirit of Cape Breton Island with Canada and the world. I congratulate them on 30 wonderful years.

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CANADIAN WOMEN'S RUGBY TEAM

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Canada's women's rugby team on their historic victory over England.

Last week's win was more than just a victory on the scoreboard. It was a statement about how far women's rugby has come in Canada and a glimpse of an incredibly bright future for the sport. Rugby Canada is showing young Canadians what can be achieved through hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit. It is inspiring girls and boys to get involved, stay active and dream big.

Now, as the Rugby Rematch Tour moves to our nation's capital, this great rivalry continues. I encourage Canadians to fill the stands at TD Place tonight and give team Canada the home field advantage they deserve. Let us stand behind our athletes and cheer them on for another great result.

Go, Canada, go!

* * *

[Translation]

SWEARING-IN AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF QUEBEC

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, for the first time since the British Conquest of 1760, elected members of the Quebec National Assembly, descendants of the settlers of New France, of the Patriots of 1837-38, of the one-time French-Canadian Métis, the blended offspring of first nations and people from around the world, the elected officials who now represent the people of Quebec in 2026, have sworn an oath not to the British Crown, but to the people of Quebec.

Statements by Members

In this historic moment, 265 years after the battle of the Plains of Abraham and the humiliations of the oath of allegiance, a proud people can finally forgo the terrible charade foisted on countless generations.

This moment of decolonization represents only the first step toward our nation's full and complete freedom. The true power to determine our future belongs not to a foreign monarch or another nation. It belongs to us, to Quebeckers.

* * *

[English]

POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS' NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY

Maggie Chi (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day, which falls on the last Sunday of September.

Over 900 brave officers have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their communities. We honour their sacrifice and their families by building a safer Canada. With deep sadness, I advise the House that five police officers and three peace officers have died in the line of duty to date in 2026. I extend my deepest condolences to their families and to all members of the policing and peace officer communities. Their deaths are a sobering reminder of the risks that accompany their service, yet every day, brave officers stand ready to run into danger to keep us safe.

This summer I had the pleasure of partnering with the fine officers of Toronto Police Service 33 Division in my riding of Don Valley North. I commend their professionalism and their always showing up for our community. We owe police and peace officers an enduring debt of gratitude, and I thank them for their dedication to keeping our communities safe.

* * *

● (1110)

THE ECONOMY

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians are working hard. They are doing everything right, and still they are struggling to make ends meet. Families are stretched thin, seniors are struggling to afford heat, and parents are helping their adult children to pay rent.

Meanwhile, the federal government is piling on debt, driving up inflation and leaving Canadians with the consequences. Canada's fiscal watchdog just downgraded Canada's economic outlook and warned that the Liberal government is failing to meet its own fiscal target. Federal debt is projected to keep rising, with the interest costs alone expected to reach \$83 billion annually within the next few years. That is \$83 billion just in interest payments. That means less money for health care, less money for seniors and less money for veterans, all because the government cannot control its spending.

In Lethbridge, people and businesses alike are already feeling the strain. Canadians deserve responsible fiscal management, real relief from the cost of living, and an economy that creates good jobs and

gives families the chance to get ahead. When will the Liberal government take responsibility for its actions, reverse the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Fredericton—Oromocto.

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NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE RECIPIENT

David Myles (Fredericton—Oromocto, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize something very special that took place a couple of weeks ago. Canadian poet Anne Carson won the Nobel Prize in Literature. This is the world's most prestigious literary award.

[Translation]

Born in Toronto, Anne Carson, distinguished intellectual and educator, explores these life-channelling moments.

[English]

She uses her words to reflect on love and grief, and finds meaning in the mundane.

[Translation]

I love poetry. Poets capture the deepest aspects of human experience. They help shape our understanding of the world and cast light on the most profound emotions shared by us all.

[English]

Anne Carson's work has helped us define the undefinable and has brought meaning to the often overlooked. She is a Canadian treasure.

Please join me in congratulating Anne Carson on this incredible achievement.

[Translation]

Congratulations!

* * *

[English]

MARGARET HARPER

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, on October 3, Margaret Harper passed away peacefully at her home at age 93. She was the loving mother to her sons Stephen, Grant and Robert, grandmother to Ben, Katie, Rachel and Elizabeth, and great-grandmother to James. She was an extraordinarily active woman who shovelled her own snow and cut her own lawn and was a well-known presence in northwest Calgary, often seen cycling or on long walks throughout the community, including on the day before her passing.

I first met Margaret when she walked into my campaign office and volunteered to door-knock. We knocked on hundreds of doors together in 2015, 2019 and 2021. She would sling a bundle of lawn signs over her shoulder and set off at an impressive pace. She was a woman of character, principle and faith who dedicated her life to her family.

The Harpers have my deepest condolences. May she rest in peace.

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SUMMER PARLIAMENTARY EVENTS IN NUNAVUT

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, Lib.): *Uqaqtittiji*, over the summer, I welcomed a record number of parliamentarians, over 40, to Nunavut. These visits were part of caucus retreats, government announcements, pre-budget consultations and international studies. I witnessed parliamentarians interact with Nunavummiut. I watched the meaningful dialogue between lawmakers and amazing Nunavummiut. As the sole MP for Nunavut, I rely on those who visit to become our allies. I saw more parliamentarians understand why Nunavut deserves more investments.

Since our return here, I am encouraged by those who have shared how important their visits were. I am humbled when they recall what they learned while they were in my beautiful riding, the most beautiful riding in Canada. I hope more Canadians come to Nunavut to see themselves in Nunavut, to see the beauty. Nunavut, our strength.

* * *

• (1115)

PATRICK BEATTY

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honour the life of my dear friend Patrick Beatty. Patrick unexpectedly passed in a car accident on September 23. His wife, Nabiha, was also seriously injured and is now recovering.

My husband and I had the privilege of knowing Patrick and attending university with him. We shared many moments, the kind filled with laughter. Patrick knew exactly how to make sure everyone had a good time. Patrick was a long-time Conservative activist inspired by his father's dedication to public service. He loved Canada and was a strong advocate for organ donation.

Having already endured the unimaginable loss of their first son nearly 20 years ago, my heart breaks knowing that his parents must now endure that pain again with the loss of Patrick. To Nabiha and the entire Beatty family, our political family mourns with them. We pray for Nabiha's full recovery, and may the memories that Patrick gave us remain with us forever.

Rest in peace, my dear friend.

* * *

CANADIAN STEEL INDUSTRY

Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that our steel industry is essential to the Canadian economy and to national security. In Sault Ste. Marie, it supports thousands of workers, families and local businesses. That is why our government announced \$5 billion through a joint steel action fund with Ontario to help Canadian steel companies diversify product lines, access overseas markets and strengthen domestic demand through our buy Canadian policies.

Oral Questions

We are continuing to strengthen protections against unfair steel imports and are establishing a special task force to improve competitiveness and address shipping costs. Our government is also investing \$1 billion into the Ring of Fire, helping unlock one of the richest critical mineral supplies in the world, located in northern Ontario.

This government is standing up for Canadian steel and northern Ontario and is supporting our workers so that Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma can play a key role in building Canada strong. In fact, Algoma Steel said, “This is exactly the kind of decisive, coordinated action our industry needs at a time of unprecedented trade pressure.”

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, Food Banks Canada just reported a record 2.3 million visits in one month, up 117% since 2019, with nearly 800,000 by children, and one in five visitors has a job. Think about that. Working Canadians cannot afford to feed themselves or their families. Meanwhile, Liberal announcements keep piling up, but so do all the bills.

Canadians cannot take another Liberal promise to the checkout counter. After 11 years in power, what do the Liberals have to say to working Canadians who have done everything right and still cannot afford to eat?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I have to say to Canadians is that we have their backs. This government has the backs of Canadians. We understand that the cost of living is the most important thing for many Canadians: the price of food, the price of gas and the price of a home. Canadians are calling, and the answer is that 12 million Canadians will receive the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. We will always be there to support Canadians.

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, no one can afford another out-of-touch Liberal lecture about how good they have it, just like that.

Alberta food bank visits have soared 156% since 2019. Food prices have jumped 30%. Higher fuel costs hit farmers, truckers, stores and families alike. The Conservatives proposed cutting all federal diesel taxes until Canada Day. The Liberals defeated it. The Prime Minister admits food is too costly, but blocked relief. Why is he all talk and bad results?

Oral Questions

When will the Liberals finally support our Conservative plan so Canadians can afford fuel and food?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure what the people in Alberta and across Canada are wondering is why the Conservatives are missing in action every time we have a vote to support Canadians. Where was the member when we voted for the Canada groceries and essentials benefit? Where was the member when we extended the suspension of the excise fuel tax for people across the country? At a time when Canadians need support, I would say that Conservative members should join with this government and support Canadians every step of the way.

● (1120)

FINANCE

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government is spending without restraint. It has added \$700 billion in national debt over the last 10 years, but it is adding another \$733 billion over the next five. The Liberals are costing us an additional \$82,000 of debt per Canadian household. What is the outcome? It is a record 2.4 million visits to the food bank in a single month. That is the highest in Canadian history.

If spending was the solution, surely Canadians would be better off by now. What good is all this spending when the very Canadians paying for it are getting poorer?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have enormous respect for the colleague who just asked the question, but she knows better. She knows that Canada has the strongest fiscal position in the G7. She knows that Canada is the only country, with Germany, to have a AAA credit rating. She knows that Canada has the lowest net debt to GDP in the G7. She knows that the IMF just confirmed in its forecast that Canada will have the second-fastest growth in 2027. She knows that this country has everything to build, and that is what we are going to do, with Canadians.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Madam Speaker, they say that they are building Canada, but the reality is that the PBO just slashed Canada's growth rate to a mere 0.9%, less than half of the U.S.'s, and the reality is that they are building generational debt. What is the fastest-growing expense for the government? It is not health care and it is not defence. It is interest, \$83 billion in interest.

The Liberals are driving Canadians into dependence on government programs, and they are taking on massive amounts of debt to pay for it. How can this Liberal government possibly claim that its economic policies are working?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what Canadians are watching today is the Conservatives always talking down the Canadian economy. We have the most talented workers. We have strong industries. We are one of the few countries that can build a car, can build a plane and can build a ship. We have the critical minerals to power the economy of the 21st century. We have an abundance of energy to make things here at home, and we are the only G7 coun-

try with free trade with all the other G7 nations. We have everything to build Canada strong, and that is what we are going to do.

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Madam Speaker, how can the minister talk about a strong economy when food banks in Quebec are serving more than three million people every month? That is a 37% increase.

In my riding, the organization Sécurité alimentaire de Victoriaville is helping 2,224 adults and 1,284 children. In fact, 35% of its clients are children. At the Centre d'action bénévole de Windsor et région, the needs have grown by 50% since the Liberals took office.

Will the Liberals eliminate the federal tax on diesel so that groceries are affordable again?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know it is Friday and I know that the people of Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources are watching question period.

They might wonder what their member of Parliament was doing when it was time to vote to help them. I actually know these people. These are people who are watching and seeing what their member of Parliament is doing. They are wondering where their member of Parliament was when we talked about the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, whether he voted for it or against it. That is what the people in his riding are going to be looking at. Indeed, the Conservatives voted against every single measure we put forward.

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Madam Speaker, with all due respect to the minister, I can say that I have been here for my constituents for nearly 10 years.

The Restaurant populaire de Victoriaville has served 5,625 breakfasts this year, which is a 15% increase in one year. It has served 21,428 lunches, which is a 10% increase in one year. The lunch boxes for children project has provided 31,453 lunches for our children, 8,167 snacks and involved 40 volunteers. I would like to thank the gang at Clan-Destins for their significant contribution to this cause.

Will the government adopt the Conservative measures?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would also like to pay tribute to the organizations in my colleague's constituency. They are undoubtedly doing remarkable work, as we have seen happening across the country.

Similar organizations in my constituency were the first to welcome the Canada child benefit and to see the impact it has on the lives of households in my constituency. I am sure this is also the case in my colleague's constituency.

In fact, let us talk about his constituency. There are 20,587 children who receive an average of \$4,176 thanks to the Canada child benefit. My colleague voted against this measure. He talks about reducing the tax on diesel. He voted against \$4,176 for 20,587 children in his constituency. He voted against 34,563—

• (1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, without the House of Commons interpreters, there would be no bilingual Parliament. It would be in English only.

That is why the government's plan to cut the Translation Bureau's staff by 25% constitutes a serious lapse in judgment. These employees have exceptional expertise that low-cost contractors and ChatGPT simply do not have. Francophones deserve the highest quality interpretation services. Good enough just does not cut it.

Will the government show some respect for francophones and cancel these cuts?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question and for his commitment to official languages. I share that commitment, as does everyone on this side of the House.

This also gives me an opportunity to thank the interpreters, who do an outstanding job every day to ensure that we can continue our work.

With regard to the Translation Bureau, we are meeting the demand from Parliament. There has been a drop in demand. Some jobs will indeed be eliminated through attrition over the coming years. We will always ensure that the highest standards for official languages are upheld in Parliament.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, as Gilles Duceppe always says, there are two languages in the House of Commons: English and simultaneous interpretation. He is not wrong: Ninety per cent of translation is from English to French because everyone chooses English, even a good number of Quebec Liberals. Without our exceptionally talented interpreters, our privileges as members of Parliament would be violated. Let us be clear: French is not an irritant to be entrusted to the lowest bidder with lesser accreditation standards.

Will the government maintain the full scope and quality of our interpretation services and reverse the cuts?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again I thank my colleague for the question. I want to assure him that we will always endeavour to maintain the highest standards of quality in interpretation and translation at Parliament.

As for the interpreters, I want to assure my colleague that there is no lowering of standards in terms of accreditation. In fact, we want

to ensure that we have the next generation of interpreters. That is why we are investing in programs to train new interpreters coming to lend us a hand so that our work may continue in both official languages at the highest quality.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is disheartening that French is still treated as an inconvenience in Ottawa. Cutting the number of interpreters in the House by 25% shows disregard for the rights of francophones, all in the name of saving a few bucks. The same Liberals who have \$40 billion to invest in a pipeline should not expect us to believe—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member, as it appears there is no interpretation.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères may start over from the beginning.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, it is disheartening that French is still treated as an inconvenience in Ottawa. Cutting the number of interpreters in the House by 25% shows disregard for the rights of francophones, all in the name of saving a few bucks. The same Liberals who have \$40 billion to invest in a pipeline should not expect us to believe that they cannot afford to pay translators. Francophones are not second-class citizens. It is disappointing to see a minister from Quebec leading the charge on this.

Will he reconsider and stand up for our interpreters and our rights?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, we need to clarify one thing. There are interpreters, and there is the Translation Bureau. They do not perform the same function. I just want to be clear. The Translation Bureau is responsible for translating documents, while interpreters provide services to the House and its committees. I want this distinction to be clear. It seems to me that the Bloc Québécois is not clear on that. I just wanted to clarify that.

As for the Translation Bureau, we respond to departments' needs by translating the documents they provide and by ensuring the timely delivery of high-quality work. Any reduction in staffing over the coming years will be based on operational requirements and will occur through natural attrition.

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THE ECONOMY

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, Food Banks Canada's new 2026 report slams the Liberal Party's promise. Food banks saw an increase of 189,000 visits compared to the previous year, representing an 8.7% increase. Since 2019, the number of visits has risen by 117%. Working people account for 23% of those receiving food assistance in Quebec. It is scandalous.

Have the Liberals broken their promise to Canadians?

Oral Questions

● (1130)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the people of Lévis—Lotbinière would like their member of Parliament to vote with a voice that loud.

Unfortunately, when it came time to vote for the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, we did not hear the loud voice of the member for Lévis—Lotbinière. He voted against it. I know people in Lévis—Lotbinière, and some of them are very dear to me. They would like their MP to stand up in the House and defend their interests.

Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, 600,000 Quebecers use food banks every month. The Liberals voted against a Conservative motion to eliminate taxes on gas and diesel and to acknowledge the affordability crisis. They voted against the motion. Practical solutions are needed to stop hunger from worsening.

Will the Liberal government vote in favour of our Conservative plan to reduce grocery bills by eliminating all federal taxes on diesel at least until Canada Day?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague wants practical solutions, yet he has voted against practical solutions for the past 10 years. One practical solution is the Canada child benefit, which provides 21,316 children with an average \$3,237. That amount of assistance is considerable and substantial for families. He voted against it.

Another practical solution is the Canadian dental care plan, which 19,770 constituents in his riding are using. Something else we strive for is to create good jobs. At the Davie shipyards, we created 5,000 jobs related to the icebreakers. He should be thrilled by this program.

[English]

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Madam Speaker, in Prince George, the Salvation Army served over 6,000 people in a single month. That is a 20% increase in just three years. One in five food bank clients has a full-time job, and over 32% of those clients are children. After 11 years of Liberal taxes and inflationary spending, Canadians are struggling to put food on the table.

Relying on food banks is now the unfortunate reality for 2.5 million Canadians every month. How is that okay?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Madam Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, when we receive a report, such as the hunger report from Food Banks Canada, we do not just read the headlines; we read the recommendations. What do not feature among any of the recommendations are any of the things the Conservatives have put on the table to combat poverty.

It is a complex challenge, and we are listening to what Food Banks Canada says. One of the policies it suggests is to expand funding for deeply affordable, supportive, non-market housing, co-operative housing, which is something the Conservatives not only vote against, despite the fact that the Conservative leader actually

lives in government housing, but also stigmatize. They call it Soviet-style housing. It is a shame.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Madam Speaker, how unattached is this Liberal Member of Parliament? It is like using a dumpster fire for a wiener roast.

Food bank usage in Williams Lake rose over 39% over the last two years. When are the Liberals going to wake up? These are families, seniors and working Canadians who are being forced to turn to the food bank because they can no longer keep up with the cost of living.

Are the Liberals that arrogant and out of touch that it has become okay for children, seniors and full-time workers to have to rely on food banks? When will they finally take responsibility for the affordability crisis they have created?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Madam Speaker, what Canadians would like are actual solutions from all sides of the House that would help reduce poverty in this country. Literally everything the Conservatives have put on the table has been rejected by poverty elimination experts. Not even one single policy recommendation from the Conservative Party appears in the list of policy recommendations in Food Banks Canada's hunger report.

One of the most important recommendations is affordable housing, which is true non-profit, non-market housing, and it is something the Conservative Party has voted against consistently over the last seven years since I have been here. They should look at their own record when talking about eliminating poverty.

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, of course, the member used the opportunity to attack Conservatives instead of focusing on a solution. One in nine households in the Waterloo region struggles to afford food. Across Canada, food banks saw 2.36 million visits in March alone, and one-third of those were children. There are 800,000 children going hungry in Canada.

Canadians cannot afford excuses, and they cannot afford the government. When will the government take responsibility for making life more expensive and finally admit that we are in an affordability crisis?

• (1135)

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Madam Speaker, with great respect to my colleague across the way, I would ask, when can Canadians expect the Conservatives to get on board with the income security policies that the very report they have been holding up this week speaks to? We are talking about the Canada disability benefit, the workers benefit, and the groceries benefit, as well as the national school food program, which is serving over nine million meals to kids in that colleague's province.

Those are real solutions to many of the challenges that Canadians are facing right now and that this government is squarely focused on.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a sad day for Canadian agriculture. The historic beef herd at the Nappan research farm is being shipped to auction today.

The Liberals are sacrificing 140 years of irreplaceable research and shutting down one of Canada's oldest experimental farms. More than 70% of the cuts at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are in science and research. As a result, research farms in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia are being shut down.

Will the minister pick up the phone and save this beef herd now before it is too late, or will he continue to cripple food research in Canada?

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, that was very important question. Science and research have always been integral to agriculture and agri-food, and they will continue to be a priority for the government. We are consolidating our infrastructure to reduce rising overhead costs and ensure that more of our available resources are being directed towards scientific research and innovation.

We remain Canada's largest agricultural research organization. With 17 research centres nationwide, every province will continue to have at least one research centre to research farm-related issues, addressing regional and national priorities.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, what are the available resources, when 72% of the cuts in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are in science and innovation?

As a result of this, we are losing research farms in every single province across the country. Instead of investing in food research here at home, the Liberals spent \$22 million on beans for Women of Empowerment in Congo and \$8 million on gender-neutral rice in Vietnam.

If the Liberals continue to say that food sovereignty is such a priority, how can they be dismantling the very research that ensures our food is safe and affordable here in Canada?

Oral Questions

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the great honour of representing the riding of Ottawa Centre, which is home to the Central Experimental Farm, one of the largest agriculture research centres in the country, which has been, for almost 100 years, providing worldwide global quality research to ensure that we have good, safe, healthy foods, not only in Canada but also around the world.

Canada will continue to do this important work and make sure that research and food quality benefit not only Canadians but also everybody abroad.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, with Bill C-39, the Liberals are acting as if it were the environment, endangered species, workers, and indigenous peoples who are preventing them from resolving the tariff crisis. They are taking people for fools. Essentially, what they are doing is exploiting the tariff crisis to make permanent changes that benefit the oil companies.

The environmental consequences will also be permanent. Fifty-six of Canada's most eminent scientists addressed this in a letter yesterday. With Bill C-39, the Liberals will cause costly and irreversible damage.

Will they reverse course?

[English]

Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is not about changing standards. The standards remain high on the environment. The duty to consult first nations is absolutely, as I mentioned the other day, sacrosanct. It is what we need to do. We need to do more of it. There needs to be more partnership.

This is about a generational and transformative initiative, this legislation, to build Canada strong and to build from coast to coast to coast with Canadian workers.

* * *

[Translation]

LABOUR

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-39 will also be damaging to labour rights. The Liberals are effectively placing the right to strike under their control with their interpretation of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. The Canadian Union of Public Employees has already announced that it will challenge this in court, and it will win because there is a precedent. The Tribunal administratif du travail du Québec overturned a nearly identical measure two weeks ago.

Instead of getting schooled in court, will the liberals collaborate with the workers?

Oral Questions

● (1140)

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a lot of talk about this bill, but the right to strike is protected. The goal is to add guardrails around section 107 and its use. We want to ensure balance, and we want negotiations to start early to avoid strikes as much as possible so that we have greater predictability and certainty as we build this country, build major projects and build a strong economy.

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[English]

FINANCE

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, the markets are predicting it, the government's own parliamentary watchdogs are predicting it, and even Tiff Macklem is indicating interest rates could go up by a quarter of a point as early as next week. That is going to mean higher mortgage payments for the residents of my community. That is going to mean higher costs for our business owners. The Liberals are literally fuelling the affordability crisis they deny exists.

When will the Liberal government finally curb its spending and allow Canadians to live their life?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure the member has been reading the international press and has been following what the international agencies are talking about with regard to Canada. The IMF just recently said that Canada would have the second-fastest growth in the G7.

We have been acting on the three most important things for Canadians: the cost of food, the cost of gas and the cost of homes. We are going to continue to work for Canadians because every day is a good day to fight for Canadians.

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be honest. I have not been speaking with the IMF, but I have been speaking to people from the food bank in Newcastle, which has seen a 3,000% increase in usage since 2015.

When will the Liberals finally get the message to curb their spending so Canadians can afford to live?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I hope the people in the member's riding are watching TV this morning, because they will know that the member, and all the Conservative members, voted against every affordability measure we put forward to support Canadians. It is a shame. Every time we said that we would support Canadians with the price of food, with the price of gas and with the price of all, the Conservatives were missing in action. Why do they not come on board and help us to support Canadians? That is what the people in the member's riding are expecting.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, barely a day goes by without the Liberal government's making an announcement of billions of dollars of new spending. Press releases are issued, media content is bought, consultants are paid and dollars go out the door immediately, yet results for Canadians are years away, if at all. The bulk of this announced spending is part of no

budget plan. This is government by blank cheque. Just this week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer released the fall economic outlook, showing just how out of whack the spending has become, and the economic outlook just gets worse.

Can the minister stand here and explain how more spending leads to worse results?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know it is Friday, but let me help my Conservative friend. Six million people are going to receive the Canada child benefit, 400,000 kids will be supported with the national school food program, 465,000 people will receive the Canada disability benefit, 12 million Canadians will receive the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, and 900,000 kids will be supported with early learning and child care. I could go down the list, but I will give it to him so he can inform his constituents the next time he engages with them.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, a sign of a strong economy must be how much the government can give people because they cannot afford to pay their own bills.

The economist Prime Minister promised Canadians two things: to balance the budget by 2029 and to maintain a declining debt-to-GDP ratio. He is failing badly at both. To quote the PBO report, "the two fiscal anchors have imposed limited fiscal discipline on government spending and borrowing." Our escalating debt is consuming way too much of our tax dollars. The bottom line is that if the PBO were a doctor, she would tell Canadians that the government is on life support.

When will the Liberals think about Canada's future and stop spending as if—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians know better. They are laughing at the question.

They understand that Canada will have the second-fastest growth in the G7 in 2027. They understand that we have the lowest net debt-to-GDP in the G7. They understand that we have one of the lowest deficit-to-GDP ratios in the G7. They understand that their country is the only one, with Germany, with a AAA credit rating.

Canadians are proud of this country. They know we are going to build Canada strong. I just hope the Conservatives get on board.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Madam Speaker, the PBO's latest report shows that unemployment will soon rise to 6.9%, but in my region it is as high as 8.3%. That includes families in Penticton, Grand Forks and Castlegar who cannot find work and are choosing between buying gas or buying groceries, yet this report shows that Liberal spending will only increase, with more debt. Therefore, higher taxes will follow.

Can the Liberal minister explain how their fiscal plan of fewer jobs and higher taxes will help families—

• (1145)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure Canadians who are watching are a bit puzzled. On one hand, the Conservatives are voting against measures to support Canadians and build the economy, and on the other hand, they are wondering what is going on.

Thank God we are not taking a lot of their advice. We are listening to Canadians. We are investing in this economy. We are supporting Canadians. We are investing in our sovereignty. Canadians are proud. They want this country to go forward. That is exactly what we are going to do.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my riding of Guelph is home to an extraordinary advanced manufacturing sector and automotive sector. Across southern Ontario, thousands of highly skilled workers are helping build the vehicles of the future.

Can the government please share its plan to protect and continue to support Canada's auto sector and its extraordinary auto workers?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and to the Secretary of State (Defence Procurement), Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Guelph is the chair of our auto caucus.

Ontario's auto workers helped build this country, and we know that they will be key to our plan to build Canada stronger. This week the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario announced an additional \$2.5-billion investment over two years for capital projects in the auto sector. With these investments, we will modernize our production lines, build the hybrids and EVs of today and tomorrow, and, most importantly, secure Canada's long-standing auto tradition.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, during Small Business Week, we celebrate Canadians who take risks and create jobs, especially during these turbulent times.

Oral Questions

One of the most important tax measures available to small businesses, the \$500,000 small deduction limit, has been left unchanged for 17 years, while inflation continues to soar. Will the Liberals agree with the Conservatives and raise the threshold to \$700,000, so entrepreneurs can keep more of what they earn to invest and grow their business?

[Translation]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is true that we use it often and that it is a source of pride for Canada. Small businesses are a source of both talent and strength for our country. This week, we are celebrating Small Business Week.

Since taking office, I have had the opportunity to talk with small business owners. What we are hearing is that they are very motivated and ambitious. They want to export and grow.

Many women run small businesses, and I admire their strength. I think that our small business owners are a source of inspiration.

[English]

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, that was a very serious question, and I hope to see the change in the budget, because that was not an answer.

Here is another thing. The small supplier GST threshold has been frozen at \$30,000 since it was introduced in 1991. Thirty-five years later, inflation has skyrocketed, costs have risen and small businesses have changed. Conservatives propose to increase the threshold to \$60,000 to help entrepreneurs get ahead and reduce red tape.

Will the government accept our proposal to help small businesses cut costs and invest more?

[Translation]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the past year, we have implemented various measures to support small businesses. As a result of the buy Canadian policy, many businesses are developing or multiplying their business opportunities. We are serious about supporting small businesses. Indeed, one solution alone cannot help an entire sector grow. That is often the response we get from our colleagues in the Conservative Party. The so-called one-size-fits-all solution does not work.

Oral Questions

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, U.S. tariffs are hurting our small and medium-sized businesses. SMEs account for 99.7% of businesses in Canada and support nearly eight million jobs. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, tariffs are leading to additional costs of \$187,000 a month per exporting business.

Why are the Liberals sending our money abroad, to the tune of billions of dollars, instead of supporting our SMEs and protecting the eight million Canadian jobs?

• (1150)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I imagine that my colleague was really busy yesterday, but he no doubt saw the press announcement by the Government of Ontario: more than \$8 billion in support for Canada's steel sector, Canada's automotive sector and the development of critical minerals. That is exactly what the government has done. We were there to support workers with more than \$25 billion and to help our industries pivot to new markets. We will always be there for our workers and our industries and to make Canada a strong nation.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, these measures are going to help big corporations. What I am saying is that the Liberals are turning their backs on our SMEs. Tariffs are having an impact: thirty-two per cent of Canadian businesses plan to scale back their operations, 24% are planning a hiring freeze and 23% intend to cancel their investments in Canada.

The Liberal government has collected over \$9.7 billion in countertariffs. Instead of spending our money on illegal immigration, for example, why not give that money back to the people who keep us going, to our SMEs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know that today is Friday, but the member seems confused.

My colleague is an experienced member, and he knows full well that we are there to support our SMEs through our regional economic development agencies. Our SMEs are the beating heart of Canada's economy. We were there to support them, to help them pivot to new markets and to support Canadian workers. Every day is a good day to fight for Canadians.

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[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, established in 1945 to support veteran employment, the right of first refusal gave the non-profit and largest employer of veterans, the Commissionaires, preferential access to federal security guard contracts.

Considering that a Veterans Affairs ministerial briefing recognized that ending the right of first refusal could negatively affect older veterans, many of whom could struggle to find alternate employment, can the veterans minister tell veterans and Canadians why the Liberal government did this?

Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday we answered the question about the specific contract, but one thing I want to say to my colleague is what the minister is doing for veterans. Veterans today are, on average, 34 years old, and they have several skills. They work with drones. They work in aerospace. They work with cybersecurity. Our job is to ensure that the transition is successful, because the one thing they have asked for is a meaningful career and for their skill set to be recognized in all sorts of fields.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary did not answer the question. The question was about why Veterans Affairs, the Liberal government, ended the right of first refusal to the Commissionaires. I just want the numbers, so I will ask a different question.

The Commissionaires employs over 4,200 veterans. Can the Liberal government tell Canadians how many Canadian veterans American-owned Allied Universal, a company with ties to ICE, the American deportation machine, employs? I just want the number of Canadian veterans that Allied employs.

Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as mentioned several times, the CRA allocated the contract based on an independent way of allocating contracts. It is about an independent allocation of the contract to a Canadian company based in Ontario, and among the people hired on that contract, several are veterans.

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THE ECONOMY

Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed what Canadians are feeling every day. The economy is weakening, inflation is on the rise and Liberal spending is driving up the debt. The Liberals' projected deficit is now \$38 billion higher than promised.

After years of broken promises, why are the Liberals forcing Canadians to pay the price for their reckless spending with an affordability crisis? Just this week, they voted against recognizing the affordability crisis. When will the Liberals finally admit that one exists?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know it is Friday, so let me give my Conservative colleagues a takeaway as they go to their ridings to help their constituents. They should probably talk about the fact that Canada is projected to have the second fastest-growing economy in the G7 in 2027. They probably should talk among themselves as to why they are voting against measures that will support Canadians with respect to affordability. Most of question period today was about affordability. The sad thing for the people watching at home is that they say they are asking questions and they are talking a good game, but when it is time to vote they are missing in action. Why will they not vote to support the government? I am sure that we—

• (1155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, Alberta's oil and gas industry is a critical component of our national economy. Despite all the press releases and announcements, the Liberal government still maintains the west coast tanker ban, Bill C-48. We know the tanker ban is not about protecting the environment, because it does not prevent the sailing of tankers through the waters supposedly protected by the ban.

Will the Prime Minister support Bill C-264, which is my private member's bill to repeal the west coast tanker ban, and get out of the way so our oil and gas—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the tanker ban, while enshrined in law under the Trudeau government, of course has existed on a voluntary basis since the 1980s under Mulroney, Campbell, Chrétien, Martin and Harper, and continues to be a cornerstone of protecting the north coast. We are seeing record production in oil and gas. We have a west coast pipeline because we have come to a place of agreement through memorandums of understanding with British Columbia and Alberta.

In the member's region of Calgary, which is also my region, jobs are up 62,000 this year.

David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, my constituents want action and not more words.

Strathcona Resources, a Canadian success story, is proposing the export of 250,000 barrels a day of crude oil from Prince Rupert and can do so within two years with oil shipped by rail. The Prime Minister says Canada has to diversify and grow its export markets. Here is a golden opportunity.

Will the Prime Minister stick to his word and repeal the west coast tanker ban so Canadian success stories like Strathcona can thrive?

Oral Questions

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with great respect to my colleague, 62,000 jobs this year sounds like an awful lot of action to me. That is also combined with record oil production and record diesel production. We are also seeing rents and housing prices go down in Calgary. We have done that by finding a balance and working together. That is also supporting renewable energy in Calgary, a centre of all energy production. I am happy to stand by the record and inform the colleague and his constituents about it.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we live in a time when global events have local repercussions. As families, businesses and workers in my riding navigate this new world, they are striving to build a better future. Earlier this week, the Minister of Finance announced that the next steps in our plan to build Canada stronger will be unveiled on November 5.

As we look forward to budget 2026, can the minister tell the House how we are building a stronger, more resilient economy?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I understand the member for Vaudreuil's passion when he speaks about this budget and the work that the government is doing. He is an outstanding representative for his region, and he understands full well that, through our last budget and the budget we will table on November 5, we will continue building Canada.

We are going to equip ourselves to be masters in our own house. Quebecers understand that. We are going to invest in our future. We are going to invest in affordability. We are going to invest in things that bring Canadian culture to life across the country.

I want to thank my colleague for his work. He is an asset to our caucus, and we will continue to work together.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Lianne Rood (Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians injured by the COVID-19 vaccines do not deserve to be dismissed or left waiting. These are people who followed the government's advice and mandates and are now struggling with lost income and living with serious permanent injuries and ongoing medical costs. Thousands across many communities have come to me over the years expressing concern over how the government has treated them and those they know and love. They say the Liberals are all talk and no results.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals finally fulfill the promise they made to Canadians who were injured by the vaccines they told them to take?

Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a very important question. We recognize that vaccines save lives, definitely, but we also recognize that there are people impacted negatively by vaccines. This is why we launched the vaccine injury program. We have taken that program internally to make sure it is administered properly. We will continue to work with members across the aisle to make sure people are supported through any vaccine injuries.

• (1200)

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, at September's Allison Inquiry, COVID vaccine-injured Canadians repeatedly described the vaccine injury support program as an unmitigated disaster. Of the \$56 million paid to the contractor, Oxaro—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The member can say his own name, yes.

The hon. member may continue from the top.

Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, at September's Allison Inquiry, COVID vaccine-injured Canadians repeatedly described the vaccine injury support program as an unmitigated disaster. Of the \$56 million paid to contractor Oxaro, \$36 million went to administration and only around \$20 million went to those who were injured. That is one-third. Following revelations of financial mismanagement, the government took over the program.

What is the government doing today to ensure that vaccine-injured Canadians receive the compensation they deserve?

Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government will always work to ensure that Canadians can make evidence-informed choices about their health. We heard frustrations with the previous administration of the program for vaccine-related injuries, which is why we took the program internally and launched the vaccine impact assistance program. We will continue to work very collaboratively to make sure the program works.

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, following the tainted blood scandal, Canada established compensation programs worth billions for those affected with HIV and hepatitis C. Today, Health Canada has recorded approximately 12,000 serious adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination, yet compensation remains limited. At the Allison Inquiry, we heard from Canadians facing devastating medical bills and lost incomes.

Why are vaccine-injured Canadians still struggling to receive compensation, and when will the government deliver meaningful financial support?

Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has taken the vaccine injury program internally from the previous administration, from the third party. We will continue to work hard to make sure the program works for vaccine-injured individuals. We are looking forward to working with members across the parties to make sure it works.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this week, the Prime Minister became the first Canadian prime minister to make a bilateral visit to Turkey, where he and President Erdoğan launched a new strategic partnership with energy as one of its central pillars. As Turkey works to diversify its energy supply, Canada is well placed to help.

Can the parliamentary secretary tell the House how this partnership will open new markets for Canadian energy and support good jobs here at home?

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada has world-leading expertise in LNG, civil, nuclear and emerging energy technologies, and partners around the world want what we have. This week in Turkey, the Prime Minister highlighted how Canada can support their energy diversification goals and said AtkinsRéalis now has good chances of supplying Canadian-designed CANDU reactors to power the Turkish economy. This means opportunities for Canadian suppliers and workers across the nuclear sector, including in that member's riding. We are opening new markets and we are building Canada strong.

* * *

JUSTICE

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Madam Speaker, two weeks ago, I asked whether the Liberals would appeal the B.C. Supreme Court ruling striking down the prohibition on possessing drugs for trafficking. They hide behind the Public Prosecution Service. The October 29 deadline is approaching, yet there is still no answer.

Families in Richmond Centre—Marpole are concerned and want to ask if the Attorney General will use his statutory authority to direct the PPSC to file an appeal and protect their community, yes or no?

Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us set the record straight. We have disagreed with the Cowichan ruling and we are appealing it. That member knows, as we have gotten up and said this a number of times. We are going to work with indigenous communities. We are going to talk to them. We are going to continue talking to the stakeholders, and we are going to continue to appeal this.

* * *

HOUSING

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the housing minister once had the ambition to end homelessness. The Prime Minister promised to build affordable housing at scale, and everyone knows building faster does not equal affordability. The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis said public housing generates almost \$3 in return on every dollar invested. Public housing is not charity, but productive infrastructure. It is good for the people and good for the economy.

Will the Prime Minister make good on his promise to build affordable housing at scale and commit to doubling non-market housing stock in the upcoming budget?

• (1205)

Caroline Desrochers (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the housing crisis has been decades in the making, and this government is taking decisive action. We are acting head-on to fight this crisis. In the first six months of this year, programs like MLI select have helped enable more than 141,000 units; the ACLP, 81,000 rental homes; and Build Canada Homes has 19,000 units under way. With the Canada rental protection fund, we are protecting 7,000 affordable rental units.

We are delivering real results for Canadians. This is why they elected us.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, we are witnessing the restructuring of Canadian democracy by stealth. Reducing the role of Parliament, Bill C-5, Bill C-15, Bill C-30, Bill C-31 and Bill C-39, all operate to create new, unprecedented powers for the Prime Minister and cabinet, and at the same time, allow the government to set aside a wide swath of existing laws as it sees fit.

Restructuring democracy in this way should be subject to full, transparent debate. Will we be given that opportunity?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, coming out of the last federal election, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians to build a stronger and a healthier economy, and that means, in good part, working with a budget and legislative changes that are going to enable the government in a very co-operative, federal, collaborative way, working with the many stakeholders, including indigenous people, provinces

Routine Proceedings

and everyone in a team Canada approach. That means through the legislation going through—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt.

I am sorry. The hon. parliamentary secretary may continue.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in a very collaborative fashion, we are working toward building that strong economy, and that means bringing in the legislation, and not only government legislation. We have also seen opposition legislation go through second reading, committee stage and third reading, and ultimately be approved. Working collaboratively is the theme. Building a stronger, healthier Canada is what it is all about.

[Translation]

Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I wish to raise an important point of order. The Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement stated, in response to a question from my colleague, the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, that interpreters do not fall under the responsibility of the Translation Bureau. He seemed to be implying that we do not know what we are talking about. However, that is simply not the case. Interpreters fall directly under the responsibility of the Translation Bureau. Given that he is the minister responsible for that agency, I assume this was merely a slip of the tongue. I cannot imagine that he is unaware of this fact, so I am giving him the opportunity to correct the record.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): That is debate. We will come back to this if there are grounds for doing so.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

PUBLIC WORKS AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and in accordance with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the French Republic on the Exchange and Mutual Protection of Classified Information”, done at Ottawa on June 10, 2026, and the treaty entitled “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the Mutual Protection and Exchange of Classified and Protected Information”, done at Ottawa on September 25, 2026.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports. The first is the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, respecting its participation in the parliamentary forum of the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development, New York, New York, United States of America, on July 22, 2025. The second is the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, respecting its participation in the parliamentary forum of the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development in New York, New York, United States of America, July 14, 2026. The third is the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, respecting its participation in the 152nd IPU Assembly and related meetings in Istanbul, Turkey, from April 15 to 19, 2026.

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● (1210)

PETITIONS**MIGRATORY BIRDS**

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am very honoured to present a petition from my constituents that focuses on the fact that marine protected areas, and particularly protected areas, for migratory birds are quite critical, and that while the critical wildlife habitat for migration stopovers and overwintering and other critical lifetime essential habitats for migratory birds exist along the areas within and along the Salish Sea, they are not connected. We have a major flyway for migratory birds that operates from Alaska all the way down to Patagonia, and these critically endangered species need more protection.

We have a number of migratory bird sanctuaries, as the petitioners point out, in Victoria harbour, in Shoal harbour and in the Esquimalt lagoon, but there is a significant gap. The petitioners are requesting that the government act with urgency to look at the possibility of creating a new Salish Sea migratory bird sanctuary to connect these areas and protect millions of migratory birds, as well as other key wildlife that use this habitat.

RIGHT TO DEFEND

Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present a petition today on behalf of residents of Regina and southern Saskatchewan who are concerned about rising incidents of home invasions and the risks they pose to the residents of those properties. They also point to incidents of homeowners being criminally charged after defending themselves and their families from criminals who had broken into their homes.

Signers of the petition are calling on Parliament to enact stand-on-guard legislation to guarantee Canadians the right to defend themselves, their families and their property in their own homes. They argue that such a law would make robbers, burglars and home invaders think twice before committing their crimes.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise on behalf of residents of Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford who are concerned about Canada's ongoing export of live horses for slaughter. The petitioners note that the health of animals regulations continue to permit the practice, leaving the horses vulnerable to unnecessary suffering and subjected to long journeys in conditions that raise serious animal welfare concerns.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to amend these regulations to ban the live export of horses for slaughter, bringing federal policy in line with the values and expectations of Canadians regarding animal welfare.

CUBA

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

The first petition I wish to table is petition e-7649, which has been signed by thousands of people across Canada who are deeply concerned by the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Cuba as a direct result of the United States' unilateral blockade, which is condemned by legal experts as a form of collective punishment.

The petition calls on the government to reaffirm Canada's historical opposition to the American embargo at the United Nations and support the annual resolution to end the embargo. Further, it calls on the government to deepen and defend economic and cultural exchanges between Canada and Cuba and to enforce the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act to protect Canadian corporations that do business in Cuba against American sanctions.

● (1215)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, lastly, I wish to table petition e-7522.

The petitioners speak specifically to the memorandum of understanding that was signed between the federal government and Premier Danielle Smith, which they feel delivers a wish list to the oil and gas lobby. The petitioners are concerned that the MOU was signed in violation of the government's duty to obtain free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, the Constitution Act, 1982, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, the signatories are concerned about the fast-tracking of another environmentally destructive oil pipeline that threatens the health and well-being of folks across Canada, speaking to the increasing climate emergencies that are occurring and climate-related hospitalizations.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to stop fast-tracking environmentally catastrophic fossil fuel projects, protect the health and well-being of all those impacted by climate change and invest in a worker-, community- and indigenous-led green energy transition that benefits everyone in Canada.

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition this afternoon from some of my constituents with respect to Canada Post and the decision by the Liberal government to axe long-treasured postal services, eliminating jobs, eliminating door-to-door delivery and lowering mail delivery.

The petitioners are calling upon the government to make the details public, because none of them are public. In particular, they highlight in their petition that the cuts are going to hurt seniors and disabled Canadians in particular, who represent 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.

The petitioners are calling upon the Liberal government 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.

LAWFUL ACCESS

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise to table three petitions.

The first petition is signed by 20,884 citizens and residents of Canada who raise numerous concerns about Bill C-22 and its broad requirement for providers to collect and retain metadata on all Canadians, even those not under suspicion or investigation, for up to a year, data that can reveal incredibly sensitive personal information.

The petitioners note that suspicionless, indiscriminate bulk metadata retention and interception capabilities raise serious concerns under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They note that the bill would grant the public safety minister broad authority to compel loosely defined electronic service providers to put in place interception or detection measures that could weaken encryption, which would create many cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

The petitioners call on the government to withdraw Bill C-22, an act respecting lawful access; remove all suspicionless bulk metadata retention requirements from any future lawful access legislation; and explicitly prohibit any future lawful access legislation from requiring the weakening or breaking of encryption.

• (1220)

BURRARD INLET

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the second petition was signed on paper by Vancouver East residents, and over 1,000 people so far have signed the online petition e-7709. They share their urgent concerns about the dredging of the Burrard Inlet by the Port of Vancouver, which began in September.

The petitioners note that the Burrard Inlet is an ecologically crucial and sensitive coastal ecosystem, and they raise concerns that

the dredging work will undo all the important restoration work that the Tsleil-Waututh Nation has been doing in the inlet, such as restoring salmon habitats and cleaning the waters enough to enable calm harvesting again and revive shore health.

Routine Proceedings

In light of Canada's commitment to upholding the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and responsibilities for habitat protection, the petitioners call on the government to urgently halt federal approvals, permits or authorizations for any dredging activities in the Burrard Inlet that pose significant environmental, cultural and cumulative risks; support the Tsleil-Waututh Nation's knowledge and responsibility to steward the inlet; and work collaboratively with the nation and other affected indigenous nations to prioritize habitat restoration, marine protection and long-term ecological health in the Burrard Inlet.

PEACEKEEPING

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the last petition I am pleased to table was signed by Vancouver East constituents taking part in and supporting the peace train. They say that peace is central to personal, national and environmental well-being, and note that peace is the only condition that allows non-violent co-existence for this and future generations.

The petitioners say a national peace centre would help balance the two requirements for durable security in Canada: a sound defence and a sophisticated peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping capacity. They lay out many reasons that a national peace centre would help Canada uphold its commitments to the basics of justice, equality, freedom and well-being for all.

They call on Parliament to establish and fund an independent, integrated Canadian centre for peace and justice as a fundamental part of Canada's increased commitment to defence and security.

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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 Acting Speaker (Chris d'Entremont): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT**

The House resumed from April 29 consideration of the motion that Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Weights and Measures Act, the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the Weights and Measures Regulations and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Regulations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to see you in the Speaker's chair. It is a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill S-3, an act to amend the Weights and Measures Act, the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the Weights and Measures Regulations and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Regulations.

Now, those here in the House today may not think this is the most exciting topic, but I could probably speak on this topic all day long. This topic affects every sector in Canada and is incredibly important. The laws governing how measured goods are bought and sold were enacted in 1970 and 1980 and have not been updated since. They do not reflect the current market environments in the digital business age. Moreover, the acts are not all aligned, so there are discrepancies and inconsistencies in their operational and enforcement-related provisions.

The proposed legislation would create a framework that is flexible, agile and more outcome-based. It would help reduce barriers to business, remove impediments to innovation, protect consumers and allow the government to deliver services effectively.

In terms of the sectors that are impacted by this legislation, there are many, including forest products businesses, oil and gas, and natural resources. I will try to provide some examples as I go along. We can think about how this affects people in their everyday life. When someone fill their tank with gas, there is a measurement there of how many litres they get. Those measurements are controlled. The meters are calibrated and verified. There are a lot of standards that have to be complied with to make sure people get the right amount that they pay for.

I have a lot of experience in this area over the years. I was a chemical engineer for 32 years, as many know, in different industries. Trucks that are taking products and services across the country have to go on weigh scales. I have actually constructed and implemented weigh scales, so I can tell members that there is a lot of technology that goes into that. It is incredibly important in commerce to have exactly the right knowledge of how much weight is in that truck or that rail car. These are practical examples of where these kinds of things are important.

I was also director of engineering at a Suncor refinery. As with many refineries, there are pipelines taking raw materials backwards and forwards. They are shipping products out. There are a lot of meters there to look at what volume has actually gone, so they know how much money has to change hands between those selling and those buying. All of these things are legislated. Measurement Canada has a whole army of people who are then responsible for making sure things are calibrated, inspected and audited. If things

are failing, there is some kind of investigation. There is a whole process behind all of this.

As members can appreciate, with the electricity standards we are talking about today and the government's new electricity strategy, there are going to be huge changes in the amount of electricity we are going to build. Members have heard about the Churchill project. Let us think about the number of devices that will need to be calibrated and audited, etc. It is a huge thing. We are doing all these nation-building projects, and every one of those is going to have things that fall under this act, which has not really been updated since the 1980s. Technology has moved on.

At the same time, we are going to want to do business with more and more other countries as we diversify our trade. Every country has developed its own methods for sampling and its own methods and laws to talk about how it measures things. How we do things is not necessarily going to be harmonized with how they do things. Today, there is no flexibility in complying with what is here.

One thing in the legislation that I think is really important is the ability for the minister to give somebody temporary permission or a temporary exemption, if needed, or to allow a different technology. All of these things are going to be very important as we see technology increasing over time. At the same time, there are going to be improvements in productivity and differences in the way countries do business.

● (1225)

To start off talking about some of these things, I think members should know a bit about what Measurement Canada does. Every year, it approves about 300 new prototype measuring devices and technologies. It also certifies about 1,529 standards of mass, volume, temperature, electricity and gas, as well as test equipment to certify measuring devices. It accredits, audits and oversees 230 authorized service providers and 700 registered technicians to inspect and certify about 95% of the measuring devices used in trade. In addition, it conducts about 10,000 inspections of measuring devices. It is also involved in auditing and investigating when there are failures and, when people do not comply with legislation, enforcing those rules with consequences. It is responsible for a lot of things.

The innovations that are currently being limited are many. I will give one example from my riding. I have a dairy farm in my riding, Forbesvue Farms, that is very well known. The owner owns Blue Water Milk Transport, which transports 19% of the milk used in Ontario. It is a substantial operation, but right now, under the requirements that exist today, it is only allowed to use these two-inch lines and a really manual sampling method that takes a long time. There is a development using a three-inch hose and meters to sample the milk, and it would like to implement that. It would save a huge amount of time and a huge amount of money. We all know we want to bring the cost of everything down, so it would be a great thing to do. Today, with the lack of flexibility in the regulations and the law, it cannot be done. The changes in Bill S-3 would allow the minister to grant permission to try this out and, if it works out, to actually be able to put it in place full-time, and also to remove the permissions to do it if it does not work out or if there is some level of concern. That is just one of many examples of why we need to have this.

In terms of the need for flexibility, one thing I saw very often when we were trying to ship to other countries or bring things in was a different level of specification. There is no way to really resolve that because countries have their laws and we have our laws. It takes a long time to change the law. We can think about how long it takes for a bill to come through the House, with first and second reading, committee, etc., and then over to the other place for consideration and, finally, royal assent. It can take 18 months to two years. It is not a flexible process.

With the rapid pace of technology, especially as we start to see artificial intelligence coming into play and we see changes and advances in digital technology, all of these things are going to cause us to need some flexibility, and not just flexibility but agility. We have to do it faster. We are talking about doing things at speeds never before seen, but in some cases, the laws and the regulations are tying our hands.

The electricity plan is going to involve a lot of different locations where we are going to be building new capability in electricity of different kinds. These regulations were put in place before green energy was a thing. We need to think about all of the different technologies that have come forward that have devices associated with them that are not covered in the existing legislation at all. We definitely need to update this to put it in line with our plans to electrify the grid and to provide different sources of green energy as we lead the world in that sector.

At the same time, we need to think about all the growth in oil, gas and LNG. All of these things are going to have more meters, more things to calibrate and more things to inspect, and we have a limited resource. With all of the things that Measurement Canada does already, we need to think about increasing that load hugely. How are we going to do that with the existing number of people?

• (1230)

The easier answer is that there are other organizations and companies across our country that do these types of activities as well, and currently, the law does not allow the government to get them to help out. That is one important thing to note. If we are going to ser-

vice all this extra growth, we have to be able to certify other services that can calibrate, audit, inspect, etc.

Private Members' Business

Another thing that needs to be looked at is the fact that right now it is all 100% inspection. That is sometimes warranted. For example, in the businesses I have been involved in, there are types of welding where 100% X-ray has to be done. It would be catastrophic if there was a failure. As one can imagine, anything could cause an explosion if there was a leak. These kinds of things demand 100% inspection, but not everything demands 100% inspection. As such, there is an opportunity for this government, under this framework, to look at a risk-based approach and do 100% inspection where it is needed, but to reduce inspection in other areas to free up resources to try to address the capacity issue that is being faced.

At the same time, we have to make sure we protect consumers. One thing about doing change more quickly is trying to make sure there are safeguards in place so that we do not do something that has an unintended and harmful consequence. There are measures in Bill S-3 that talk about the protection of consumers. Some of the protections are to align with the Criminal Code today regarding inspectors. Sometimes people who are not complying with the law want to prevent them from accessing their property or inspecting their device as needed, so there are measures in Bill S-3 that would allow people to enter properties, but not without a judicial warrant. There are some good safeguards there. If people suspect that there is a compliance issue, there are powers in the bill for the inspectors, but all of them are in line with what would be required by law.

There are some other updates in the bill that I thought were pretty interesting. In the existing legislation and regulations, inspections have to be done in person, and we cannot do anything else. There is no telecommunications capability allowed. How many of us FaceTime with people who are across the country, or try to inspect something while somebody is on the phone asking us to take a picture of it and send it to them or show them what it looks like? The bill would allow access by means of telecommunication, which I think opens up some efficiencies and cuts down on the travel back and forth.

There was one other thing that I thought was quite interesting. I actually read the bill. Some people may not find weights and measures super exciting. If someone has problems with insomnia, they may want to turn to Bill S-3 and read it very carefully. One of the other good things in here is trying to make sure we do not get ourselves in another situation where the law and regulations have not been updated since 1980. Think about that. That is 46 years ago. There is a provision in here that says that every 10 years, the minister has to look at how things are working out and table a report here in Parliament so we can keep an eye on whether this thing needs to be reviewed and updated again more quickly. That is an excellent measure as well.

Private Members' Business

At the end of the day, this is about the balance of power of the inspectors, the amount of inspection we are doing, the use of new technologies in the way that Measurement Canada conducts its work, and the flexibility that would allow a greater number of innovations to come forward. It would allow us to more rapidly accommodate trade differences. Those things are all important in this bill.

We must also look at aligning all of these regulations. There are a lot of government regulations and laws, as members may be aware. This is a Senate bill, and somebody from the Senate meticulously went through and collected all of this information on things that have been outstanding for years and put it together in one bill. I want to thank them for bringing this bill forward, because although not everyone is interested in the bill, the good that it would do for every sector across the country is quite impressive.

• (1235)

There are some amendments that are interesting.

The bill would provide a temporary permission for organizations to introduce emerging technologies to market without delay while awaiting approval. That is another good thing to build speed. The bill would also allow for sampling as a means to inspect devices, thereby increasing the efficiency in the oversight.

The bill would create exemptions from burdensome requirements for small and seasonal businesses that sell electricity and natural gas. As we can imagine, for the programs that have to be put in place, to have records for calibrations, inspections, audits and everything else is an onerous bureaucracy for a very small business. There are permissions to exempt people, as we do not have to inspect and audit people all the time, especially when they have shown good behaviour. I think that is a good measure.

One amendment would allow for preventive control plans to help prevent non-compliance. If businesses start to see that new technology has been implemented, and there are rules in place regarding that, but there is no compliance, and that non-compliance is chronic in that they are seeing a lot of examples, this bill would allow them to put together a preventive action plan so they could fix the problem.

Some of the sectors involved in this bill are the following: electricity and natural gas, and we have talked about those; retail; food; retail systems; wholesale petroleum; fishing; forestry; grain and field crops; mining; and construction. Let us think about the breadth of what this legislation will do when it is applied to all of those businesses and starts to free them up to introduce new technology, become more productive and become more competitive. That is what Canadians want. Certainly, that is what we want.

Some of the technologies that are described in the existing legislation are obsolete now, so we have an opportunity to do a little cleanup and get rid of all of the things that are mentioned that no longer exist or are used. I think that would be important for everybody.

In summary, Bill S-3 intends to take all of these different acts and align them with all of the things Measurement Canada does to give some power to allow the minister to make temporary exemp-

tions and introduce new innovative technologies. Plus they could make them permanent if the technology works out.

At the same time, there are protections in here for consumers. There are guardrails to make sure that the inspections that are done are aligned with the risk of not inspecting, and there is some flexibility in the bill.

In addition, we are going to make sure we review the situation every 10 years with a parliamentary report. That is going to be critical with respect to identifying when it is time to update it again so we do not get ourselves back in a situation where it is more than 40 years and we have not updated the regulations.

With that, I would be happy to take questions.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech. As noted, she is somebody who has a background in chemical engineering. I have always appreciated that about her, as well as her ability to get facts, figures and everything else.

She talked in her speech about the increases in oil, gas and mining that are going to happen here, and of all the sensors that are going to have to be part and parcel of that. All of those sensors, and she would know this, have an embedded carbon price, as does the increased production of oil and gas, in particular, to make sure we have a baseload in a reliable energy system in this country.

Since she has crossed the floor, and I am going to ask the member this question very clearly, has she managed to convince the rest of her new colleagues over there that this whole green shift economy is a bit of a myth and that we need to build a sustainable economy in Canada that depends on oil and gas?

• (1240)

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud that our government was the one that finally got rid of the carbon tax, which I was going on about for 10 years. I am super happy about that. I am really happy as well that the government is listening to my voice, having invited me into the tent. Certainly, I am speaking out on efficiency as an engineer, which is always my number one, and ways to reduce prices.

We have seen the government's ability to take the tax off fuel to help the affordability situation for Canadians, so I think its ears are open. We are changing as we go along, and we are learning. As we build our electricity grid and start to see all of the things that we are building, as well as the need, we are going to have to make decisions. That is why it is really good to have a provision in Bill S-3 that would allow it to not do a 100% inspection on everything, but to reduce it based on risk.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see you in the chair.

I appreciated my colleague's speech, but I am not entirely reassured. It seems like every bill in this Parliament either overrides existing laws or grants more powers to ministers. This bill is highly complex and will require careful study in committee. However, it is already clear that one of its objectives is to confer even more powers on the minister. We have some concerns on that front.

We also have concerns about Quebec's jurisdiction, particularly with respect to the development of natural resources and Hydro-Québec, a point of national pride. I think we will need to hear from its representatives in committee. I would like my colleague to commit to defending these areas of jurisdiction and protecting the environment. She told us she came from the oil industry. I respect that experience but, at the same time, her viewpoints may differ from mine.

I would like her to reassure me on this issue.

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that granting powers to ministers is inherently problematic, because proposals relating to things like changes, flexibility or exemptions come from the sectors themselves. They do not come from the minister. He consults with sector stakeholders. Flexibility can be introduced, exemptions can be implemented more quickly, and I believe that is the right choice.

[English]

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a civil engineer, not a chemical engineer, but over the last 20 years, we went through a revolution in scales on trucks. There are now on-board scales for trucks and loaders, as opposed to fixed scales, which we had before. This accomplished two things: one, productivity was raised because we were able to maximize the amount of gravel we can get into a truck; and two, our roads were protected from overloaded trucks.

I would like to know from our colleague how the bill would better productivity and protect our infrastructure.

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, as he mentioned, my colleague is also an engineer. In fact, we have so many engineers in the Liberal caucus that we could have our own engineering caucus. As we have said, we ourselves are already optimized, so we prefer to work on the others.

When it comes to the changes, he talked about protecting the roads. As changes happen, sometimes there are unintended consequences. That is the beauty of the minister having the ability to make a temporary exemption, to implement a change, and then, if there is a problem with it, to remove that exemption. I think that allows us to, in real time, be able to improve, become more competitive and, at the same time, walk it back if it looks problematic.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to be able to participate virtually and ask a question of my old friend from Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong.

Bill S-3, of course, came to us through the Senate. It was already passed there, and it was tabled for first reading seven months ago.

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Like her, I have read the bill. I read every bill. I think every MP has an obligation to read every piece of legislation before they vote on it.

In any case, my question on Bill S-3 deals with weights and measures. I do not have any problem with what is in the bill; but I am wondering if this was not a missed opportunity.

While we talk about food security and the price of food, we know that we are experiencing shrinkflation. It is not entirely a new thing. Do members remember the old jokes about the country store, where the thumb was on the scale just a bit when they measured out how much hamburger one was buying or how much cheese?

I am wondering, since the bill very specifically relates to a couple of pieces of legislation, as the member has mentioned, has there been any thought on the government side of the House to expanding the bill we got from the Senate to include inspection and verification of what the oligarchy of grocery chains does in telling us how much food we are buying and at what price?

• (1245)

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the member is raising an excellent point. The reality is that, in all of the grocery stores, they are using scales. We order our deli meat and say we want 100 grams. They have the scale that is going to promote that. Those things are calibrated. I do not know if any of us have ever stood on the scales to weigh ourselves and thought that we lost 10 pounds, and then we find out that the scale was not really calibrated. When we recalibrate it, nothing has changed.

There are measures in place to address the grocery industry, as it is one of the ones that are covered under the regulations and the legislation.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a statute mile, a geographical mile, the U.S. survey mile, an admiralty mile, a nautical mile, a data mile, and tactical mile. The list goes on. As a former navigator, I understand the importance of efficiency, standardizing and updating measurements. I thank the member opposite for her impassioned speech. I have weighed her comments, pardon the pun, and measured them closely.

My question though is, after seeing so many scandals, wasted money and inefficiencies with other Liberal bills, what protections are in this bill to ensure that Canadians do not see increased prices or increased costs and to prevent money being wasted?

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, first of all, this was drafted in the Senate. We should take some confidence from that because they meticulously looked through what has been hanging around for years that needed to be put into the bill.

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In terms of protections to make sure prices are not going to go up for consumers, I think, despite the costs they are experiencing today, all those industries that already have measurement have those costs built in. New businesses coming forward will incorporate the same kinds of costs. It would not be a reason to increase prices for consumers.

Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, small businesses in rural communities, such as the one where I live in Haldimand—Norfolk, are already facing rising operating costs. The new requirements in Bill S-3 could potentially add red tape and additional costs on those businesses. What is the government putting in place to ensure that this does not happen?

Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, this update to the regulations and the law allows exemptions for small businesses, seasonal businesses and people who would be overburdened with that kind of bureaucracy, while at the same time maintaining the requirements for large suppliers of electricity and gas, etc. I think the bill strikes the right balance, and I hope the members opposite will support it.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today generally in support of Bill S-3, legislation that modernizes Canada's measurement laws through amendments to the Weights and Measures Act and the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, as well as the weights and measures regulations and the electricity and gas inspection regulations.

When legislation like this comes before Parliament, it is quite appreciated. Legislation like this will help modernize the Canadian economy. I will note, however, based on what I have heard in Debates so far, it was actually the government representative in the Senate who tabled the legislation. In fact, the Liberal government has a tradition of taking bills like this, bills that are highly technical in nature, like some of the red tape reduction acts in the previous Parliament, to do some of the foundational work that governments are actually responsible for. I am not criticizing that approach, but it is the tradition of the Liberal government to do that.

Why is this bill, which at first glance a Canadian would see through a very narrow and highly technical lens, actually important? If I were to talk to my constituents about this bill, I would outline the little metal placard at every gas station in Canada that allows them to understand that, when they fill up their truck in Mission and expect to pay for 50 litres of gasoline, they are actually getting 50 litres. When a family in Abbotsford receives their monthly electricity or natural gas bill, they expect the metre to accurately measure what they have, in fact, consumed. When someone purchases a kilogram of apples or, as the member previously mentioned, deli meats at the grocery store, they trust that the scale is, in fact, giving an accurate reading.

• (1250)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the member, but I believe that the hon. member for Repentigny is rising on a point of order.

No, he is not. It can be confusing to see members rise with their earpiece in hand. It always makes me think there is a problem with interpretation.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford may continue his speech.

[English]

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, these transactions seem routine, but they are built upon a foundation of public confidence that when we do business, buy fuel or transport goods, or when oil is shipped through my riding, for example, the systems underpinning our economy are accurate, fair and trustworthy.

The purpose of Bill S-3, therefore, is not simply to protect those standards. It is also to modernize them and how the government is enforcing them. I think the enforcement part really deserves a lot of attention during the upcoming debate. In my view, from my preliminary reading of the legislation, the most significant parts of the bill are found in sections 17 and 19, because they recognize a reality that many Canadians have been pointing out for years: government institutions cannot continue operating with 20th-century tools in a 21st-century economy.

Section 17 is perhaps the clearest example of this modernization effort. Today, businesses increasingly operate through digital platforms. Records are stored electronically, transactions move through complex telecommunication systems, and data is generated and transferred in real time, yet many of the regulatory frameworks that operate under our current laws were designed in an era when inspectors relied on paper records and on-site reviews. Section 17 would modernize our way of doing business, the way of regulating the flow of goods in Canada, and would acknowledge that the world has changed.

It would equip inspectors with the ability to access electronic records, review information contained within computer systems, reproduce digital documents and make use of telecommunication technologies in the conduct of their responsibilities. In practical terms, it would mean that regulators could follow information where it actually exists in today's economy, rather than simply relying exclusively on paper records and physical inspections, which is, frankly, way too common in our economy. It would give the power to inspectors to access and review information in a digital environment where modern commerce increasingly occurs.

This may sound like just a technical change, but it reflects an important principle: Effective oversight requires modern tools. I believe that Canadians understand that principle even more instinctively than government does today. In fact, one of the most consistent criticisms I hear, living in and representing a community on the border with the United States, at the border crossing in my riding, is that our institutions are not modernizing quickly enough. No agency illustrates this concern more clearly than Canada Border Services Agency. Canadians routinely hear concerns about long processing times, increasing trade volumes, evolving criminal networks and the growing sophistication of cross-border threats.

Where I live, we hear many concerns about the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at our points of entry. There are concerns with its capacity to examine things such as spent fowl, chicken from birds that were used for hatching eggs, coming into Canada, and whether it is compliant with existing trade frameworks and regulations.

Canadians are concerned that we are not doing a good enough job monitoring the flow of goods in an effective way that upholds our trade agreements and Canadian businesses. This concern is not merely whether government has enough personnel or capacity. It is whether government has applied the right tools to ensure equity, equal terms, in the way we do business.

Canadians expect the agencies responsible for protecting our borders to operate in the digital world. They expect those agencies to use modern technology, modern data analysis and modern inspection techniques. They expect government to identify risks efficiently rather than relying on the outdated processes that, I believe, Bill S-3 is, in good faith, trying to amend.

• (1255)

I should be clear that Bill S-3 would not amend legislation governing CBSA. However, section 17 and other parts of the bill reflect exactly the kind of modernization mindset that Canadians increasingly want to see throughout government. When Parliament recognizes that inspection agencies need access to electronic information, digital records, measuring equipment or telecommunications in order to do their job effectively, it is acknowledging a broader truth that modernization is no longer optional.

This does touch close to home for my constituents. The transfer station for the Trans Mountain pipeline is on Sumas Mountain, just a few kilometres from where I grew up. At that transfer station, 37% of all oil shipped through the Trans Mountain pipeline goes under Highway 1 and across Sumas Prairie to northern Washington state, where it is processed and refined. The Enbridge natural gas pipeline was approved by the Liberal government. It has a transfer station at the Huntingdon border crossing area as well. My constituents expect government to make sure that they have the most modern and efficient ways of regulating the flow of those goods, not only to protect but also to monitor and to know what we are actually doing in our economy.

Government oversight has to evolve alongside the economy it regulates. That same modernization philosophy, I will note, can be seen in section 19. Historically, regulators often operated in a reactive manner. A violation occurred, and the government would respond. Section 19 would move us toward a preventative model by

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giving regulators tools to require corrective and preventative measures before non-compliance becomes entrenched or there is an accident with the Trans Mountain pipeline, just as an example. In other words, the focus would shift from reacting to violations and toward preventing violations. That may seem like a subtle distinction, but would represent a significant change in our regulatory approach here in Canada.

I will note that Canadians businesses consistently want this regulatory change, so whether we are discussing consumer protection, public safety, transportation or border security, my constituents want to know that the government has the ability to identify risks and to respond proactively. In the same region where the Trans Mountain pipeline crosses Sumas Prairie, there are pumps that regulate water flow. It was those same pumps and our diking system that failed in 2021 and exposed the Enbridge pipeline and the Trans Mountain pipeline to risk. Those pump stations were not up to date and were not working effectively. This legislation might improve our overall effectiveness at doing those tasks.

Going back to discussion about the border, when Canadians express frustration about border management, they are frequently expressing frustration with a system they perceive as reactive rather than proactive. They want government to anticipate emerging threats, whether it is food safety or illegal drugs going north and south on the border. They want systems that identify risk before they reach our communities. They want agencies that leverage technology and intelligence to stay ahead of evolving challenges. The preventative approach, the risk-based approach, reflected in section 19, mirrors those broader expectations and recognizes that effective regulation is not simply about enforcement after the fact; it is about building systems that reduce harm.

Whether Canadians are filling up their vehicles, reviewing their utility bills, purchasing goods at a store or expecting government agencies to protect our borders, they want to know that systems are serving a purpose, that the members of the House are taking care of business in the most real way possible to make sure that people can move goods and do so effectively.

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● (1300)

In conclusion, as the bill is scrutinized in Parliament, I hope my fellow legislators will review with a fine-tooth comb the sections that would expand power to, as the bill refers to, the president, who is in fact the industry minister, with new inspection powers, especially with respect to the data and technology components that would be added to the legislation. It is important to ensure that there would in fact be proper checks and balances put upon the use of those powers, and that the use of those powers would be extremely limited to the flow of goods in question that are subject to these existing laws and regulations under the Weights and Measures Act and other applicable bills.

For these reasons, I do believe, with a tiny bit of apprehension about ministerial power, that Bill S-3 is a step in the right direction. I look forward to a wholesome debate, a technical debate, that would improve the way we conduct commerce in Canada.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I truly appreciate many of the comments the member has put on the record, recognizing just how important weights and measurements are in everyday society, through legislation and regulation. Different levels of government, either directly or indirectly, get engaged, from consumers purchasing gas to truckers crossing the border with different types of product. It is actually a very important area for dialogue and discussion. I am grateful that the Senate has done a great deal of homework to try to make it all-inclusive.

The House will sit for about 34 days this fall, and we have a heavy legislative agenda. This is an important piece of legislation. Debate is, I think, now on day two. Part of having the debate is also ensuring that a healthy discussion takes place at committee.

I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts in regard to trying to advance the legislation so it does get royal assent eventually.

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I do agree. I want the bill passed. I believe that, at the committee stage, it would be useful for Parliament to clarify the powers of the president as outlined in clause 17 and clause 19, the purview of those powers, to make sure there is clarity for the Canadian economy in the conduct of the proposed new preventative measures and the risk-based approach applied in Bill S-3.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, in Bill S-3, there is a requirement to introduce a 10-year review, a legislative review, to ensure that we do not come into the position where Bill S-3 is needed again in the future. As the bill outlines, it has been about 40 years.

I cannot help but be a little bit cynical, though, because I did an Order Paper question on the fact that the government has 13 acts that already have overdue mandated legislative reviews. In particular, I have raised the review for the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act. It was due on October 6, 2022. The Minister of Public Safety promised me in the House that the government is going to introduce that legislative review this fall, this year. He specifically said that. My suspicion is that he is not going to deliver on that promise.

What does my hon. colleague think is the value of these mandated reviews if the Liberal government is going to ignore them anyway?

● (1305)

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the legislation that comes to my mind is the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The government has missed many deadlines to review legislation that actually overlaps with the bill before us here today.

A responsible Parliament and a responsible House leader will not negate the promises made to Canadians about the proper conduct of legislation. We have ample resources in the House to conduct such reviews, including the capacity to create subcommittees for every standing committee. The government has so far not upheld that legislative responsibility and the promises it made to Canadians on many of the 13 laws the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound mentioned. That is something we can take away from the debate, about the actual applicability of a 10-year review if the government is not going to follow it.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, I commend the member on his speech. It was excellent.

We have some concerns that we are looking forward to discussing further at the committee stage. I wonder if he had an opportunity to review some of the discussions that happened on this bill in the Senate, where it originated, and what out of that he might be bringing forward should he or our colleagues have the opportunity to discuss this bill later in the House committee process.

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I have yet to review the Hansard from the Senate on Bill S-3. I will acknowledge that. However, from my preliminary reading of this legislation, it is very clear that a couple of key portions of it can be properly clarified in Parliament for the well-being of Canada, especially as the government pursues a new pipeline along the existing route of the Trans Mountain pipeline. That will touch upon other pieces of the legislation, like the Fisheries Act, for example, which requires legislative reviews in Parliament that I do not necessarily believe have all taken place according to their scheduled reviews.

Let this bill be a wake-up call for Parliament that sometimes we need to get down to the messy but important business of making sure that our country functions in a way that is responsible for all Canadians, and that sometimes we need to leave politics completely outside of it but do our very best to make sure the economy is humming and our weights and measures are all aligned so people can make money and live a better life.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I must say that I am somewhat inspired by the last 50 words or so from the member opposite. I, too, want to make sure we have an economy that is humming and that works for all Canadians. We share that, and I genuinely believe it.

Having said that, does the member already have some amendments in mind he has been working on that he would like to share with the House? If he does not, I would encourage him to share them with the ministry even before the bill ultimately goes to committee. I find that it is very helpful when a member does that.

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I have already outlined areas in sections 17 and 19 and in the mandatory review clause during questions and comments, and I believe they need further scrutiny. I have yet to write such amendments, but I would be pleased to provide commentary in writing to the relevant minister to ensure that more oil flows through Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford to support the Canadian economy in the best way possible.

• (1310)

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, this bill is obviously rather complex. It is very technical, I would say. We have some concerns. I heard my colleague talk about the new powers the minister might assume, and I would like him to elaborate on that. We are seeing a pattern where the government is giving ministers a lot of power. Is this something that concerns him, and does he have any solutions?

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, that is a good question. For the powers mentioned in Bill S-3, I want to know if the minister can access the electronic data or even other data used by the telecommunications sector. I want to ensure that this power is properly circumscribed to protect the private and commercial interests of the company in question.

[English]

Jonathan Rowe (The Eastern Peninsulas, CPC): Madam Speaker, when I am in my riding, I hear a lot of small business owners say that they cannot succeed or get ahead because there is so much red tape and there are so many rules. They cannot even sell a loaf of bread without all of these regulations.

I am curious if the hon. member would like to speak to how we need to strike a balance among reducing red tape, having a deregulated economy and, at the same time, protecting consumers and Canadians.

Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, more broadly on reducing red tape, earlier today during question period, I posed a very serious question to the government on just that in the context of Small Business Week. With my remaining time, I would encourage everyone in this chamber to support a local small business and to buy Canadian this week. It is very important because many businesses are struggling.

I suggested, and I think this is very applicable to Newfoundland and Labrador, that we increase the GST remittance threshold from \$30,000 to \$60,000 to help the mom working a side hustle on weekends, as the former minister of small business did when she was a banker and was baking cakes. Then right off the bat when they get started, they would not be subject to registration with the CRA, which does the dirty work of collecting taxes. We would allow those businesses to flourish without red tape in the first place. This would be great for people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this House on behalf of my neighbours, friends and family in Oshawa. Today I rise to speak to Bill S-3, which proposes changes to Canada's laws governing weights and measures and the inspection of electricity and natural gas meters.

When I look at legislation like this, I cannot help but think about the people and businesses in my community that will be affected by

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it. I think about the small business owner who is trying to keep the doors open, the manufacturer working to remain competitive and the family already stretching every dollar to make ends meet.

This reminds me of a story my sister told me last night. Apparently, there are some videos and reels going around showing folks in grocery stores with prepackaged goods, maybe a bag of peanuts or meat. They read the weight on it, and then take it to a scale and weigh it, and it is a different weight. This brought me to thinking about why this bill is so important. I understand that, and Canadians are counting on it, for fairness especially.

Let us be honest. Most Canadians are never going to read the Weights and Measures Act, and frankly, they should not have to, because they expect the rules governing our economy to be fair, reliable and sensible. It is our responsibility to make sure they are. Canadians expect businesses to be held to consistent standards, consumers to be protected and government regulations to serve a purpose rather than create unnecessary obstacles. We have seen that far too often in our economy. That is the standard against which I believe Bill S-3 should be measured.

Our economy has undergone an extraordinary transformation. Technologies that would have been difficult to imagine 40 years ago are now essential to how Canadian businesses operate. From automated manufacturing processes to digital measuring equipment and increasingly sophisticated energy systems, the way we produce, purchase and consume goods has changed dramatically. However, our regulatory framework has not kept pace. In fact, I believe I was a very small child the last time the act was updated.

Bill S-3 seeks to address this by updating how measures and devices are approved and inspected, allowing more flexible methods of verification and removing certain outdated regulatory requirements. There is definite merit to these objectives. As Conservatives, of course, we believe that government should create the conditions for businesses to succeed, not stand in their way. Regulations should protect Canadians while also allowing businesses to innovate, invest and create good-paying jobs. I feel that principle is especially important in my community of Oshawa.

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I have said many times in this House that Oshawa is a city built on hard work. I believe some of the most hard-working people in the country reside and live in my neighbourhood in Oshawa. For generations, our automotive workers and manufacturers have helped drive the whole Canadian economy. Our community knows what it means to compete, adapt and innovate in an industry that is constantly changing. Our manufacturing sector relies on precision, efficiency and the ability to adopt new technologies. Whether it is with regard to measuring materials, monitoring energy consumption or ensuring consistent production standards, accuracy is fundamental to doing business. We know this.

Canadian manufacturers are also competing in an increasingly difficult economic environment. They face rising operating costs, international competition and uncertainty about the future of their industries. The last thing they need is a regulatory system that makes it harder or more expensive to invest in new technologies.

• (1315)

This is why I believe there is value in updating outdated rules and making regulatory processes more efficient. If a business can demonstrate that its equipment meets appropriate standards, it should not face unnecessary delays simply because the law has failed to keep up with technological advancements. At the same time, modernization must deliver real improvements. It cannot simply mean replacing one set of complicated government requirements with another. We have seen too many examples of Canadian businesses being forced to spend more time navigating government paperwork and less time doing what they do best.

For a large corporation, additional administrative requirements may be an inconvenience, but for a small business owner, they can mean a whole lot more, such as additional expenses that could hurt them, lost productivity and fewer resources available to hire workers or to grow their business. In Oshawa, our local businesses are an essential part of our community. They employ our neighbours, support local families and contribute to the local economy. Whether it is a family-owned grocery store, an independent retailer or a small manufacturing operation, these businesses need clear and predictable rules. They should not have to hire additional consultants or spend countless hours navigating complicated regulatory processes simply to remain compliant.

This is why I believe one of the most important questions surrounding Bill S-3 is whether it would actually reduce the burden on Canadian businesses. I think in many cases it could. Would the changes make inspections more efficient? Would businesses have greater certainty when adopting new technologies? Would the government ensure that any new requirements were practical and affordable for all business owners across the country? These are questions that deserve clear answers, and I think some of them will be demonstrated and dug into even deeper as this bill gets into our committee.

Another issue that deserves attention is the expansion of regulatory authority proposed in the legislation. Bill S-3 would provide the Minister of Industry and federal inspectors with additional powers, including greater flexibility over the approval and inspection of measuring devices. Some of these changes may be necessary to modernize the system, but Parliament has a responsibility to exam-

ine how the powers are exercised. I am always hesitant when I hear of a bill placing more power in one minister's hands, but I certainly understand the responsibility we have to make sure that the powers are exercised appropriately. Greater flexibility for government officials must be accompanied by appropriate safeguards and transparencies. We must ensure that businesses understand the rules they are expected to follow, that decisions are made consistently and that there are meaningful opportunities to challenge decisions when disagreements arise.

This brings me to another important consideration, which is the ability of Canadian businesses to seek fair and timely resolution when disputes occur. If a business disagrees with a regulatory decision, it should have access to a process that is understandable, impartial and reasonably efficient. For small businesses, a prolonged dispute with a federal regulator could create significant uncertainty and expense, and I do not think any of us in the House want that for any of our small businesses. The goal should never be to make it more difficult for them to defend their interests and have their concerns heard, so I felt it was important to bring that up.

We must also consider what these changes could mean for Canadian consumers. After 11 years of Liberal government, families across the country are struggling with rising costs of everyday necessities. Consumers are struggling. People are working so hard to try to make ends meet. In Oshawa, I hear from parents who are watching their grocery bills climb and seniors who cannot even keep up with their utility payments. They are afraid they are not going to be able to keep the heat on this winter.

• (1320)

There are workers who are finding it increasingly difficult to make their paycheques stretch until the end of the month. These Canadians are already paying more than they should have to for life's essentials. They deserve to have the confidence that the systems used to calculate what they owe are accurate and dependable. Whether it is the scale at the grocery store, as I mentioned before, the meter measuring household energy consumption or the equipment used to calculate the price of fuel, consumers should be protected by reliable standards.

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Bill S-3 proposes allowing certain measuring devices to be inspected through sampling methods rather than requiring every individual device to be examined. This may improve efficiency, but it is important that these methods maintain the accuracy and, of course, the reliability that Canadians expect. The government must be able to demonstrate that greater flexibility will not weaken consumer protections, because when families are already struggling with affordability, even small inaccuracies or additional costs add up and can make a huge difference.

While Bill S-3 is intended to modernize the regulatory framework, Canadians deserve to understand the financial implications of implementing it. Would businesses face new compliance expenses? Would there be additional administrative costs for government? What steps would be taken to prevent those expenses from being passed along to consumers? All these questions are particularly important for small businesses that are already operating under significant financial pressure.

Modernization should make government more effective and less burdensome, not create another layer of bureaucracy that Canadian taxpayers and businesses are expected to finance. Bill S-3 includes provisions requiring periodic parliamentary reviews of the amended legislation, which is a positive step as long as those reviews actually take place, because our laws should continue to evolve as technologies and industries change. However, meaningful accountability also requires transparency through the implementation process. Canadians should be able to understand how regulatory decisions are made, how businesses are affected and whether the changes are delivering the efficiencies that have been promised.

At the end of the day, the success of this legislation should not be judged by how many regulations are rewritten or how many new authorities are created. It should be judged by whether consumers are better protected, whether businesses face fewer unnecessary obstacles and whether Canada's economy is better positioned to compete on the world stage. Our responsibility, as parliamentarians, is to ensure that the legislation delivers meaningful improvements for Canadians and businesses that would be affected by it. Canadians do not need more government for the sake of government. I think they need a government that works better, costs less and delivers results.

• (1325)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I pointed out earlier the issue of small businesses. The member brought it up and a previous member brought it up. There is no doubt that when we think of small businesses as the backbone of the Canadian economy, even legislation of this nature can have a very positive outcome because, ultimately, it would provide more uniformity and modernization. Both of those things are essential in advancing small businesses, especially nowadays. We see a lot take place over the Internet through sales and so forth, but there is also the administration of going through different facilities, like manufacturing facilities, processing and so forth.

Would the member not agree that this form of modernization would, in fact, directly benefit small businesses alongside consumers, but—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Oshawa.

Rhonda Kirkland: Madam Speaker, that is my hope. My hope is that it would, in fact, benefit small businesses and consumers. However, that does not negate the questions that I had in my speech, and that it would not also negatively impact them with unintended consequences. I think that it is incumbent upon the committee members, when it comes before them, to take a look at each and every piece to make sure we find the balance necessary so that businesses can get a move on.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member the same question that I asked our Liberal colleagues earlier.

We know that this law needs reviewing. I think that we need to conduct an in-depth study in committee, as my colleague just mentioned. We need to review it carefully.

However, we have some concerns. This is yet another bill that gives more power to ministers. Since the 2025 election, the Liberals have been either bypassing laws or giving more discretionary powers to ministers, who are not all renowned scientists. That is unfortunate. I hope they will have good advisers. We are very concerned about this, and I would like to hear the member's thoughts. Does she think that Quebec's jurisdiction will be respected in the negotiations? Hydro-Québec is Quebec's pride and joy. We want to keep it.

[English]

Rhonda Kirkland: Madam Speaker, I believe we must be very careful whenever legislation expands the powers of a minister. While greater flexibility may help modernize an updated regulatory system, the powers must come with clear safeguards, transparency and accountability. Parliament should not simply hand over additional authority without understanding how it would be exercised, how they would be accountable and that we could review it again in the appropriate time when we are supposed to. I would expect the industry committee to examine very carefully when it sees this bill that the powers come with great accountability.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

● (1330)

*[English]***NATIONAL STRATEGY ON FLOOD AND DROUGHT
FORECASTING ACT**

The House resumed from October 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-241, An Act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting, be read the third time and passed.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in support of one of my colleagues on what I believe is a bold initiative that could actually make a difference. I can tell the House that, coming from the Prairies, I understand and can appreciate what the member is talking about and just how important it is that we think of water management in general.

We can talk about things like droughts and floods. Winnipeg has been the victim of many floods over the years. From my time in the Manitoba legislature, I can tell members that whenever there are floods in Manitoba, a lot of praise goes to Duff's ditch. Duff Roblin was a Progressive Conservative premier of Manitoba. He had the vision and saw the merit in protecting the city of Winnipeg by building a ditch, going from the south of Winnipeg all the way east and into the north, so that the mighty Red River would have a diversion that would ultimately take water back into the Red River. It has saved, just in economic terms, billions upon billions of dollars, because of that forethought. At the time, I am sure, it was a difficult decision to have made.

My colleague's resolution to have a flood and drought strategy, and the role that the federal government could play, is, I think, a responsible piece of legislation. I understand there is a great deal of support for the private members' bill, and I hope to see it go through the system.

It reminds me of the freshwater strategy that is currently in place and how important that strategy is. They are out consulting today with stakeholders, understanding the impact, and not only to our environment. It is very important. That is why we look to indigenous communities and the many other stakeholders, including provincial and territorial stakeholders, all the leaders within the community, as much as possible to solicit and seek advice where we can, and hopefully to get direct input, as they know about the strategy that is taking place.

Our fresh water is one of our commodities that are undervalued. We are very grateful. We are one of the leading nations in the world in the amount of fresh water that we have. We should never take advantage of that. That is why it is important to see that strategy not only be put in place but ultimately come up with some tangible ways to protect our fresh water.

Thinking of floods and droughts, again, I will bring this back to my home province. A few years ago I was on a cattle farm, and the farmer was telling me how a drought had impacted his herd and the farm. That farmer went to the government to try to get additional support. That was part of the reason I went to visit that particular

cattle farmer, to get a better appreciation of some of the costs of droughts.

When we see floods, we see the vast amount of water covering a lot of land and causing a lot of problems and damage. That is just physical damage. It does not show the consequences of a drought in a community. Often, we will see people come together in very real ways, whether to toss sandbags, build dikes or just move earth to prevent water from going into areas that could cause even more damage to personal properties, and so much more. Communities will often come together.

● (1335)

When it comes to droughts, it is not quite as visible, but the impact is significant. I make reference to the cattle farmer. I can talk about different commodities, whether it is the wheat farmer, the canola farmer or even restrictions for people living in cities when using water for personal use. We see these types of actions taking place more and more frequently.

On advancing through legislation the need for the national government to play a larger role, I do not see who would oppose it. Why would someone oppose working and supporting the science and the level of expertise across the nation looking for better practices? We are not saying that it is the national government that has to do it all. In fact, we cannot underestimate the critical, frontline leadership role that our provinces, territories, municipal communities and indigenous communities play. However, I would suggest that from a national perspective, there is something we can do that would make a difference. That is why when I look across the way, I am very much interested in hearing other thoughts in regard to the whole issue of collaboration.

I talk a great deal about collaboration, because I genuinely believe that we can achieve so much more when governments work together in collaboration. We can achieve so much more when they do not worry about turf protection but put people first instead, and this is what I see within what the member is putting forward today in her private member's bill. I would like to think that individuals looking to the future and the need for drought and flood proofing realizing that doing this study and looking at ways in which the federal government can complement that is a very positive thing.

Just before the last election, Winnipeg got the Canada Water Agency. The federal government has recognized how valuable it is for us to spend more attention on water management in general. Take a look at these vast, massive catchment areas and the flow of water. Those are all interprovincial. In the Red River case, it is international. It all has an impact.

Private Members' Business

I believe having a Canada Water Agency makes a big difference. It provides us the opportunity once again to make sure our waterways and supplies are that much more protected, while at the same time recognizing things such as invasive species and their impacts. For example, there are algae blooms that make water unsafe. There are all sorts of things that affect water conditions. I think of the zebra mussels control mechanisms that were put into Manitoba. There are parks that are affected. There are so many aspects to this, and that is why it is good to have things like the fresh water strategy. That is why it is good for the House to be debating how we can contribute collectively to flood proofing and looking at ways to minimize the impact of droughts.

• (1340)

Therefore, it is a pleasure for me to rise and speak in favour of Bill C-241. I hope to ultimately see more discussion and the ultimate passage of my friend's legislation.

I appreciate being given the opportunity to say a few words.

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I spoke on Bill C-241 at second reading in December 2025, and was largely positive about it. It was after yet another flood in my riding. I had received fresh promises from the Government of Canada that it was going to support British Columbia with its flood mitigation assessment and prevention measures to protect the most vital agricultural land in British Columbia, the national supply chains of the Trans Mountain pipeline, the Abbotsford International Airport and an international border crossing in an area that is so significant to Canada's national interest.

I think it is very important that we look at some of the amendments the government has passed with respect to this bill regarding the contents.

In section 3(d), I will note that the following amendment came forward, “measures that the Government of Canada may take in response to the assessments referred to in paragraphs (a) to (c)”.

Paragraph (a) talks about “an assessment of the need for, and the benefits of, national coordination, new investment and the application of novel technologies in forecasting floods and droughts”.

Paragraph (b) says there is “an assessment of the need for modelling that would support flood and drought forecasting”.

Paragraph (c) says the following:

an assessment of opportunities to develop national flood and drought forecasting across Canada in order to help meet the information needs of the provinces, municipalities, industry, including the insurance industry, and Indigenous communities in respect of short- and long-term flood and drought forecasting, including current and future flood-plain delineation;

The bill outlines the following:

The Minister, in collaboration with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, must develop a national strategy....

What that change does is essentially give the government an out. In the earlier version of this legislation, the Government of Canada would have been compelled to, in other words must do, something in the legislation. The government weakened what it said it was going to do through the committee and amendment stages.

Why does this matter to me and to Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford? First off, none of the powers outlined in this bill do not already exist. Every day during Routine Proceedings, a minister of the Crown has the opportunity to provide a statement or a motion. Those periods of time that are enshrined in our democratic traditions are for ministers to show leadership to Canada for exactly these reasons. Nothing is stopping the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Minister of Industry, the Minister of Emergency Management and the Minister of the Environment from working together today. Nothing is stopping them from doing everything in this bill already.

I appreciate the sentiment, as I mentioned in my remarks at second reading in December 2025, that the government was paying attention to these important matters. In good faith I said those words, but forgive me if I am pessimistic about the amendments passed by the government and where we stand in my riding today. I have fought tooth and nail in this House for it to recognize the national interest of the Fraser Valley and other regions impacted by natural disasters never seen in the history of Canada. We were not prepared. There was no coordination. We had to fly in military equipment from Quebec. Infantry officers and their platoons from Alberta had to go through the United States to get into Canada because all of our roads were washed out.

No one in this House is doubting the need for science and forecasting, but what I am doubting now is the government's real desire to listen to science. How could it not compel or require the minister to act on sound science? Why weaken this bill when we have seen so much damage that has cost so much?

• (1345)

Earlier in the debate during Government Orders, it was mentioned that many pieces of legislation require a minister to table a report or review legislation. Many of those go unheard. We do not enforce the rules we put upon ourselves in the chamber.

My plea today is for the government to focus on the areas, like around Penticton, that were hit by forest fires in the Okanagan this summer. My plea is for the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Emergency Management, the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure to hear the pleas of people in Princeton, Chilliwack and Abbotsford who are calling for a west coast corridor initiative, because the government has not listened to its own forecasting already. My plea is for all the ministers to stand up during Routine Proceedings every day and use that time to update the House, in the way it was intended, on how they are taking advice from public servants on forecasting that has already taken place. Nothing is stopping a minister from adopting new technology. Nothing is stopping the ministers from coordinating together.

Private Members' Business

To my government friends, in good faith, my communities have suffered so much. My communities live with the uncertainty of whether or not their next crop will be destroyed, because we are having a dry season right now, and we do not know when the rains are going to come, nor how the soil is going to respond to that rain in its current state.

British Columbia does not know how to forecast properly for forest fires. Every year we hear, "We are going to be there for you." I have had countless pats on the back. The ambassador to the U.K., Bill Blair, said he broke promises to me and the former member from Abbotsford, Ed Fast, about what they were going to do, and he said that in good faith. I ask the government to please help us.

A new MOU has been signed by the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia. There was a paragraph in it on Sumas flood mitigation. I sought clarity from the Clerk of the Privy Council on the application of the \$20 million referenced to study a pump once again. I hope, when we have a new government in British Columbia, we can move forward on the critical scientific work that has already been done, and we can bring real and measurable change to the people of British Columbia, who have suffered unnecessarily due to inaction.

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this important issue. It is fundamental. We are talking about Bill C-241, an act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting.

As my colleagues are surely already well aware, the Bloc Québécois has a major issue with any sort of national strategy. Our concerns are many. However, I want to make one thing clear from the outset. We think that we need as much technology as possible and that we need to work together as much as possible. However, it is not just the provinces that need to work together. We also need to work with other countries. It is vital that we set that up because we need to prevent floods or at least know they are coming so that we can prepare for them. That is why the Bloc Québécois has been consistently making recommendations in that regard. In fact, during the last election campaign, we had an extremely comprehensive platform on this issue. I am talking about real, substantive investments.

Unfortunately, today, we are being presented with an additional structure, even though I am sure it is not the fault of the bill's sponsor, who seems to have only the best of intentions. The bill proposes an additional administrative structure when these tasks can already be carried out quite effectively. They fall under the responsibility of the weather offices at Environment and Climate Change Canada. If the department is having problems with forecasting and prevention, it is likely because the government is not investing enough in this area and is not taking this responsibility seriously. Rather than creating a new structure, let us take this responsibility more seriously.

I am not sure if anyone mentioned this already, but the bill contains no funding measures whatsoever. All the government is doing is adding a new layer of bureaucracy that will override everything else, and telling people what to do, but without actually doing it because we do not have the resources. People are going to get even

more bogged down in red tape, even though, across the country, or across both countries, namely Quebec and Canada, people are calling for less bureaucracy.

For a cause that is undoubtedly worthy and critically important, we are being presented with what amounts to an empty shell. That is how I would describe it. The Bloc Québécois has significant reservations about this legislation, and I share those reservations personally as well. As recently as yesterday, I spoke on another matter and said that I was tired of governments pretending and relying on fine words and lofty expressions only to end up doing nothing beyond making speeches. We have concerns about this bill, because we believe that if the necessary resources were invested in the structures that already exist, we would actually have the means to act. That is our main concern with this bill. We are being asked to create a new structure and address new needs, yet we are told that resources are not the issue. The structure already exists. The problem is that it has no resources. Why not provide it with the resources it needs?

The bill's preamble states that "most technologically advanced countries have a national flood forecasting service". Quebec has in fact done just that. The public is provided with weather and hydrological forecasts. For example, we have a web app called Vigilance. I can provide more details if time permits a little later, but all this is with a view to preventing and anticipating floods. It is very important to prevent them from happening.

I see a bit of a contradiction here, given that the government has been scrapping all its environmental measures since the 2025 election. It even reached the point where a former environment minister was forced to resign, first as a minister and then as a member of Parliament. That is a big move that sends a strong signal. Even for someone who does not know all the intricacies of what has been scrapped, that sends a clear message that the environment is the least of this government's concerns. I also have the impression that establishing a new structure like this would create a clear line of communication. One could say that a national drought prevention policy has been created. I hope that is not the intention, but I am raising this concern nonetheless.

● (1350)

The preamble also states that "current flood and drought forecasting in Canada is conducted by the provinces without coordination between them". However, there is nothing to prevent that coordination. Data is currently available to the general public. What is needed is the will to establish that coordination. As I said in my introduction, this needs to be established not only among Canada's provinces and Quebec, but also internationally, particularly with the United States, our closest neighbour.

Partnerships are possible, and the Department of the Environment already has the authority to establish them. Why is it not doing so? Perhaps that is the question we should be asking.

If current methods are limited and the purpose of the bill is to invest more heavily in the development of new technologies, which I believe is one of its main objectives, why can that not be done through the Department of Environment and Climate Change? The member will have an opportunity to answer that question when she next speaks to this bill.

If there were genuine political will to do so, I think it could very well be done. However, as I mentioned in my introduction, there appears to be a reluctance to create this new structure.

In her speech, the member for Terrebonne, who is also the sponsor of the bill, was highly critical of the current government. We welcome that, because it shows that she is a woman of vision and foresight. That being said, the government has been in power for 10 years. For a decade, it has told us that that it is firmly committed to fighting climate change. However, over the past year, it has been rolling back environmental measures across the board, leaving us scratching our heads and asking questions.

As I was saying, it is very encouraging that the member is raising these concerns, but the government already has the authority, through existing environmental legislation, to take action.

Is there something in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act that is keeping this from being done? If that is the case, why does Bill C-241 not propose amendments to that act? There is no mention of this at all in the bill.

If the problem does not actually exist and the government already has the ability to act and the means to do so under existing legislation, what is stopping it? Is money the issue? The budget is going to be tabled on November 5, so let me send that message now. I know that the parliamentary secretary is paying close attention to what I am saying and taking notes. I am sure he is writing that Mr. Perron had a good idea and that investing in drought and flood prevention is essential.

Because this matter is important to us, we have no shortage of relevant proposals, as I said earlier. When it comes to climate change, we know that doing nothing is more costly than taking preventive measures and adapting. This is important. Things are going to get increasingly expensive. Insurance is a good example: In some regions, obtaining insurance is becoming impossible because claim payouts have become too high.

That is why the Bloc Québécois believes that concrete measures are needed. To reinvest in infrastructure adaptation and reduce risk, municipalities need funding. For that to happen, transfers need to be made to Quebec so that it can pay the money to the municipalities.

We are calling for an additional \$875 million over five years for the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund. We proposed protecting Quebecers' homes by requiring the federal government to establish a co-insurance program to help offset the very problems I just described with respect to insurance coverage. We are calling for a \$500-million increase in federal funding to counter shoreline erosion. The federal government can give us a well-crafted speech and a catchy title, but without funding, it is meaningless. Unless I am mistaken, there has been no shoreline protection program since 1997. Does anyone think that makes sense? If someone could an-

swer me, I am pretty sure they would say that it does not. At some point, we need to get serious.

We are also calling for sector-specific funding transfers to the provinces so that they can coordinate these efforts. As far as coordination is concerned, we do not need a national policy that will interfere with and potentially encroach on areas of provincial jurisdiction. I believe that cohesion and coordination can be achieved with the existing structures.

* * *

● (1355)

[English]

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S DEFENCE SECTOR ACT

BILL C-40—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Randeep Sarai (Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-40, an act respecting production, procurement and investment in relation to national defence and national security.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON FLOOD AND DROUGHT FORECASTING ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-241, An Act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting, be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Terrebonne for her right of reply.

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all my colleagues who took part in the debate on this bill at each reading and in committee.

When we introduce a bill in the House, we do it because we have an idea, a belief and, above all, a desire to make things better. However, as the parliamentary process unfolds, we learn something fundamental: No legislative initiative moves forward on its own. Every bill involves discussions, research, evidence, sometimes difficult questions and, most importantly, people who choose to put their expertise to work for the common good. That is precisely what I saw as Bill C-241 made its way through the legislative process.

As that process comes to an end today, I want to take a moment to recognize the work that has been done and the contributions that have helped to move this initiative forward.

Private Members' Business

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Professor John Pomeroy of the University of Saskatchewan. His expertise and contributions helped inform our thinking and improved our understanding of the opportunities available to Canada to strengthen its forecasting capabilities. His involvement underscores the importance of dialogue between the scientific community and public decision-makers, because scientific knowledge is especially valuable when it can help inform decisions that directly affect Canadians' lives.

I would also like to thank the chair and members of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, as well as all the witnesses who took part in its study of this bill. Their contributions helped deepen our understanding of the issues at stake, raise important questions and examine the different facets of this initiative. I would especially like to acknowledge the contribution of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which reminded us how important it is to take the realities faced by farmers into account in our deliberations. These discussions served as an important reminder of a fundamental principle: Behind every public policy, there are people, industries and communities whose needs must be heard.

This goes to show why committee work is so valuable. It is not simply about examining legislation; it is about testing our ideas against the realities on the ground, listening to diverse perspectives and working to improve the proposals before us.

This process also reminded me why dialogue and collaboration play such an important role in our democracy. We do not always share the same views on how to achieve our goals, and that is to be expected, but we all have a responsibility to consider proposals carefully, ask the right questions and look for solutions that meet Canadians' needs. I would like to thank the members from all parties who contributed to the discussion on Bill C-241. Their questions, observations and different perspectives are an integral part of our parliamentary work.

As the member for Terrebonne, I am especially mindful of the trust that people place in us when they ask us to represent them. This trust comes with a responsibility, that of looking beyond immediate concerns and thinking about the challenges that our communities may face not only today, but also tomorrow.

Bill C-241 does just that. It encourages us to look at how we can capitalize on existing knowledge, skills and resources to improve flood and drought forecasting in Canada. It also encourages us to

consider how all of the provinces and territories could work together and truly put each one's knowledge to good use. It proposes an approach based on assessing needs, consulting with relevant partners and improving coordination. Most importantly, it reminds us that the decisions we make today must also take into account the needs of tomorrow.

As this stage draws to a close, what I will remember is the valuable collective effort that went into this initiative. I will remember the scientists and organizations who got involved and the parliamentarians who put in the work for the common purpose of better understanding the challenges facing our country. I will take this opportunity to acknowledge some of the people who gave us food for thought, including Professor Pomeroy, whom I mentioned earlier, the insurance experts who told us about the challenges that a lot of people are facing, and the agriculture stakeholders who talked to me about their struggles with droughts and floods. I sincerely thank them for all the work they did.

As I see it, Bill C-241, is not the end of the road, but the beginning of a journey.

• (1400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

• (1405)

[*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.

[*Translation*]

Tatiana Auguste: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 28, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 2:05 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:05 p.m.)

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