



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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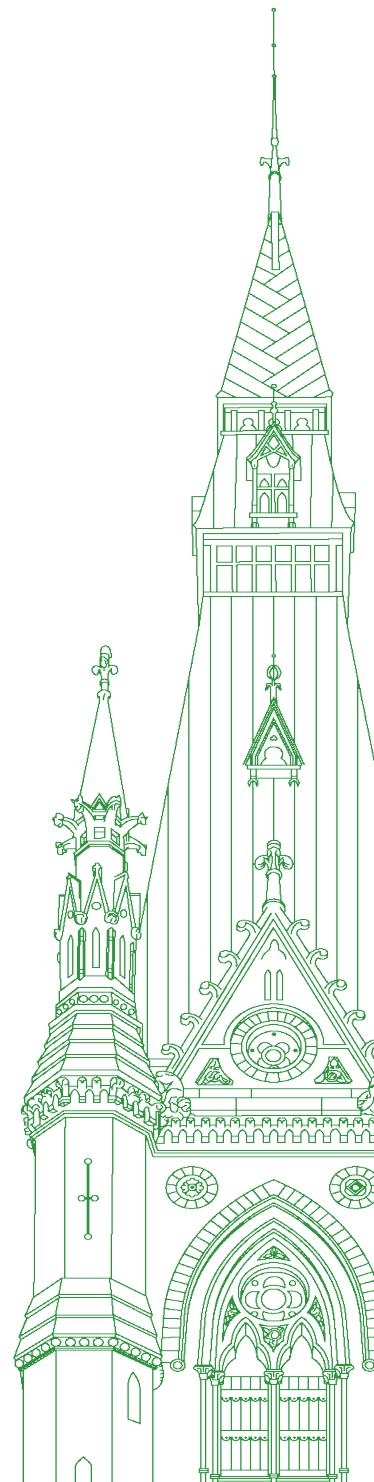
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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 26, 2026

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[English]

AN ACT TO REPEAL CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON SHIPPING

The House resumed from May 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-264, An Act to repeal certain restrictions on shipping, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and address the House on the important issue of Canada's natural resources and how those resources can be of great value to all Canadians. If we really want to take a look at how the Government of Canada has been addressing that issue, we have to understand just how important collaborative federalism is, meaning that Ottawa works with our provinces and other stakeholders on doing the things we are doing in order to build that stronger and healthier economy.

When we take a look at the legislation before us today, we should also take a look at what has been happening since 1972. We had a great deal of commitment to our environment even back then, including from industries and different stakeholders, including the provinces, indigenous community leaders or the federal government, and an understanding of the dangers of such things as oil spills and protecting the B.C. coastline. It is important that we continue to look at ways to encourage and support that collaborative approach in building a stronger and healthier Canada. It is something the Prime Minister and this government have strived to achieve since the last federal election when Canadians made the decision to elect a new Prime Minister. This is a government that understands the importance of building an economy that works for all Canadians and the benefits of doing so, and in working with other provinces.

British Columbia just had an election, as we all know, and I congratulate the new Premier-elect, Lorne Doerksen, on his election. I listened very attentively to what he had to say; there were a lot of common links with what the Prime Minister of Canada has been

talking about. We will see that not only are there concerns about the environment, but there are also concerns in regards to how we can actually build that stronger Canada and the important role that British Columbia plays in that.

The week before, we saw the people of Alberta, an overwhelming majority, understanding the value of Canada as a federal system and the potential that Alberta, B.C. and every province in Canada has. The way we achieve that potential is to ensure that we have the Prime Minister, ministers, the government as a whole, and I would even extend that to every member of the House of Commons, contributing towards a co-operative federalism that ensures every Canadian and every region of the country benefits. That is what we should be attempting to achieve.

However, a great deal of the legislation before us deals with rhetoric. The Conservative opposition's approach to oil and the development of our natural resources, which is to say full steam ahead, that we do not care what the indigenous people of Canada have to say and would not even listen to what provincial governments have to say. Whether individuals advocate for a healthier environment or a healthier economy, the Conservatives like to think that the Conservative spin is going to resolve the issues.

• (1105)

I have heard the leader of the Conservative Party talk about dealing with clearing the way and getting pipelines built to the B.C. coast, at times completely ignoring indigenous interests and just saying they should build anyway. However, as a government, I believe there is a responsibility of consultation, both morally and legally, that needs to take place. That is what I mean by collaborative approach. It does not mean that it is not going to happen.

In fact, take a look at Stephen Harper. What did Prime Minister Stephen Harper actually accomplish when it came to building pipelines to tidewater? Absolutely nothing. There was not even an inch of pipeline built in the direction of the west coast. It was not until the current leader and Prime Minister Stephen Harper left office a few years later where we started to actually see action on that front. That is the reality. That is a fact.

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Since the last federal election, the Prime Minister has made a commitment to Canadians that we are going to build, and build Canada strong, that means taking a look at our natural resources and other things across the nation, and how it is that we are going to advance that build. That is why we brought forward not one, but two pieces of legislation dealing with things such as one Canadian economy. Canadians want that, they expect that, and the federal government has delivered that. Now we continue to encourage co-operation among the provinces to continue to take down barriers that prevent trade between our provinces. Part of trade is dealing with pipelines and dealing with the mobility of labour. They are so very important to our nation.

Take a look at the projects. Here we are dealing a great deal in the bill that is being proposed by the Conservatives today, with the Province of British Columbia. I will remind members from across the way that the single greatest expenditure between government and the private sector was LNG phase one, under the government of Justin Trudeau. Some 18 months later, we now have an agreement to push forward with LNG phase two. We are talking about billions of dollars of investment that is going to generate billions in terms of future revenue for the federal government, while working with an NDP government in B.C. and a Conservative government in Alberta. In other words, it is a team Canada approach. The political stripe is secondary. What is important is that it be in the interest of Canadians. I believe we have demonstrated that time and time again.

I can talk about B.C. as I just did. I can talk about the MOU in Alberta. I can talk about the copper mine in Saskatchewan. I can talk about the port of Churchill in Manitoba and nuclear energy in Ontario. I can talk about the port of Montreal and the expansion there, energy expansion in Atlantic Canada and the list goes on. I can talk about how it is we are using natural resource development and enticing investors to come to Canada as the Prime Minister hosted them back in Toronto, where we saw half trillion dollars, which was previously unheard of.

• (1110)

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, in 2015, the northern gateway pipeline was a conditionally approved 525,000 barrel per day link between the Alberta oil sands and the Pacific coast. In the 2015 election, the Liberals campaigned against this project. They were aided and abetted heavily by environmentalist NGOs, many foreign-funded, that opposed that project. Their then leader, Justin Trudeau, his campaign manager and many of his candidates were vehemently opposed to the northern gateway pipeline.

This is what happened in 2015. A pipeline was conditionally approved and the Liberals opposed it. When they formed their government, they failed to champion this approved pipeline. They failed to take any steps to work with anybody toward ensuring that conditions could be met or that the opposition could be worked with to ensure its construction, and they killed it by a ministerial order in the fall of 2016, about 10 years ago. Then they brought in Bill C-48 to ensure that no pipeline could ever be built to the northwest coast. That is the track record of the government. They are opposed to northern shipping because they oppose a pipeline and the increased production to fill the pipeline.

The northern route is the best route to world markets. It is the closest way to world prices. It is the least number of shipping days to get to Asian markets. It is the way that Canada could get off the differential with the existing bottlenecks that cause Canadians to take a discount on our prices. Getting to Asian markets, world markets and world prices is how Canada can diversify its trade relationships with Canada's most valuable commodity, by far the biggest source of export revenue and contribution to the Canadian economy.

I heard as recently as last week in debate in this House that they claim there was never any shipping traffic and Bill C-48 was just codifying a long-existing de facto ban. That is all nonsense. They deliberately banned shipping traffic with this bill. Bill C-48 prohibits the loading and unloading of tankers off the northwest coast of British Columbia and this bill today would repeal that decision.

Let us face it and admit to ourselves that Bill C-48 never had anything to do with environmental policy, certainly not with maritime environmental policy. It had everything to do with ensuring that the northern gateway pipeline would never be built and that the expansion of the oil sands to fill the pipeline would not happen. That was the agenda. We need to go back to that time and hear some of the things members said in this place. We need to hear what Prime Minister Trudeau said when he appeared at the industry committee, I think in 2021, under questioning from the opposition leader. He doubled down, said he supported it and thought it was the right decision to kill northern gateway. He did not say it was because the Liberals did not want shipping traffic off the northwest coast. It was because they did not believe in the project and did not want a northern pipeline. It was not about safety. It was about their opposition to pipelines and the oil and gas industry. So many of the members of the Liberal government and caucus are quite clearly on the record about this.

• (1115)

The current Minister of the Environment, on her MP web page, gave herself credit for opposing an expansion of the oil sands. This is not something we dug up deep from the history of the Internet. This is live while she is Minister of the Environment. I questioned her about it at the natural resources committee. I was actually surprised that the Liberals did not have it taken down within the hour when it was aired publicly. It took months before they took it down. We have the Minister of the Environment who proudly opposes an expansion of the oil sands, and today they would have us think that they are aggressively moving forward to ensure that we have an expansion of our exports and that we become an energy superpower.

In order to do that, we would have to export far more oil and gas and energy products than we currently do. We would need two or three northern gateways. We would need a doubling of TMX. We would need Keystone XL to be built. We would need an eastern pipeline to Sarnia or all the way to Saint John. These are the things that an energy superpower would need. The most efficient way to get our exports to world markets would be to allow the shipping traffic that is currently banned by this law.

If the northern gateway pipeline had been built at 525,000 barrels a day, at today's world prices, that would be nearly \$20 billion a year in revenue. Think of the taxation base for public services. Think of all the high-paying jobs. Think of what we would have today economically if that pipeline and other pipelines had been built, if the Liberals had championed Keystone XL to ensure its construction or had not chased TransCanada Energy out of Canada. It literally had to change its name and moved all of its investment activity to Mexico and the United States.

The Liberals have an opportunity today. They can stand up and vote for this bill, although we will probably not have the vote today but this week. They can declare whether they want to actually undertake the steps necessary to allow Canada to become an energy superpower. They can repeal Bill C-48, which was calculated to restrict the expansion of the oil sands and our exports. They have a chance to do that now.

There is today a private sector proponent that wishes to ship 250,000 barrels a day from Prince Rupert, which is the closest port to, and has the fewest number of shipping days from, Asian markets. This proponent would need a repeal of Bill C-48. The Liberals have a chance, with this bill, to be on the side of Canadian jobs, of Canadian export diversification and of getting us out of our dependence on the United States as an export destination. They have the chance to do it with this bill, and it will be really interesting to see if they will undertake a concrete step in furtherance of the objectives they sometimes talk about.

The Liberals speak of Canada as an energy superpower yet have not repealed Bill C-69, which is the "no more pipelines" bill. They will need to support Bill C-264 to remove the shipping ban. These things have to be done. They cannot just say the words "energy superpower". They will have to change the laws the government passed that prevent Canada from reaching its potential as an energy superpower. This is an important step. Bill C-5, which we supported, gives the Liberals the power to exempt people from the law, but that is not the way to go. They need to change the laws that actually prevent the activity.

I want to thank the member for Calgary Signal Hill for bringing this bill to the House. I want to thank my friend James Cumming for his attempt in an earlier Parliament to strip away Bill C-48. It is a long-time policy of the Conservatives to repeal this ban, which is all about reducing Canada's export potential of oil and gas.

• (1120)

Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this month, the Prime Minister announced that Canada would pursue another oil pipeline to the Pacific coast. I agree that Canada should be selling more of its energy to the world, but I have one question: If more oil tankers can be part of a responsible national

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project on the south coast of B.C., why is the answer automatically "no" when somebody proposes a project farther north? This is what Bill C-264 asks us to reconsider.

Let me be clear. I do not want oil splashing up on a beach or destroying an ecosystem; nobody does. We can disagree about how best to protect the environment without pretending that one side cares about it and the other side does not.

We ought to be honest about this law, including where it came from. In 2016, Justin Trudeau announced that his government would reject the northern gateway pipeline and introduced a tanker ban for northern B.C. His stated reason was environmental protection. What does the law actually do? It prohibits tankers carrying more than 12,500 metric tonnes of crude oil or certain persistent oils from loading, unloading or stopping at ports and marine installations along the northern B.C. coast. It does not ban every tanker passing offshore, though. It prevents the development of a large crude oil export terminal using those ports.

There is an important difference, because oil tankers did not vanish from the Pacific coast when this law was passed. Let us consider Alaska. American tankers have long carried crude oil to destinations farther south, including Washington state. They travel offshore, west of a voluntary tanker exclusion zone established back in 1985. We need to look at the broader picture. We recognize that marine shipping carries risks, and we manage some of those risks through routes, rules and emergency preparedness. Meanwhile, a company proposing a northern export terminal faces a ban regardless of what safeguards it might offer.

We manage oil shipping elsewhere. Tankers operate on the St. Lawrence and around Newfoundland. They load Canadian crude oil at Westridge in Burnaby. In the second quarter of this year alone, Trans Mountain reported that 82 vessels were loaded at that terminal. Those waters are not all alike, but that is exactly why we have experts, navigational assessments and environmental reviews. The risks of a particular project ought to be assessed where it would actually operate.

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This brings me back to the Pacific link project, the new pipeline that was announced. It is proposed to follow a southern route to an export terminal at Roberts Bank outside of the northern moratorium area. It has not been built or finally approved. The federal government says it could carry another million barrels of oil a day toward customers in Asia. I am glad the Liberal government finally recognizes that more buyers for Canadian energy would be a good thing. We have depended heavily on the American market, and we should not put all of our eggs in one basket, nor should we be effectively donating billions of dollars to the United States by selling to it at a discount when higher world prices are available.

However, we cannot keep assuming that every new pipeline to the Pacific should end up along some variation of the same southern corridor. There are communities, mountains, already very busy ports and environmental concerns along those routes too. Sometimes, using an existing corridor will be the sensible option. Sometimes, it may not be. Why would we decide today that future engineers, investors and communities would not even be allowed to put another northern option on the table?

Here is what really bothers me about the tanker ban: It substitutes a blanket political decision for the hard work of judging individual proposals as they come in. Let us think about how ridiculous that is. A company could come forward with a proposal that uses the safest tankers available, the latest navigation technology, tugboats to escort every vessel and an emergency response system that goes well beyond anything required today. It could offer to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on additional safety measures and demonstrate that it can meet every environmental standard we can throw at it. What would the federal government say? "Sorry, we are not interested."

It does not matter how safe a company can make it, how much technology has improved or what precautions it is prepared to take. The answer was decided back in 2019, and the government is not even going to consider the question. This is the absurdity of this ban in a nutshell. The government did not set a higher environmental standard for companies to meet. It decided that no matter how much companies invest, how safe the technology becomes or how strong environmental protections are, nothing will ever be good enough. They are not being given a tough test to pass. They are being told they are not even allowed to take the test.

• (1125)

That strikes me as a rather strange way to govern. We regulate plenty of activities that carry serious risks. Pipelines, railways, ports, factories and even the driving of cars all operate under rules designed to prevent accidents and limit their consequences. We do not simply assume that every project is safe. We demand evidence, impose conditions and, when necessary, refuse permission. At the very minimum, we should at least examine what is being proposed.

There is something else worth remembering. Back in 2013, Stephen Harper's Conservative government launched a major effort to improve tanker safety in Canada. It increased tanker inspections, expanded aerial and satellite monitoring, improved our ability to respond to spills and brought in tougher rules for facilities handling oil. These were not just promises. The measures were put into practice, and Transport Canada's own evaluation later confirmed that

they helped improve marine safety. The Harper government also recognized that preventing spills was only part of the equation. It changed the law to make sure that if something did go wrong, the people responsible would be held financially accountable.

In 2014, the government proposed removing the compensation limit on Canada's ship-source oil pollution fund. The principle was simple: If a tanker causes a spill, the people who suffer the losses should be compensated and the polluter should pay. Further changes were passed in 2018, removing the compensation ceiling on the fund and clarifying the rules for certain economic losses. Today, that fund can provide compensation for claims without a fixed overall limit for each incident.

Over the years, we have built a system designed to prevent accidents, respond when they happen and hold those responsible for them financially accountable. Rather than simply banning certain tanker operations outright, should we not be asking whether those protections can be made even stronger? If the existing rules are not good enough for northern B.C., let us identify what is missing.

Do we need more tugboats escorting tankers? Do we need better equipment stationed across the coastline? Do we need restrictions on sailing during dangerous weather, perhaps, or tougher financial requirements for companies that want to operate there? If a company wants to build a terminal and ship oil through those waters, it should have to demonstrate that it can operate responsibly. It should be prepared to invest in the necessary safety measures and take financial responsibility if something goes wrong.

That brings us back to Bill C-264. Passing this legislation would not approve a single new pipeline or tanker terminal. It would not give an oil company permission to do whatever it wants, and it would not remove Canada's other marine safety or environmental laws. It would simply repeal the existing tanker moratorium, allowing future proposals to be considered under the other laws and approval processes that apply to it. Those reviews should be rigorous. If a proposed project cannot meet the required environmental standards, it should not be approved. If the risks are simply too great, the answer should be no. Surely we should be willing to examine the evidence before making that decision.

The Prime Minister keeps telling us that he wants to make this country an energy superpower. I would ask him this: How can we seriously talk about opening new markets while maintaining a law that rules out an entire region of potential export opportunities before anyone could even put forward a proposal?

We cannot assume that every future pipeline to the Pacific Ocean should have to squeeze into the same southern corridor, nor should we assume that every proposal for a northern terminal would be suitable. We should be making those decisions based on actual proposals. I do not believe that protecting the environment and developing our natural resources must be competing objectives. We should, in fact, be able to walk and chew gum. I think it is perfectly reasonable to take another look at whether the tanker ban still makes any sense. That is why I will be supporting Bill C-264.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, before I start, I want to acknowledge my colleagues who are proudly wearing the poppy as we begin the annual poppy campaign to remember those who gave their lives and fought for our values and freedom.

This is my annual reminder. This year is the second year that I have the honour of serving as the honorary president of the poppy campaign in my riding of Drummond. The poppy is worn over the heart, above any other medal or pin. The member pin that many of us wear must be worn below the poppy. I repeat this every year. I think that these details are important for veterans and for those who care about matters of protocol.

Before I begin my speech on Bill C-264, I would like to congratulate the new Quebec minister of natural resources and forests, Nathalie Bisailon, on her appointment. Ms. Bisailon is also the MNA for the new riding of Marie-Lacoste-Gérin-Lajoie, part of which is located in the federal riding of Drummond, which I have had the honour of representing since 2019. I welcome Nathalie Bisailon to her role as MNA and minister. I will be very pleased and honoured to work with her on both regional and national files.

We are here today to talk about Bill C-264, an act to repeal certain restrictions on shipping, which seeks to completely do away with the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act. The first thing we need to know is that we are only debating this bill today because the Prime Minister himself committed in his memorandum of understanding with Alberta to adjusting the oil tanker moratorium should a new bitumen pipeline between Alberta and British Columbia ever move forward.

In an effort to protect so-called Canadian national unity and look like Captain Canada to the United States, the Prime Minister opened the door to abandoning the moratorium that protects marine diversity in British Columbia.

Unsurprisingly, the Conservatives have thrown themselves headlong into this. If the Liberals think that Bill C-264 is a trap, they are quite right. The problem is that it is a trap they themselves set when they signed the MOU with Alberta in November 2025.

The bill we are debating today deals with regulating vessels carrying crude oil or persistent oil to or from ports and maritime facilities

located along British Columbia's north coast. These substances are considered "persistent" because, if they end up in the environment or marine ecosystems, they remain there for a long time. As the term suggests, they can persist for decades, and communities end up stuck with them.

The issue at hand, therefore, is the risk of oil spills along the coast of British Columbia, specifically in the waters extending from the Alaskan border to the northern mainland coast opposite the northern tip of Vancouver Island.

The moratorium exists because British Columbia's north coast is considered to be one of the most productive and least disturbed temperate marine ecosystems on the planet. An oil spill would pose a direct threat to marine biodiversity and to the many species that depend on this coastline.

The Great Bear Sea is a 102,000-square-kilometre marine area extending from the northern tip of Vancouver Island to the Alaskan border. It is one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world. Home to species and habitats like the migrating humpback whale, orcas, sea otters, seabirds, salmon, ancient glass sponge reefs, kelp forests and seagrass meadows, it is simply a treasure.

Crude oil and persistent oil have been slowly degrading these ecosystems for decades. In their efforts to ideologically support increased shipments of Canadian oil sands exports, the Conservatives want to remove any potential obstacle to their industry's development, regardless of the ecological risk or damage posed to precious marine ecosystems like the ones I just mentioned.

The current moratorium, however, applies only to northern British Columbia, whereas current exports are located in the south and are therefore unaffected by the moratorium. What, then, are they trying to accomplish?

Bill C-48 was tabled in Parliament on May 12, 2017. The bill was introduced by the late Marc Garneau, Minister of Transportation at the time, and was studied during the 42nd Parliament. It was passed and received royal assent in June 2019.

The regulation of marine shipping is part of Canada's oceans protection plan and its broader commitment to protecting 30% of oceans by 2030 pursuant to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the commitments that were made in Montreal in 2022 at COP15.

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● (1135)

The Oil Tanker Moratorium Act imposes a moratorium on tankers carrying more than 12,500 metric tons of crude oil from stopping along the northern coast of British Columbia. Vessels carrying cargoes of less than 12,500 metric tonnes are permitted in the moratorium area. The act includes an enforcement and sanctions regime that includes charges and fines of up to \$5 million, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

It is important to understand that this moratorium was added to the voluntary tanker exclusion zone that has been in place since 1985 and that was negotiated with the United States. Oil tankers travelling from Alaska to Washington were required to sail west of the zone. What is more, since this was a voluntary exclusion zone, it was never introduced into legislation. The Canadian government has been talking about a tanker moratorium off the coast of British Columbia since 1972. Before Bill C-48 was passed in 2019, the legal status of the moratorium was a source of debate and confusion, so the moratorium resolved a legal and historic ambiguity and helped to ensure the protection of B.C.'s northern coast.

Why lift the oil tanker ban? What would be the point of that? When the Prime Minister ventured to suggest lifting the oil tanker ban in November 2025, his decision was harshly criticized by the British Columbia government. The new government that just took office this weekend will likely have a different attitude. It completely changes the situation, but it will not necessarily make things any easier, because the first nations also strongly oppose that decision. The next few months in particular will likely be full of heated discussions.

The Prime Minister's Alberta escapade has been viewed as a sign that the government has abandoned its commitment to protecting nature. The message from British Columbia and first nations has been clear. Protecting the environment on B.C.'s north coast does not hinder the economy, but rather helps it grow. The rapid expansion of the oil sands industry and increased exports in the 1990s were bound to lead to more marine transportation and put more pressure on marine ecosystems. The Trans Mountain expansion tripled the existing pipeline capacity and added an extra 590,000 barrels a day of shipping capacity.

In fact, it was Justin Trudeau who claimed that the goal of his pipeline, funded by \$35 billion or \$40 billion dollars in public funds, was to diversify export markets, but the vast majority of exports go to the United States. The United States remains the primary destination for Canadian crude oil. That country received 93.8% of all Canadian crude oil exports from May 2024 to April 2025. Of Canada's total crude oil exports to the United States, 92.8% flow through the existing pipeline network. I think this is all show and no substance.

Why do I bring up the removal of the oil tanker moratorium? It is because challenging the moratorium on oil tankers helps fuel the dream of the Conservatives, and the neo-conservatives who now sit on the Liberal benches, to build new pipelines. That is why, in the Canada-Alberta memorandum of understanding, alongside the Prime Minister's pledge to increase Alberta's oil and gas production to meet Canada's export targets, there is already a proposal to amend the moratorium on oil tankers. It states the following:

If an Alberta bitumen pipeline is ultimately approved under the *Building Canada Act* and provides opportunities for indigenous co-ownership and shared economic benefits, Canada confirms that it will enable the export of bitumen from a deep-water port to Asian markets, including if necessary through an appropriate adjustment to the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act*.

This sentence is still on the Prime Minister's website even today. The reason we are here today debating Bill C-264, which proposes to tear apart an entire piece of legislation against the wishes of first nations and against the wishes of the government then in power in British Columbia, is that the Prime Minister himself launched the debate and invited us to join him in that. Once again, we can agree that the new government now in power in British Columbia may not object quite so strenuously. The Prime Minister of Canada opened the door and the Conservatives walked right in. In doing so, he is continuing to destroy his own political party's weak environmental record.

● (1140)

[English]

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the House this morning and to express my strong support for Bill C-264. This is a bill that would finally repeal the Liberal tanker ban. This is an opportunity to talk about pipeline policy in this country and to call out the slipperiness of the Liberal government.

It is clear that over the last 10 years, the Conservative opposition has won the public debate on pipelines. There is certainly very strong public support for the construction of pipelines and other major national energy projects, and this creates the conditions in which the government faces a political imperative to try to pretend to be more supportive of energy infrastructure projects than it has been in the past. However, while we have won the public debate around the construction of pipelines and other major energy infrastructure, the government continues to obstruct, at a policy level, actual progress on these issues. We have won the public debate, but we have not won the policy battle. That is what Bill C-264 tries to do: complete policy work that certainly reflects the public demand for these kinds of projects to go forward.

To understand, though, how the government says one thing and does another when it comes to pipelines, I think it is important to dig into the history. If we look at the history over the last 10 or 15 years as it relates to pipelines, the government has done everything possible to obstruct pipelines and major energy infrastructure from going forward. It has also tried to do so indirectly. Those who are familiar with crime films will recognize the phrase "make it look like an accident." The government has tried to kill pipelines and make it look like an accident.

Let us talk about where we were in 2015 when Justin Trudeau became prime minister. Looking back at the record of the Harper government, in 2015, four major pipelines were constructed and a fifth had been approved, the northern gateway project. The Liberals promised in the 2015 election to kill the northern gateway pipeline. They did two things: first, they killed it directly; and second, they legislated to prohibit energy exports from the northern coast of B.C. This was designed, or intended, to kill the northern gateway project and the opportunities associated with it. This was a decision of the government to kill that project in two ways: first, to kill it directly; and second, to legislate to prevent those energy exports.

The Liberal government subsequently passed Bill C-69, adding additional challenges and barriers for pipeline construction, and killed the energy east pipeline. It did so by applying conditions to it that had never been applied previously to other development projects. Even then, the government wanted to say it was a private sector decision to kill the energy east pipeline. It changed the game by piling impossible conditions on the project and then said, "Oh, too bad. The proponents killed it." This is part of the "kill major infrastructure projects and make it look like an accident" approach of the government, which is to apply legislative and other policy barriers that make it very difficult, if not impossible, for these kinds of projects to move forward.

Now we have a different Prime Minister, who has written extensively, in a negative way, about the development of our energy resources, but now that he is Prime Minister, he wants people to think that he is maybe more supportive of these developments. The simple thing he could do is repeal the antidevelopment rules that were put in place by his predecessor. If the Prime Minister is really different from Justin Trudeau, he could simply repeal Bill C-69 and Bill C-48. These are two major anti-energy bills that his predecessor put forward. In particular, he could repeal Bill C-48, which is the bill regarding the tanker exclusion zone. That is the bill that Bill C-264, which we are debating today, would repeal. If the Prime Minister is sincere about getting pipelines built, he could simply vote in favour of this bill, or he could have moved to repeal Bill C-48 earlier.

However, the approach the Liberal government has taken has not been, notably, to repeal the barriers that were put in place by his predecessor to prevent energy development. Instead, the Liberals brought us Bill C-5, which was the option for the government to approve, in exceptional circumstances, that some projects would not be subject to the rules that apply to every other project.

• (1145)

Instead of simply removing the barriers that prevent development, they created a process in which those barriers that prevent development from moving forward are still in place, but if someone wants to build a project, they could go, cap in hand, to the government to ask. It would refer them to this Major Projects Office. That will look at the project, and it will be designated and reviewed by various panels. Maybe at the end of it, they might get exceptional treatment for one project, even though the barriers would remain in place for all the other projects.

If we could build major projects with red tape, the government would be all over it, because that is what it has been building: more

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and more red tape. They try to make it look like the Liberals are really trying, that they are going to add more offices, say that people can send their project here, refer it over here, and then this panel will take a look at it. Then maybe at the end of the day, they might create exemptions to the framework that was designed to prevent these projects from going forward.

Conservatives have a much simpler solution, which is to get rid of the red tape and get rid of the laws that prevent these major projects from going forward so that we can build things again.

This is what I think the public wants. The public wants major energy projects to go forward. We saw great news out of British Columbia. It is a strong endorsement by the voters of British Columbia for a government that is committed to creating jobs and building opportunity. There is a government now in British Columbia that sees how we can prosper together as a country instead of trying to make B.C. the barrier to exports that the previous NDP government wanted it to be. We see in that result, and in the expression of voters across the country, a desire for these kinds of projects to move forward.

The government is slippery and savvy politically. The government knows it does not want to challenge directly this desire for major projects to go forward, so instead, it is just trying to make it look really difficult. The government wants to leave in place these barriers. It wants to add on red tape. It wants to promise that it might allow workarounds in certain situations if things are designated as such.

The simple thing that the government can and should do to make it so much easier for major projects in energy, pipelines and other major projects, to go forward, is vote for Bill C-264. It would not add more laws. It would repeal a previous law that was put in place to block development. This is going to be a clear test for the government on Wednesday. When we vote on Bill C-264, we will see whether individual members of the government from energy-producing regions, as well as members from other regions, are prepared to vote in favour of a bill that would clear away red tape and create opportunities for major projects to go forward, or if they will vote to leave that red tape in place as an excuse to say they would like to, but it is just really difficult. It is really difficult because we have a law that makes it difficult.

The building of major infrastructure could happen much more easily if we had not had governments for 11 years that tried to prevent it from happening. Let us underline that it is the same people.

An hon. member: You guys have to get over Trudeau.

Private Members' Business

Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North, who is heckling me right now, has been here for a long time. He is not new. He voted for all these measures. In fact, I asked the Liberal member for Calgary Confederation, who is new, when he was first elected, if he would have voted in favour of C-48, and he said yes, and he is from Calgary. It is the same group of people, and in the cases where there are newer members, they profess to think the same way as the previous ones.

The member said we are talking too much about Trudeau. I would be very happy to turn the page on the disastrous years of Justin Trudeau. Does the member know how we can turn the page on the disastrous record of Justin Trudeau? We can vote in favour of this bill, which would repeal a centrepiece part of Justin Trudeau's radical antidevelopment agenda.

The Prime Minister can show he is different on Wednesday by voting in favour of Bill C-264. If he were to vote in favour of Bill C-264, I will say that maybe there is some real change, to coin a phrase, but if he were to vote for the Justin Trudeau policy on Wednesday, we will have to conclude that they are doubling down on the same energy policy.

Yes, they are trying to nuance it in the communications in light of the fact that we have won the public debate on this issue, but they have not really changed. Again, we will see in the vote on Wednesday.

• (1150)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, I cannot help but violently agree with my colleague's summation of the best way to turn the page on Justin Trudeau. It is amazing how the Liberals have forgotten that he ever existed, as if they were not here, all along the way, voting in favour of all the terrible policies that caused so much hardship, not just for western Canada and the energy sector, but also for Canadians from coast to coast.

We have had the massive inflation crisis, the crime crisis, the drug crisis and, of course, the energy crisis, where Canada has been forced to discount its natural resources because, thanks to Liberal policies, Canada no longer has an ability to get oil to growing markets in Asia where it would pay a premium for what Canada is selling. This would be a wonderful opportunity to show sincere commitment to change by undoing Liberal policies.

My colleague used the analogy of crime TV shows and movies, and of making something look like an accident. There is another theme in those types of movies where there are elements of a criminal underworld and the mobsters who run protection rackets. They come by someone's shop and throw a brick through the window. They then come back the next day and say, "Hey, we can make sure that nobody throws bricks through your windows."

That is what the Liberals have done with energy policy. They have thrown bricks through the ability of private sector proponents of projects to get things built. They then come along, after billions of dollars have left Canada for other jurisdictions and, after Canadian energy companies choose to invest in South America, Asia, Africa and even in the Middle East, they say, "Hey, if you work with us, if you jump through new hoops and new hurdles, and allow

the government to take ownership positions in energy projects, then you can get something built." That is what we have seen with the MOU that was imposed on Alberta, forcing the Government of Alberta to agree to an industrial carbon tax and to paying billions of dollars of costs into the pathways project. That is completely unnecessary.

We now see a major development in the energy sector that Canada could take advantage of. Strathcona Resources pitches 250,000 barrels of oil per day on an export route to Asia. That is wonderful news. A private sector company is using its own money, not taxpayers' money, to push a project that would allow new exports to Asian markets, getting around the U.S. discount that Canadian producers have to face. There is only one thing standing in the way, and that is Bill C-48, the Liberal shipping ban. For people who have not heard about this before, the ban is a Liberal law that was brought in under the Trudeau government. It was voted for by all the members I see across the way who were there at the time, and it imposed a ban on Canadian energy being shipped off the west coast. This ban does not apply to U.S. tankers. U.S. tankers can come down from Alaska and take inland routes into U.S. refineries in the northwestern United States. This ban only applies to the loading of Canadian energy on Canadian ships leaving Canadian ports. It is a completely self-imposed double standard that means that no oil can flow through that northern route.

Why is that important? That northern route is closer to Asia. It is cheaper to ship through that northern route because it is a shorter distance. It is also a deeper water port. Right now, in order to handle the potential expansion of TMX and a southern route in the Vancouver port, they are going to have to dredge along the Second Narrows Bridge because they cannot load the tankers to full capacity. They would be too low and those tankers would not be able to go through that particular waterway. That is not a problem in the northern route. That northern route is already a deep water port.

This is a perfect example of the government causing a problem. This is hallmark Liberal politics. The Liberal policy causes a problem. The Liberal policies cause Canadian energy companies to abandon Canadian projects and to move Canadian dollars offshore to invest in other places. What is the solution to bad Liberal policy? It is more Liberal policy, more hoops and hurdles, bigger bureaucracies, and more red tape.

The Conservatives have a different approach. We believe we should treat the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem right now in the energy sector is not a lack of demand, a lack of expertise or even a lack of capital, since there are Canadian companies with lots of money to invest. It is a lack of confidence in being able to get anything built after 10 years of Liberal policies killing things and blocking things. We now live in a world where private sector investors would rather build pipelines in war zones than in Canada. They would rather deal with bombs and bullets than with bureaucracy. The Liberal solution is to come along and say that we have a new complicated scheme, a new Major Projects Office and new lists and new hurdles. The government is going to take an ownership share, with all the distorting effects that would have, and that is the only way forward.

• (1155)

Conservatives believe that, if we were to treat the root cause of the problem, which is to repeal bad Liberal policies, the bill we are debating today would be a huge step along that road. Let us lift the moratorium on Canadian shipping, put Canadian producers and exporters on a level playing field and get our resources to market.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill has five minutes for his right of reply.

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

Bill C-264 puts a tremendous opportunity before the House, which is to get rid of one more of the anti-energy, antidevelopment laws, which were put in place by the Trudeau Liberal government, that remain on the books today and continue to hamper and hinder economic development and business in Canada.

First of all, I want to note that the MOU, the memorandum of understanding, between the federal government and the provincial government of Alberta, which was entered into in late 2025, just about a year ago, states that it would “enable the export of bitumen from a strategic deep-water port to Asian markets, including if necessary through an appropriate adjustment to the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act.”

That makes clear the position of the government. Let us not go halfway, but all the way. Let us get rid of a law that has no purpose at all in environmental protection, in safety or in maritime shipping issues, but has simply been put in place to keep Alberta oil in the ground.

There are several red herrings, if members can pardon the limited pun, in the waters today in respect of this debate.

First, the oil tanker ban, Bill C-48, is somehow a logical extension of the voluntary exclusion zone that exists off Canada's west coast and applies to U.S. tanker traffic. Roughly five supertankers a week transit from Valdez, Alaska, to U.S. ports on the southern western coast of the United States. Those tankers stay offshore by agreement. This tanker ban, Bill C-48, covers only interior waters that those tankers do not transit on any regular basis.

Private Members' Business

Second, on indigenous participation, one of the members opposite has suggested over the course of the debate on this bill that Conservatives do not care about indigenous consultation. It is quite the opposite. Under the last Conservative government of Stephen Harper, the Eagle Spirit Energy project was well-developed. That was an indigenous-owned pipeline that would have put in place the opportunity to transport Alberta crude oil to the west coast. That project died with Bill C-48 and other anti-energy Liberal laws.

I believe in reconciliation, and true reconciliation comes from working together, particularly as economic partners. There is no effort on the part of this side of the House to limit that consultation and those processes to develop partnerships that would allow economic prosperity for all.

Third, with respect to the red herrings is the environment and safety, it has been suggested that we want to cut corners. Nothing could be further from the truth. I am as concerned about environmental protection as any other Canadian. Let me note something from a former Liberal MP, Ms. Martha Hall Findlay, who was pretty succinct on this subject in respect of shipping risk. She stated, “There are risks associated with any kind of transportation with any goods, and not all of them are with oil tankers. All that singling out one part of one coast did was prevent more oil and gas from being produced that could be shipped off that coast”.

Our west coast shipping industry, and indeed the Canadian maritime shipping industry writ large, is safe, capable and world-class. Perhaps the members opposite forming government at this point in time do not have confidence in that industry, but I certainly do. The ability for our industry to ship and ship safely is extensive.

Last, I want to quote from Greg Ebel, the CEO of Enbridge, Canada's largest crude oil shipper. He said, “The tanker ban is a great example of how things will have to change to allow our country to maximize its economic potential. Let markets and real demand guide routes and capacities while government focuses on enabling the conditions for success”. I could not agree more.

As my friends on this side of the House have made clear, Bill C-48 has never been about protecting the environment. It has never been about safety. It is only about keeping oil in the ground. It must be repealed.

• (1200)

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

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

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

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 28, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week, on Thursday, October 22, I presented the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, on that day the not-so-mighty OGGO. Unfortunately, the report omitted the committee's request for a government response.

If you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to allow me to present a corrected version of the report and replace the earlier version.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

[Translation]

There being no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[Translation]***STRENGTHENING CANADA'S DEFENCE SECTOR ACT**

The House resumed from October 20 consideration of the motion that C-40, An Act respecting production, procurement and investment in relation to national defence and national security, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Edmonton West.

On behalf of the people of Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, let me begin by paying tribute to the four soldiers who lost their lives in the fire at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright, Alberta, on October 17. Sergeant Morgan Wong, Private Shaun Farrell, Private Aidan Goulding and Private Hayden Lykkemark each left behind a grieving family, loved ones, and brothers and sisters in arms. I offer my deepest condolences to those who are in mourning.

Coming from a region that went through its own serious tragedy, I know from experience that such devastating events leave a lasting impact. I hope they can draw on their resilience to overcome this painful ordeal, both for themselves and for the families of the service members who lost their lives. They were simply there to train, to do their duty for their country. They wanted to have a good time training and doing what they loved. On behalf of my constituents, I would like to say that we owe them a debt of respect, gratitude and support.

Let us imagine for a moment a Canadian soldier getting ready to deploy. He has completed his training, he knows his team and he knows why he wears the uniform. However, just as he is about to leave, one question remains: Will he have all the equipment he needs to carry out his mission safely? He might be leaving behind a family, loved ones, a partner, children or parents who are waiting for him to come home. These people trust our country to have the decency to provide the necessary equipment to those who are putting their lives on the line and risking their physical safety to protect us and protect others. However, after 10 years of Liberal rule, procurement delays are mounting, costs are rising and our military personnel are still waiting for essential equipment. It is in the context of the terrible conditions facing our military personnel that we are discussing Bill C-40, which supposedly seeks to reorganize military procurement in Canada.

We expected concrete action, but what this old Liberal government is proposing yet again is to do what it has done best since it took office, that is, create a new structure. This time, it is a new Crown corporation. I do not think that a new organizational chart is what our military personnel need. What they need is equipment that is reliable, available and delivered on time. Where are the ships? Where are the jets? Where is the ammunition? These are the questions that our military members are asking. The Conservatives will always stand with the men and women who serve our country, now and in the future. We have to make sure that every dollar we spend is well spent, meets their needs and serves to protect our country or people, when we participate in support operations, for instance.

That money is, of course, entrusted to the government by Canadians. As members are aware, families are having to make tough choices right now. In Quebec and elsewhere, the price of everything, like groceries, is going up. Canadians are careful about how much gas they put in their cars. Canadians have to calculate how much is left at the end of the month to pay the bills. Every penny counts. When spending goes up, families have to reconsider their priorities, and sometimes they have to forgo some larger purchases. I think that families expect the same level of discipline from their government. While families are stretching their money as far as it will go, the government in Ottawa keeps making more and more announcements and creating more and more bureaucracy.

Not that long ago, in October 2025, the Liberal government established the Defence Investment Agency. It subsequently sought to modify the agency's status through Bill C-31. Today, it is proposing yet another change, namely, transforming it into a Crown corporation. This is nothing short of a bureaucratic lasagna. When a problem arises, the government adds another administrative layer. When a new problem emerges, it adds another layer of red tape. When another new problem surfaces, it piles on a new layer of management. That is how it operates. That is the recipe for Liberal lasagna.

Canadians do not need more announcements. Our armed forces do not need a new organizational chart. They just need equipment that works and enough ammunition to be able to do their job properly.

• (1205)

In the real world, families and small businesses cannot just keep adding layers of paperwork to avoid paying their bills. At the end of the month, they have to pay. Unfortunately, from what we are hearing, people cannot afford to pay for their items at the grocery store checkout. There are too many stories of mothers having to take diapers out of their cart just to bring the total down. Why is the government giving itself permission to keep spending while families have to do without?

What Liberal problems will this new organization actually solve? How much will this reorganization cost?

While the Liberals are once again reorganizing their offices, our men and women in uniform are waiting. All of this leads to another problem. While they are waiting, another question arises. Why do we need to create a new corporation? Is it to take certain important decision-making powers away from the state, away from Parliament, so that money can be spent out of the public eye? No, of course not. The Liberals would surely never do something like that, and yet it seems that is exactly what is happening.

Bill C-40 provides for 17 cases in which an unelected official may grant an exception so that a competitive procurement process does not have to be conducted. That is a lot. Some exceptions are likely necessary. However, when contracts can be awarded without any real competition, how do we prevent favouritism and the risk of corruption?

As I said, we have every right to have doubts. Canadians have every right to have doubts. I am thinking about Brookfield and all the other situations where members of the Liberal club seem to enjoy the bounty of the Prime Minister's generosity using Canadians' money, which families will have to pay back sooner or later. The government is not doing the borrowing on its account. The government is borrowing on behalf of families. At the end of the day, Canadians are the ones who are going to pay for all this borrowing. It is not the government's money. It is Canadians' money, and Canadians have a right to know how it is being spent.

I want to make that clear. It may be that, when it comes to defence and national security, direct procurement is required to meet urgent needs. Under Prime Minister Harper, this was used during the war in Afghanistan, for example. However, it does not mean that we should abandon accountability. It does not mean that the government can simply say that it needs such and such a thing and

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that we have to take it at its word. There needs to be accountability. It is a matter of trust.

After more than 10 years of Liberal promises, Canadians expect more meaningful action. They expect jets, ships and ammunition, not just more Liberal announcements. What is more, the issue of transparency needs to be addressed. It goes well beyond Bill C-40. We have a clear example with the Saab GlobalEye aircraft. The government announced Saab as the preferred supplier for the air-borne early warning system.

Was the Royal Canadian Air Force consulted? Were its needs taken into consideration?

The silence we are hearing right now is exactly the response we have received. We do not know. Canadians deserve answers. The F-35 file is another example of the consequences of the Liberals' hesitation. The cost overruns of the F-35 program now total \$8.7 billion. Behind these billions in cost overruns are workers, parents, and families trying to make ends meet. I can say that those families would know exactly what to do with that money.

The Conservatives want to see major military procurement projects prioritized within the Privy Council Office, rather than the creation of additional administrative structures. When every decision is made, one consideration must remain paramount: the duty to protect Canadians, which is the very purpose for which the Canadian Armed Forces exist and are trained. When our soldiers receive training but are not provided with the equipment they need to carry out their missions, the government is putting itself in a difficult position and, unfortunately, sending military personnel into challenging situations.

We will continue to advocate for and demand the equipment necessary to protect our country. Unfortunately, with the Liberals, it is always the same story: promises to do better, announcements of sweeping reforms, billions of dollars spent on bureaucracy and repeated demands that Canadians be patient and foot the bill without question.

After 11 years of Liberal government, the Prime Minister is still talking about changing the structure. Eleven years of waiting is 11 years too long. No one goes to war with paper and pencils. No one defends peace by creating new offices, yet that is largely what the Liberals are offering our armed forces through Bill C-40. We will examine this bill carefully to ensure that our armed forces receive the equipment they need and that decisions can be made in a timely manner.

• (1210)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first, I would recognize that members of Parliament are wearing a poppy as a form of respect and tribute to members of our forces who have served in the past and are serving in present, and the sacrifices that have been made. I do believe, as the member referenced, that Wainwright will in fact be in the minds and hearts of many, along with our prayers for the victims.

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My question is with regard to the corporation that would be established. An arm's-length corporation, I would ultimately argue, has been demonstrated in the past through many different administrations of corporations, whether at the provincial level or federal level, to be exceptionally effective in transparency, accountability and efficiencies. I am wondering if the member would recognize that corporations can, if done properly through legislation, be the best way to ensure that our men and women are best served with the necessary equipment into the future.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, is my colleague referring to the Liberal green fund? Is he referring to about the Canada Post Corporation? Are those really good examples of transparency and controlled spending subject to the scrutiny of Parliament?

I respect my colleague's comments concerning the poppy that we are wearing today. I also agree that the next few days will be filled with ceremonies, and I encourage all Canadians to participate in honour of the CFB Wainwright soldiers. It is a unique opportunity for the public to reconnect with our soldiers and our veterans.

However, I cannot agree with the part of his intervention where he said Crown corporations are exceptionally effective in transparency. If he looked back over history a little, he would see that they are the best way for the government to fiddle the numbers and prevent its spending from being counted as government operating debt. That is not what we want here.

• (1215)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a fundamental question. In my colleague's opinion, why would this government rather set up new corporations with less accountability to the minister? There should be a line of accountability going all the way up to the minister and cabinet, but this type of corporation is not accountable to the government.

Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, my colleague sees right through this government's decision to establish a Crown corporation. It is to avoid transparency. It is probably to enable the Liberals to give millions of dollars to organizations and companies linked to their Liberal cronies, as they did with the green fund.

Who are the Liberal cronies in the queue these days, waiting for this Crown corporation to be established? I do not know. One thing I do know, however, is that over the past 18 months, one company in particular has been following the Liberal Prime Minister wherever he goes. That company is called Brookfield, and it sometimes even appears one step ahead of him, which worries us a great deal.

[English]

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to expand on the question the member from the Green Party asked, which really gets to the root of accountability and the lack of transparency that is being brought forward.

As somebody who has spent decades in the military, I fully understand that we need to massively revamp our defence procurement system. However, the previous Harper government demonstrated that when we need to urgently sole-source something for operational needs, it is able to be done. What does it require? It requires leadership from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Na-

tional Defence. In this case, the Liberals are trying to bring in a mechanism, and I am trying to understand why they would take away all this transparency, ministerial accountability, ultimately, and parliamentary oversight. I have no problem with Canada and the government's spending billions of dollars for our military, but it needs to be reported back to the House.

Can my hon. colleague explain why he thinks the Liberals are going down this path?

[Translation]

Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, it is simple. It is because they do not want to be held accountable. There is not a single minister who is accountable to the public. Ministerial responsibility no longer means anything to the Liberal government or its ministers.

[English]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-40, which is called by the government "strengthening Canada's defence sector act". It is really just another example of Liberal failure and incompetence being covered up by creating a new bureaucracy, but this time we would actually get two bureaucracies for the price of one.

There has been Liberal failure after Liberal failure for defence procurement, so the Liberals tried to create an extra agency, the DIA, the Defence Investment Agency, to cover up those previous failures instead of addressing them. Now we would have another bureaucracy covering up for the DIA, covering up for the previous failures.

There has been from the government a long string of failures for military procurement. There was the F-35, for which the original agreement was famously signed back in the Chrétien days. Then, of course, there was Trudeau saying that we were not going to buy it and then that we were going to maybe buy it. Now the government is saying that we have bought some but that it is going to review whether we are buying others, and that it is not really not sure what is going on.

There is the handgun debacle. Apart from purchasing a knife for the military, which is probably the lowest of the low-tech weapons, it has taken the government over 10 years to come up with a proper procurement process, such as for a handgun. Even after 10 years, it bungled it so badly that the winning bidder ended up suing the government, which further delayed it. Funny enough, now the RCMP is actually procuring weapons. It started the process in 2015, when the government came to power, but the government still has not finalized its procurement process. One would think it would just simply piggyback on the same 9mm bought by the armed forces, but that is too easy for the government.

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There were the frigates, which were many tens of billions of dollars over budget. If we remember back to the beginning of the frigate process with the national shipbuilding program, part of the tenet was that there would be no federal infrastructure money. The shipyards building them would have to build their own shipyards with their own money. What happened? The Liberal-connected Irving came hat in hand to the Liberal government, demanding 400 million more dollars, or otherwise there would be more cost overruns and more delays on the frigates. Despite the national shipbuilding agreement saying there would be no federal infrastructure money, the Liberals quickly cut a cheque.

One of my favourites is the fixed-wing search-and-rescue CC-295. It was purchased with political interference in 2015 from the first public works minister, Judy Foote, who put her finger on the scale to push it toward Airbus so there would be, as she stated, jobs created for PAL in her riding. This was a plane that was not properly certified yet to fly in Canada—

An hon. member: It is.

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, it is not fully, and the member opposite knows that.

The government spent billions on this plane, and there are still ongoing issues with it.

There is also GlobalEye. This is the one the Prime Minister interfered on and personally chose, so he could put hand over heart and say that we are working with our European allies, elbows up, instead of picking something else. Instead of going to a proper procurement process, we have GlobalEye, which is like an AEW&C plane.

What is the problem with it? It is meant for a small European theatre, perhaps not for a country that is, surprisingly, the second-largest country in the world. I guess the government forgot that. It has no inflight refuelling capabilities, does not have 360-degree viewing for its radar and does not meet the requirements as set out by the RCAF, yet the government interfered with the procurement process to pick a plane that is not suitable for Canada.

What is going to be perhaps the largest procurement ever is submarines. I am hearing now, and the government is free to refute it, that there is a stoppage in negotiations because apparently the German sub does not meet Royal Canadian Navy requirements. The government made a big splash, saying that it was going to do this and bring in so many jobs. It does not seem to focus on delivering what is best for our armed forces at the lowest price. It seems to focus on what is best for photo ops.

• (1220)

I want to get back to the CC-295 Kingfisher. This one was famous for its complexity in the RFP process, which was so bloated with the requirements set by the Liberals that there was a legendary viral photo of Airbus delivering its RFP. It had to rent a U-Haul. The RFP was 100,000 pages. For Leonardo, the competing bidder, it was 180,000 pages. Somehow, with an RFP so complicated, set by the government, that it required 180,000 pages, the Liberals missed advising Leonardo that there were some loopholes that they

could put in on the bids that allowed Airbus, despite putting in a bid 25% more expensive, to win the deal. Leonardo sued.

What did the government do instead of fixing its procurement process? It quietly gave Leonardo a sole-source contract, worth billions of dollars, for the CH-149 Cormorant. Airbus is happy. Leonardo is happy. Who is not happy? The taxpayers and the RCAF are not happy.

The government so overmodified the Airbus plane to justify purchasing. It is overweight and underpowered. Regulations require it to maintain a certain altitude on one engine, but the Kingfisher cannot. The equipment that it added so threw off the centre of gravity that it had to add counterweights, which of course added to the weight issue. There are icing vulnerabilities and modifications that changed the slipstream. As it was, search and rescue techs jumping out of the plane would get dragged into the airstream, bounced along the plane and killed or injured.

What is the Liberals' solution to their political meddling and incompetence? They would create the Defence Investment Agency. They hire their friend Doug Guzman, friend of the Prime Minister, and give him \$1 million a year. Despite his comfy role and \$1 million a year, he threatens to quit because they cannot get past the sclerotic process of procurement inflicted on the process by Canadians. Therefore they bring out Bill C-40. Even before the DIA is birthed by royal assent through the BIA, they would basically be killing it, replacing it with Bill C-40. The Liberals make a mess, create a bureaucracy to fix the mess and then would create another bureaucracy to fix the bureaucracy that was to fix the original mess.

It reminds me of an episode from *Yes, Minister*, the episode "Jobs for the Boys". The government tries to hide and resolve the financial failure of a mismanaged project. Rather than admitting its mistake and fixing the mistake, it resolves it by establishing a quango. What is a quango? It is a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization. Instead of Bill C-40, the government, I think, should have named the bill "C-quango".

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The famous Sir Humphrey explains that a failing government can always be rescued by establishing a new independent board or agency that allows the government to hand out jobs to its allies, such as Mr. Guzman, while adding a new layer of officialdom to oversee the original disaster. Does this sound familiar? Yes, it does. I want to quote right from the episode. Bernard says, “Sir Humphrey, this is a bit of a cover-up, isn't it?” Sir Humphrey answers, “Certainly not, Bernard. It's a responsible discretion exercised in the national interest to prevent unnecessary disclosure of eminently justifiable procedures in which the untimely revelation could severely impair public confidence.”

Once again, quite often it is *The Simpsons* that is foreseeing the future in politics, but here we have another example in *Yes, Minister*.

We do not need a quango. We do not need a Bill C-40 to fix procurement. We do not need a Defence Investment Agency to fix procurement. What we do need is for the Liberal government to depoliticize procurement. We need it to get out of the way.

My colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound commented that during the Afghan war, in which he served, we were able to purchase howitzers and other weapons quickly through sole-sourcing. It can be done, and it can be done right. The government needs to focus on the best equipment for our men and women in uniform, at the best price for taxpayers, not on what is best for its announcements and photo ops.

• (1225)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was at a press conference a few years back where we announced that the Hercules aircraft, through 435 squadron, was going to be replaced by the Kingfisher. The Kingfisher is going to be operational later this year for search and rescue. I am very much familiar with it because that is the branch I used to serve for when I was in the Canadian Forces, search and rescue, which was then based out of Edmonton and is now based out of the city of Winnipeg.

At the end of the day, when we think of the Bank of Canada, the CBC and the post office, these are Crown corporations with a high sense of accountability. If we think of provincial Crown corporations, whether it is Manitoba Hydro, Hydro-Québec or autopac, they have proven to be very effective. We have a Prime Minister who has now raised our GDP military spending to 2%, higher than Stephen Harper ever even dreamed about. I think Stephen Harper one year raised it to 1%.

Does the member not see that accountability can be held through Crown corporations?

• (1230)

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I can only assume that the member opposite is playing out a scene from the *Seinfeld* episode “The Opposite”. He stands in this House and gives CBC as an example of openness and accountability, along with Canada Post. At the operations committee, we heard the president of Canada Post tell us at that for five years the government blocked the publication and implementation of its board's strategic plan. The president stat-

ed publicly that the government's political interference is a big reason that it is losing over \$1 billion a year, yet the government wants to use the Canada Post business example as a reason to hand over the reins for defence spending. I think not.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Edmonton West for his very strong intervention pointing out all the political interference we have witnessed already from the Liberals.

My colleague is the chair of the government operations committee, or, as we like to call it, the mighty OGGO. He hears from the Parliamentary Budget Officer on a frequent basis. The Parliamentary Budget Officer, in the last week or so, was criticizing the government for its overuse of Crown corporations to hide its ongoing structural deficits by moving things underneath Crown corporations, especially the spending that is going to take place under National Defence. It is going to turn spending into assets, which does not protect taxpayers. I wonder if my colleague could comment on that.

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, yes, there were a lot of concerns expressed by the PBO with respect to transparency, the government's ability to hide debt and other issues with Crown corporations.

One of the other issues we heard about, which the member for Winnipeg North was going on about, is meeting the 2%. At committee, the Coast Guard came and told us that its money is now being counted as defence spending, even though it is for activities such as counting fish and scientific studies. This is the 2% the government is bragging about. Again, it needs to focus on procuring the weapons and equipment that our defence department and our men and women in uniform need, not playing that counting fish is a defence activity.

James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to get up again.

The member for Edmonton West was talking about the ongoing creative accounting. The Coast Guard is a case in point. It is a civilian organization that does a great job at navigation research, ice-breaking and policing our fishery, but it does not have any constabulary power at all. It told the defence committee that although 100% of its funding is now calculated under National Defence, it is only a civilian organization, and that if it runs into any threats of a hot conflict developing between Canada and an adversary, it would flee the situation.

I would like my colleague to talk about the other creative accounting we are seeing from the Liberals, as with Transport Canada aircraft, that has been moved to National Defence, rather than them buying the kit we need to keep Canada safe.

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Manitoba said it all. What we want from the government is accountability and transparency. We will work with the government to serve our men and women in uniform and get them the right equipment, but the government has to do its part as well.

[Translation]

Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Labrador.

[English]

This is my first opportunity to speak in the House since the tragedy at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright, so I want to begin by offering my deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of those who tragically died in this tragedy. My thoughts are also with those who were injured, their families and the entire community as they grieve and support one another through this difficult time.

[Translation]

I rise today to give my full support to Bill C-30, which will transform the way Canada procures military equipment, invests in defence and, above all, builds its domestic defence industry.

The Defence Investment Agency was created in October 2025 to speed up military procurement, but transforming it into a Crown corporation could reduce bureaucracy. I will come back to this later, but companies seeking defence contracts face significant challenges. The government has invested billions of dollars in defence, and that is very good. We want to meet NATO's targets, but we also need to ensure that these investments benefit Canadian businesses and workers.

The agency was originally established to modernize defence procurement. That was a very good first step, but it did not go far enough. Bill C-40 will finally give the agency the authority and independence it needs to accelerate the contract awarding process, reduce red tape and better coordinate government efforts. This is very important for accelerating and facilitating SMEs' access to the defence market. This is a very practical response to the concerns that businesses have shared with us. It is also a way to quickly turn our defence investments into quality jobs for Canadians, innovation, and economic spinoffs at a time when we really need them.

I want to focus specifically on the aerospace industry in Quebec and Canada, especially because Quebec's aerospace industry is a major asset. This summer, I had the pleasure of organizing a round table that brought together both large corporations and SMEs from Quebec's aerospace and defence industry. Bombardier was there, but so were many other innovative SMEs. In Quebec, we have outstanding expertise, world-class businesses and a network of specialized companies that contribute to our ability to innovate in Canada and around the world in the aerospace industry.

During this round table with businesses, one very clear message emerged. One of the biggest obstacles to their growth and ability to secure contracts is the slow, bureaucratic pace of the defence procurement process. Their representatives explained to me that the historic investments we have announced for the defence sector are not automatically translating into jobs and economic spinoffs, be-

cause it takes so long to get contracts signed. These contracts are essential if businesses are to invest, hire staff and engage with other suppliers. For example, if Bombardier wins a defence contract, the entire chain of SMEs in Quebec and Canada stands to benefit as a result.

The participants also pointed out that SMEs often struggle to access defence tenders, even if the government has already awarded them contracts and their technology is well known. In short, it takes a very long time for contracts to be awarded.

● (1235)

Not only do we need to invest in defence, but we also need to ensure that our investments translate quickly into contracts, innovation and well-paying jobs for Canadians. Transforming the Defence Investment Agency is very important for doing that. Not only are we streamlining the processes, but another very aspect is that we are bringing together expertise within the agency to speed up procurement. If we do the right thing with this bill, we will finally be able to respond directly to the main concern expressed by the industry.

Our aim is not just to spend more on defence, but to transform these investments into strong, lasting Canadian industrial capabilities that benefit our businesses and our workers, while ensuring the sovereignty of our amazing country. The agency's core mandate is to combine and build on existing defence procurement expertise within government through a single organization focused on a very specific objective. Rather than duplicate the use of resources, it pools operational knowledge and expertise on procurement contracts in one place. As I said, one of the concerns that was mentioned during the round table was that companies have to explain their expertise or technology to one agency and then turn around and explain it again to another, even after receiving approval. They often have to repeat things twice. Now, everything will come together in a single agency.

The agency's transformation reflects our government's commitment to build a strong, secure and sovereign Canada. With more autonomy and stronger contractual authority, the agency will finally be able to ease its administrative burden and improve its efficiency and speed, because these investments are needed now. This will strengthen our country's ability to defend itself while providing more accountability.

In February 2026, the unveiling of the first-ever defence industrial strategy marked a key step in modernizing our procurement system. The strategy already called for a whole-of-government approach aimed at strengthening our defence industrial base. We are now seeing the results of this strategy, since we have finally met the NATO defence spending target of 2% of our GDP. We have also reaffirmed our commitment to meeting the NATO target of investing 5% of GDP by 2035. The agency will obviously play a key role in meeting those targets.

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We are at a hinge moment. Global uncertainty, supply chain disruptions and evolving security challenges have made one thing very clear: Protecting Canadians and safeguarding our sovereignty, our economy and our military capability is what will give us industrial and military strength.

Our investments in defence are also a powerful driver of growth for our economy and our innovative sectors. Let us consider just a few examples. Drone technology was developed for defence, but it can also be used in agriculture. Military aerospace innovations benefit the entire aerospace industry. The same is true for shipbuilding and satellites. There is a great company in the Outaouais region, Telesat, that builds satellites. That also benefits AI and cybersecurity.

All of these examples show that by working with an effective agency, we will be able to build a strong and sovereign Canada.

• (1240)

[English]

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome my colleague to the veterans affairs committee.

One of the things we hear in the veterans affairs committee is that there is a continual lack of recognition for veterans when military contracts go out. If we look south of the border, the U.S. has a procurement strategy of including 3% of small businesses owned by veterans, and in fact, that has actually been exceeded to 5%. We hear all these numbers being thrown around by the Liberals, but we are not hearing anything about veterans. We have seen sole-sourcing.

Could the member expand a little on her thoughts about why veterans are not being recognized?

Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, one thing we are studying at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs right now, which is very important for our veterans, is how to recognize the amazing skills they acquired in the forces. The forces now include drones, as I mentioned, cybersecurity, AI, all of those technologies that are so important to the defence sector. When they retire from the forces, they are sometimes as young as 34, and they want a rewarding career after the forces. They want to feel that they are contributing to the service of their country that they love.

Our job, and I invite all members to support me, is to help them recognize the skills they acquired in dual-use technology and how they can translate those into civilian jobs so that we can build very rewarding careers for all of our veterans.

• (1245)

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to explain in greater detail how this bill will help veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces successfully transition to civilian life.

I agree with her. I have seen cases like this in my constituency. Many individuals leave the armed forces for a variety of reasons, only to find themselves with nothing. They have no job, no social network and no recognition for their service.

I have studied Bill C-40, but I am not sure I can see any concrete improvements in it. In her view, how will Bill C-40 help these people?

Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, I hope my colleague will agree that aerospace is one of the flagship sectors of Quebec's economy. I have spoken with companies in the sector, and one Quebec-based SME told me that it could hire 300 people tomorrow morning, but our educational institutions are not currently able to train enough workers to meet the demand for these highly rewarding careers.

We have veterans who have acquired these skills, this expertise, and who are simply waiting for those qualifications to be recognized. We are currently working with certain educational institutions to accelerate the recognition of skills acquired in the Canadian Armed Forces so that veterans can step in to fill labour shortages. The aerospace sector alone will need 65,000 new workers over the next 10 years. These are technical trades. Our role is to recognize veterans' expertise and translate it into a certification that allows them to practise a Red Seal trade and pursue a meaningful career involving a wide range of technologies.

[English]

Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I have to say that I am somewhat disappointed with the answer I received earlier, but I will move on.

The big question is, is this an admission of failure by the Liberal government to procure equipment? We have been waiting for years for F-35s. We have been waiting for submarine replacements. We are waiting on Snowbird replacements. We are waiting on continual equipment replacement by the Liberal government. It keeps dragging the puck, and all we hear are excuses. This seems to be another excuse.

Is this another excuse, or is this an admission of failure on bad policy that the Liberals have had in place for over 10 years?

[Translation]

Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, my colleague will be voting in favour of Bill C-40, because its goal is get contracts awarded faster to our defence companies.

I want to come back to the aerospace industry. Contracts could easily be awarded. By combining expertise, we could make sure contracts are awarded faster.

[English]

Philip Earle (Labrador, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like my colleague, this is the first time I have spoken on a bill in the House since October 17. I would like to bring condolences from the people of Labrador with respect to the tragic loss to Canada, to all of us and especially to the families of those who lost their lives on October 17.

At the heart of the ongoing debate around Bill C-40 in the House lies a simple notion, that the Canadian Armed Forces deserve to have the equipment they need when they need it. It was, after all, the opening comment from my colleague across the way just a few short moments ago. Our armed forces and Canadian Coast Guard work tirelessly to protect our country's sovereignty, defend our people, respond to emergencies and maintain international peace and security. The women and men who serve our country must have the capabilities they need to do their jobs. That includes modern, reliable equipment with advanced features and technology for maximum advantage in the field.

Canada's defence procurement has long been complicated, lengthy and reliant on international suppliers. The old methods of defence procurement involve a decentralized approach that has not been, and is not, fit for the current geopolitical realities, with responsibilities and accountability spread over too many separate departments. Canada needs a defence procurement system that can keep pace with the world around us.

Our armed forces need the right equipment. We need new, nimble and more streamlined methods of procurement. Our industry needs clear direction, and Canadians expect us to deliver. Bill C-40, the strengthening Canada's defence sector act, is the next step in that important work: giving the Canadian Armed Forces and the Canadian Coast Guard the capabilities they need when they need them. Providing modern, reliable capabilities to our armed forces is at the very core of the Defence Investment Agency's mission.

The DIA was created in October 2025 under a temporary structure of a special operating agency within Public Services and Procurement Canada to help Canada respond to current and emerging security threats. The overarching goal was to modernize equipment delivery and ensure our troops receive the capabilities they need when they need them. Creating the DIA as a special operating agency allowed us to improve delivery immediately, while developing its permanent structure. However, that was never intended to be the destination.

Over the last year, the agency quickly got to work on its mission to transform defence procurement in Canada, reducing delays, cutting red tape, streamlining decision-making and delivering critical capabilities more quickly, transparently and with full accountability to Canadians. As a special operating agency, it has succeeded in its mission, to a point. In the year since the DIA was created, several major procurements have been completed or are on track to be completed faster and earlier than expected. The agency has reached key milestones on a number of complex and highly valued projects.

Now guided by Canada's first defence industrial strategy, the agency has made considerable progress in important projects, such as the next-generation rifle for our army, new aircraft, space capabilities and the next generation of submarines. The special operating agency model has proven its value. It has shown us that we can accelerate defence procurement.

Instituting the Defence Investment Agency as a permanent organization with an updated mandate, authorities and flexibility will give us the tools to accelerate even faster. Moreover, it will provide a critical level of agility to meet the serious defence and security challenges that Canada is facing. This would allow us to deliver

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military capabilities sooner, strengthen Canadian industry and remain accountable for the results. This is what Bill C-40 would accomplish, taking progress to the next level and using a more businesslike approach.

● (1250)

I believe many, if not most, members in the House would agree that there is a strong need for a single point of accountability for defence procurement. Under the previous, decentralized system, responsibility was spread out across multiple departments. Many organizations had a role, but no single minister was accountable for delivering results. Bill C-40 would set a dedicated ministerial leadership within the national defence portfolio, the associate minister of national defence for procurement. It is important to note that Bill C-40 would allow the new associate minister to perform financial assistance operations related to production or investment in respect of defence or national security.

These new powers would allow the government to play a more active role in strengthening Canada's defence and national security industrial base. This is how we are fostering innovation that supports strategic capabilities and moving swiftly to ensure that critical technologies and manufacturing capabilities remain available to Canada and to our allies. We have already streamlined approval processes under the DIA's temporary structure and achieved many things in terms of accelerating and improving procurement, as I mentioned earlier. However, we need to go further, and Bill C-40 would take us there.

In closing, as Canadians face an unpredictable and unstable world, our government is ensuring that our armed forces remain ready for the challenges ahead. We are rebuilding and reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces to meet the moment, so that Canadians who serve have access to the dependable, modern equipment they need. We are laser focused on delivering on the defence industrial strategy and supporting the buy Canadian policy by tapping into and using a more businesslike approach. We are collaborating with like-minded, reliable and trusted industry partners to create new opportunities for Canadian defence industries, ensuring Canadian expertise has a strong hand in keeping us safe and secure.

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Canada's government is protecting Canadians by making generational investments in defence and security, and we need institutions built to match the scale and urgency of that ambition. That is why the Defence Investment Agency is transitioning to a permanent organization with an updated mandate, as well as a centralized office with greater accountability. Under this model, the DIA will move faster to make strategic investments and deliver capabilities we need for the dedicated women and men on the front lines of our armed forces. This is about putting in place the right long-term institutional framework to improve defence procurement and delivering better results for Canadians.

Bill C-40, once passed, will dramatically improve outcomes for the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces and all Canadians. I urge all members in the House to support this legislation.

• (1255)

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I consider my colleague from Labrador a friend. I would just like to ask him a few things about his intervention. Under the Chrétien government, the Liberals came out with a defence white paper. It was about buying off-the-shelf technology, and that was, basically, relying on foreign countries for equipment. I heard my colleague say that put us in a bad situation, and we are reliant on foreign nations.

Under a Conservative government, we invested on the ground floor of the F-35s, which included small businesses in Canada being able to gain from the contracts. Now the Liberals are dragging the puck on that.

What side of the fence is my colleague on? If I get two Liberals in the same room, they are arguing between each other, and at some point one of them is going to win. Which one is going to win?

Philip Earle: Madam Speaker, I share the same respect for my colleague across the way. We have worked collaboratively on many things since I came here as a new member of Parliament.

I would say to my hon. colleague that the world has changed. The premise of his question, while well stated, does not recognize that the world has changed. This legislation would allow us to invest more into our military but build an industry right here in Canada so those investments that are made would go to create jobs, maybe in his riding or in another riding. It is all about the women and men in uniform and giving them the tools they need.

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Labrador for his excellent speech.

He talked about the importance of being able to make decisions quickly.

Could he explain to the House how, in his opinion, this new agency will quickly deliver on its promises for the Canadian Armed Forces?

[English]

Philip Earle: Madam Speaker, coming from the aerospace sector before coming to the House, I know all too well how challenging procurement is in Canada when it comes to identifying the need

and then waiting through the process as contract tender specs continue to change and so on.

To answer my colleague's question, we must identify the need, make sure it is well pronounced, have an RFP that is developed accurately through this new process, and get through the procurement process to get the goods required by our Canadian Armed Forces.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, is this not a way for the government to shirk some of its responsibility? Is it not a bit risky to create an agency to handle such crucial and sensitive defence investments? Questions are already being raised.

First, there is the appointment of the agency's president, who is close to the Prime Minister and has a background at Goldman Sachs. Then, that person's salary is around \$700,000 a year, which is more than that of most senior public servants. That is more than what the Minister of Finance and National Revenue himself earns, and it is more than the Prime Minister's salary, though interest on his investments is not included in that figure.

I wonder if this is a way for the government to offload some of its responsibility. When there are questionable decisions, when there are suspicions of misconduct or scandals, which could happen, even if it is just cases of misconduct that need to be investigated, the government might then be able to claim that it was not them, that it was the agency, and that it cannot be held responsible. On the contrary, when it comes to defence investments, it is absolutely essential for the government to be at the helm.

• (1300)

[English]

Philip Earle: Madam Speaker, I would say to my hon. colleague that it is quite the opposite. Setting up a Crown corporation would take it away from politics. It would allow people who are trained and experts in the field, who will most likely sit on the board of directors, to direct the procurement policy and get the best deal for Canadians so we can buy the products and items that our Canadian Forces need.

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-40, the strengthening Canada's defence sector act. When this debate opened, the Secretary of State for Defence Procurement read the House a long list of what the Defence Investment Agency has achieved. Then he said something that I agree with completely: Some were contracts, some were preferred suppliers and some were arrangements, and we should not confuse them. He is right, so let us not. A preferred supplier is not a contract. A contract is not a delivery.

Let me be clear about where Conservatives stand. Procurement in this country is too slow. Our men and women in uniform have waited too long for the equipment they needed yesterday. Going faster is the right goal. We do not object to going faster. We object to going faster with nobody watching.

We know it can be done. During the war in Afghanistan, a Conservative government bought C-17s, Chinooks and new Hercules quickly using the urgent operational and national security exceptions that already existed. That speed came from political leadership. It did not require handing unchecked power to one person.

This is the third version of this agency in a year. It started inside Public Services and Procurement Canada. Six months later, the government buried a plan to make it a stand-alone entity in an omnibus budget bill. Before that plan has even passed, it wants a Crown corporation instead. That is three structures in one year. How is that for Liberals making themselves look busy while accomplishing nothing? There is no shortage of decisions, and how they were made tells us exactly what this bill would make routine.

Let us take the fighter trainer as an example. Since March 2024, the Royal Canadian Air Force has not had a lead-in fighter trainer. The Hawks are gone. The 419 squadron is on hiatus, and our future fighter pilots are being trained in Italy, Texas and other locations around the globe.

How did the government pick a replacement? It was not through an open competition. The Prime Minister launched negotiations for the Italian M-346 with Prime Minister Meloni on the sidelines of the G7, even though Canada had received proposals from American and South Korean manufacturers. It may well be a fine aircraft, but a leader-to-leader handshake is not a procurement process. Under Bill C-40, a government-to-government deal would be one of 17 ways a minister could skip competition entirely.

Then there is GlobalEye. The government named Saab's GlobalEye as its preferred airborne early warning aircraft at CANSEC in May. It is a capability that our air force badly needs, but according to reports, the decision came as a shock to the RCAF itself and to other manufacturers ready to bid on the contract. Saab did not meet with National Defence or the air force about operational requirements until weeks after the announcement. The technical assessment that followed found real shortfalls: limited radar coverage, no air-to-air refuelling capability and incompatibility with NORAD's secure data network.

That is why Conservatives have asked the Auditor General and the Parliamentary Budget Officer to investigate. If this is how decisions get made while Parliament still has some oversight, imagine how they will be under the bill that would remove it.

This bill would create a Crown corporation that we are told would operate at arm's length, but the minister can direct it to do or not do any procurement activity, and the bill says it must comply. Ministers keep the control. The House loses the line of sight. We have seen what happens when public money flows through a body the House cannot see into. The green slush fund handed out public money with too little oversight. Bill C-40 would build that same kind of body and hand it \$1 billion at a time.

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Plainly, this bill would hand a new associate minister oligarchic powers to direct a corporation with a billion-dollar fund, to have it lend money and buy shares in companies, and to do it all while the House is kept at arm's length. This is not reform. This is concentration.

● (1305)

The secretary of state defended clause 9 by calling it an “unambiguous tie to the government”. That is exactly the point. This is not at arm's length. It is a minister's hand on a billion-dollar fund.

The government is promising a once-in-a-generation build-out-of-Canada defence economy, so let me ask a simple question: Who is better prepared to build, maintain and sustain military equipment than the people who use it? They are mechanics, technicians, logisticians, pilots and project managers who have run operations under conditions that most private sector managers will never see.

On the veterans affairs committee, we hear in study after study that veterans' skills are not recognized and that the government has no measurable targets, and there is nothing in the bill and nothing in this strategy to change that. There is no target for veteran-owned businesses and no credit in contract evaluation for hiring veterans. There is nothing.

Let us look south. In the United States, Congress set a statutory goal that 3% of federal contracting dollars would go to small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. In fiscal year 2023, American agencies did not just meet that goal; they beat it, awarding more than 5%, or nearly \$32 billion U.S.

We do not have to look south to know targets work. The secretary of state told the House that defence procurement met the government's 5% indigenous procurement target last year. That is good. It proves that a target can be set, measured and met in Canadian defence procurement, so why is there no target for veterans?

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Conservatives want our armed forces equipped faster. We just want it done in the open and done for the people who served. That means having a minister who answers to Parliament. The bill says, “The Corporation must do as the Minister directs”, which is wording we would not find in any other law in Canada. Direction should come from cabinet on the record, not from one minister's say-so.

It means using the tools the system already has. We did it in Afghanistan. That is why Conservatives have called for a dedicated secretariat in the Privy Council so defence contracts get cabinet's priority. Speed comes from political will, not from new Crown corporations. Conservatives would cut the process, not cut Parliament out.

After a decade of Liberal neglect, our sailors, soldiers and aviators do not need a new bureaucracy or a minister with a new title. They need a procurement process that equips them for the modern threats we face. I am concerned that Bill C-40 would remove the parliamentary oversight that this agency badly needs and would open the door to waste and mismanagement.

We have seen where this leads. The greens slush fund was an arm's-length body handing out public money. Bill C-40 would be the same kind of body. That is why Conservatives have concerns and will be seeking clarity at committee.

I would be remiss not to spend my last minute of this speech recognizing those who served with the Snowbirds. I was at their last air show in Moose Jaw, something that obviously I was proud to witness and that inspired not only me but Canadians across this nation, but something that was very disappointing. It is another example of a procurement boondoggle on the Liberal side, as we do not have an aircraft to replace the Snowbirds, to transition from one to the other and to continue having a team that shows the professionalism of our Canadian military.

I look forward to the questions and comments that will come from my colleagues from both my side and the other side.

• (1310)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish I had enough time to counter many of the things the member put on the record.

Quite frankly, I am starting to believe that Conservatives do not understand or do not care. We could talk about procurements. Today, the member talked about speed, but I would add in the word efficiency. In 18 months, we can look at what the Prime Minister has accomplished. The F-35s are now on Canadian soil.

There are so many things that, at the end of the day, members of the opposition do not recognize, like accountability. Crown corporations go to a minister. Members are allowed to hold them to account. Crown corporations go before a committee. We can hold them to account. Efficiency matters, and building Canada's industrial military base also matters. This is something that a Crown corporation would be able to accomplish. The Conservatives need to get off their “we oppose everything the government does” ledge and start recognizing a good thing when it hits them in the face.

Why will the member not support a Crown corporation?

Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I feel like I am at Yuk Yucks. Honestly, on efficiency for the F-35, we have two that have been delivered after 11 years of the Liberal government, and it is not the first time it has done this. There are the Cormorant helicopters. It is unbelievable. Time after time after time, we are always waiting for equipment from the Liberal government. Is this an admission of it having bad policy previously and that it cannot get its act together? Is it trying to create some new way to expedite? Nobody believes the Liberals.

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was very enlightening. We are talking about Bill C-40, the proposed strengthening Canada's defence sector act, which would create yet another bureaucracy for the federal government to use as a vehicle for announcements, re-announcements and photo ops. I think of Build Canada Homes, which was going to build houses at a generational scale, and in the meantime, housing starts are down and nowhere near the 500,000 for replacement to bring back housing affordability.

How would this bureaucracy be any different?

Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, the short answer is that it would not. When we look at the past record of how the Liberals have been operating in government, it is just boondoggle after boondoggle. Whether it is housing, the military or building pipelines, we have not seen anything. All we hear is the Prime Minister or ministers at the podium making announcements upon announcements. We have not seen anything. It is not tangible. It takes forever for the Liberals to come up with something.

Canadians are so tired of waiting. We have been waiting 10 years for the F-35 fighter aircraft that we desperately need. We had two delivered just recently and the Liberals think they have a win. This is just another example of why recruitment is down in the military and why we cannot get people in. We are not setting goals or standards and giving people something to strive for. We are not making them feel good that they are being looked after, that when they are being deployed to Latvia, they have the equipment they need or that they are not using used equipment or washed equipment from a weekend so that reservists can do weekend deployment.

• (1315)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member just said that military recruitment is down. Again the member is wrong, and he should know that we had record numbers of people applying to join the Canadian Forces. The member should acknowledge that.

At the end of the day, we have a Prime Minister who has been pushing for the last 18 months for our Canadian Forces. We have gone from a Stephen Harper 1% of GDP for the military to a 2% of Canadian GDP under the current Prime Minister. The member needs to be more straightforward and stick with the facts.

Fraser Tolmie: Madam Speaker, I will be straightforward: There are more people washing out in the military. They are being thrown into recruitment centres and being told that they are going to become soldiers, sailors and infantry, and they do not even know. They just show up. I have talked to friends who are in the military, and they are asking, "What are these people doing here?" They do not even know what they are doing here. Do not tell me that recruitment is up when the full spectrum of what is going on in the military is not being given.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak to Bill C-40, strengthening Canada's defence sector act. This enactment contains measures relating to production, procurement and investment with respect to national defence and national security. Part 1 deals with establishing the Canadian corporation for defence investment and part 2 would amend the Defence Production Act to, among other things:

- (a) extend the application of that Act to supplies and projects related to national security and to services related to national defence and national security;
- (b) provide that the Minister of Public Works and Government Services has the authority to acquire supplies and services related to national defence and national security... [with some] exceptions;
- (c) extend the purposes for which that Minister may engage in stockpiling to include national defence and national security, including economic security, and the defence and security of an associated government or other state;
- (d) provide that Minister with new financial authorities...; and
- (e) establish procurement rules....

Then part 3 gets into providing the necessary review of said acts. Everything I just said was extracted from the legislation itself.

What does this mean in plain speak? Bill C-40 would establish a Canadian corporation for defence investment, a Crown corporation run by a CEO and a board of directors under the authority of the associate minister of defence for procurement. The extent that Treasury Board's rules, however, would apply to this corporation have not been established. It is not part of the bill itself, but it is expected to be substantially less than before the defence investment act is enacted.

The Defence Production Act would be renamed and amended to permit the minister to procure everything or anything that could have a national defence or security use. It would also allow the corporation to exercise powers under sections 15 and 16 of the newly named defence and national security production and procurement act, which would deal with the stockpiling, procurement and disposal of military equipment. Bill C-40 would also massively expand the number of categories under which the minister could carry out a sole-sourced procurement, 17 in total should this bill pass, and by virtue of that, decline to run a competition and would also allow any number of future exceptions to be written into regulation, not backed through legislation. It would also allow the minister to exclude anyone on national security grounds from a competition, and here is what I take issue with, without justification, oversight or explanation to Canada and to Parliament.

Government Orders

Before I get into some of the other reasons that I think it is important that we revisit and revamp our procurement process, I am shocked that we are debating today under the threat of time allocation. To be fair, the government has not moved it, but a Liberal stood on Friday and threatened to move time allocation on a bill that is going to allow the government to spend literally hundreds of billions of dollars going forward and, at the same time, remove parliamentary oversight. I find it fascinating that we are on the second day of debate, not even through the first five hours of debate, and we are already under a threat of time allocation.

I will provide a bit of my own background. I spent 25 years in the military, but 24 years ago I had the privilege of attending, on the army side, the land force technical staff program, a year-long course where I did nothing besides study defence management as it relates to the army here in Canada and how we procure equipment. I was shocked, to say the least, after learning the technical expertise, some of the skill sets associated with it and a lot of science and engineering type stuff too, how messed up our procurement system has been for decades. That is why I am all about seeing necessary changes to the way we procure equipment for our members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

I want to give another specific example. After I did that course, I had the privilege of being posted at the infantry school in Gagetown. I had this weird title. I was the infantry corps technical adjutant. It was basically my job to read every statement of requirement for every piece of equipment that the army was procuring that could impact the Canadian Armed Forces and, specifically, the Canadian infantry. I remember having a debate and argument with the project director in Ottawa at the time around the purchase of our STANO equipment, our surveillance, target acquisition and night observation gear, specifically our monocular night vision goggles. We were doing something back then called whole fleet management. This was back under the Chrétien Liberal government at the time. I said this was not going to work, that we could not have equipment being procured for individual soldiers and expect to have it serviceable and ready when we need it, when we deploy on operations or to war. This was obviously post-9/11. We had troops in Afghanistan, but had not committed to the fight yet.

Government Orders

● (1320)

I was shocked and I had something to say when I called up that project director in spring 2006, because now I am the priority of the Canadian Army, deploying to Afghanistan on combat operations, and I do not even have enough monocular night vision goggles or enough equipment to train in night fighting before we are going out the door and going to war. It was just very frustrating.

If we fast-forward a bit, however, we see that we can do this right. The previous Harper Conservative government demonstrated during Afghanistan the ability to make massive procurements. They were to the tune of billions of dollars through a sole-source process. We got Chinook helicopters. We repurchased tanks. We got strategic airlift capabilities with the C-17s.

There are many more examples I could provide. It can be done, but it requires leadership and political will. A previous speaker from my side of the House highlighted this. It is about political will. Accountability, transparency and parliamentary oversight are needed.

This is what my concerns now relate to. Under the Liberal government, over the last 11 years, a number of defence procurement processes have been messed up. In previous speeches, we heard about the GlobalEye. Again, it was purchased before any substantial discussions with the Royal Canadian Air Force. There are still concerns about the operational capabilities of this platform to work in the north, in our Arctic.

Let us talk about the F-35. The member for Winnipeg North got up earlier and said they are a great thing. I will remind everyone that the member ran under the Liberal government in 2015 when it said it was going to get rid of the F-35 and that there was no way it was going to purchase the F-35, which is completely contrary to procurement, government rules and the whole competition process. It is good to finally see those F-35s being delivered.

The Liberals announced the Defence Investment Agency. It was announced during the Budget Implementation Act earlier and now through this new piece of legislation, Bill C-40. What may be part of the catalyst for this legislation is that the DIA's own CEO reportedly wanted to resign. He has been so frustrated by the slow pace of government bureaucracy and lack of the current Liberal government making things happen. What is the government's answer? It is to take away accountability and oversight.

That is where my concerns lie. We are talking about hundreds of billions of Canadian taxpayer dollars being used without being transparent or having proper parliamentary oversight. The Liberals have stood up and are claiming that the accountability is going to occur through the new associate minister of national defence. However, at the same time, we do not see anything within the clauses of the bill itself that would provide mechanisms for that oversight and transparency.

In principle, I absolutely support a massive rework of Canada's defence procurement system. However, as I laid out in my speech, Canada can procure and has procured massive military procurement in the past. How was that done? As I said, it was done through leadership. It was done through leadership by the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence, by pushing things through, by

making the claim to the Canadian taxpayer publicly and by reporting back to this chamber the necessary mechanisms so that the billions of dollars are going out for the right reasons and not just to Liberal insiders. It can be done.

I am going to be listening intently. I am confident in stating that this bill will get to committee. I am looking forward to the testimony of the Secretary of State for Defence Procurement, the Minister of National Defence and the minister of procurement services. I am looking forward to them showing up and explaining how they are going to make sure that they are accountable and transparent to Canadian taxpayers and how they will make sure that members of the Canadian Armed Forces are equipped with the necessary equipment and systems they need to defend this nation.

● (1325)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is important to recognize that when we think of a Crown corporation, there is a very high level of accountability. We have Crown corporations that report to standing committees, for example. We have a minister responsible for the Crown corporation, who we can pose all sorts of questions to. There is a higher level of accountability, I would ultimately argue, and it is arm's length.

I have been a parliamentarian for over 30 years at the provincial and federal level, and Crown corporations at all levels of government have proven to be very successful. Having a military procurement corporation would be good for Canada's military industrialization and our military. I will continue to articulate that.

Would the member not agree that provincial corporations and other federal corporations can prove to be very effective?

Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I am not going to debate whether or not Crown corporations can possibly be very effective. I think there are examples of where they have been very effective. There are plenty of examples of where they have not been very effective or very efficient. We have had huge debates around Canada Post. There are still huge issues, as it is not actually functioning the way it needs to function properly.

That said, why is the government, and this is the whole purpose of part of my speech, hiding behind transparency and parliamentary oversight? That is where my real concerns are when we are talking about literally hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars.

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound for his service in the military.

In the public accounts committee, of which I am a member, we have had many occurrences where the Auditor General has said that there are different rules for departments versus Crown corporations, and how that is a problem for the Auditor General's dealing with accountability and transparency with regard to the Crown corporations.

Can the member speak to how he sees this transparency actually proceeding with these impediments?

Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, I think that is a great point. In fact, I encourage all Canadians listening to read the Parliamentary Budget Officer's latest reports around the bending of the rules and the interpretation of how accountability and accounting are working with the government expenditures, with the Prime Minister and the Liberal government are trying to say that spending is somehow now assets.

The parliamentary secretary talked about how Crown corporations are so good, but we have some examples. I mentioned Canada Post, which has been losing \$1 billion every year. At the same time, how is that an asset? That is absolutely a liability. It is spending, not an actual asset going forward.

I think we should be using the same rules we have always used to account for our budgetary spending of Canadian taxpayers' dollars in this country. I think it is so important that the privilege we have as parliamentarians is used to actually provide that oversight, to ensure for Canadians that the members of our Canadian Armed Forces are being equipped properly with those very limited taxpayer dollars.

• (1330)

[Translation]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, creating this new Crown corporation is all well and good. It allows the government to say that decisions will be made independently. However, when we read the bill, it is clear that the government still retains control over decisions. Even if the decisions are officially being made by a Crown corporation, there will still be government oversight.

That seems a bit pointless to me. It strikes me as a bit of a smoke-and-mirrors show that will not really change anything meaningfully on the ground, especially since it is clear that it benefits a former colleague and friend of the Prime Minister who will end up at the head of this Crown corporation with a salary that could be described as astronomical.

How does my colleague view these issues in relation to Bill C-40?

[English]

Alex Ruff: Madam Speaker, my Bloc colleague's question is a good one, as it speaks to the issue of whether this corporation is even required. I would argue it likely is not. I agree with the hon. member that it is not actually doing anything, as I demonstrated in my speech, when governments of the past have successfully procured equipment in a timely fashion when required and, at the same time, with parliamentary oversight.

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today on behalf of the people of Acadie—Annapolis at second reading of Bill C-40, the strengthening Canada's defence sector act. I will be sharing my time with the awesome member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

I want to begin by offering my sincere condolences to family and friends of the Canadian Armed Forces members lost at CFB Wain-

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wright. May those members rest in peace. My thoughts are also with those members who are still in hospital. I wish them a full and speedy recovery. I am part of a family that includes a CAF member, and I know that my brother served many times at CFB Wainwright. I think he said he actually trained there more than seven times and really felt bad about what happened there. We hope, of course, that everyone recovers well.

Bill C-40 is personal for our region, because Acadie—Annapolis is proud to be home to 14 Wing Greenwood, the largest air base in Atlantic Canada. Greenwood trains long-range patrol crews, conducts regular surveillance over the Atlantic, supports global strategic airlift, and is the primary air search and rescue unit on Canada's east coast.

Over the past year, the government has backed Greenwood with new hangars for the new P-8A Poseidons, which replaced the aging Aurora aircraft; the new remotely piloted aircraft systems program; and new housing on the base. There is more coming for CFB Greenwood. This investment matters, not just for our safety on the east coast but just as much for the jobs and businesses of the Annapolis Valley and all of Nova Scotia.

I will go back to the bill that is before us and what it means for Greenwood, the valley and, of course, Nova Scotia. At its core, the legislation asks a very straightforward question: How do we make sure that Canada's growing investment in defence translates into real capacity, real security and real economic opportunity for Canadians, including communities such as ours?

The security environment is changing rapidly. Our allies are increasing defence spending, and governments everywhere recognize that a strong military depends on a strong and resilient industrial base. For Canada, that means more than committing resources. It means making sure our institutions can put those resources to work. For too long, defence procurement has been marked by complexity, multiple departments, overlapping authorities and lengthy approval times. Each part has an important job, but together those processes can slow decisions, create uncertainty for industry, and delay essential capacities. We have talented people across the system, and we have too often asked them to deliver complex projects and processes that are not built for today's pace and scale.

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Bill C-40 proposes a different approach. First, it will establish the Defence Investment Agency as a crown corporation within the national defence portfolio. The agency was created last October as the departmental agency. That was an important first step. This bill would take the next one: a permanent institution with its own board of directors, commercial expertise, and greater authority to negotiate and manage major contracts. Legally, it would be the Canadian corporation for defence investment, carrying on as the DIA.

Just as important, it would bring procurement, production and investment together in one organization. Procurement is how we acquire what our armed forces need. Production is how we make sure that capacity exists to build and sustain them. Investment is how we build industrial capabilities Canada will need in the years ahead. That matters because a purchase order does not build a factory, a contract does not create a skilled workforce, and a promising technology does not strengthen our security until it can be produced, tested, delivered and sustained.

• (1335)

[Translation]

That is why the bill provides the agency with a broader range of tools, including loans and advance payments, subject to the necessary approvals, to help Canadian businesses, including those in Nova Scotia, overcome financing barriers and scale up production.

[English]

Consider a company from Nova Scotia. Last Thursday, I spoke with representatives from A.F. Theriault & Son, the oldest and largest privately owned vessel builder in Nova Scotia. Since 1938, it has built more than 1,000 vessels in wood, steel, aluminum, fibre-glass and advanced composites. It has delivered over 750 unmanned surface target drones to the Canadian military, to the navy. It can respond to the need, but it needs to modernize and expand. A loan or an advance payment is the kind of tool that could help a company like that get there. It is exactly the kind of Nova Scotia business the DIA is being built to support.

This does not mean that government would be replacing private investment. It means using private investment strategically to attract private capital and build on capabilities that our security depends on.

The second part of the bill would amend the Defence Production Act and rename it the defence and national security production and procurement act. It would broaden the framework to address modern concerns, including economic security and strategically important industrial capacity. It would provide flexibility for certain procurement decisions, including urgent operational requirements. It would allow the minister, in specified circumstances, to award a contract without a competition, where that is necessary to support a sector of the economy that is important to national defence or national security.

[Translation]

Members will no doubt want to examine this provision closely and rightly so. The argument for it is simple. In a crisis, or when critical domestic capacity is under threat, a lengthy competitive process may cause us to lose the very capacity we seek to preserve.

It is in committee that these protection mechanisms must be put to the test.

[English]

Flexibility must come with responsibility. The corporation would have its own board and be subject to governance and financial reporting requirements. It would report through a new associate minister of National Defence for procurement, who would answer to Parliament for the agency and who could direct its work.

The Canadian Armed Forces, National Defence and the Canadian Coast Guard would continue to set their own operational priorities, requirements and acceptance criteria. The people who understand operational needs would keep deciding what is needed. The agency's job would be to turn those requirements into results. The aim is not to choose between speed and accountability. It is to deliver both.

This bill is about the link between national security and economic strength. The defence industrial strategy, launched in February, rests on a build, partner, buy framework to build in Canada where we have the capacity to develop it, to partner with trusted allies where co-operation strengthens our capabilities and supply chains, and to buy abroad when it is the most effective way to meet a requirement.

Over the next decade, the strategy aims to create up to 125,000 new jobs, increase defence exports by 50%, raise the share of defence acquisitions awarded to Canadian firms to 70% and grow annual defence revenues for small and medium-sized businesses by more than \$5 billion. These are ambitious goals, and they are an opportunity. That opportunity must reach smaller companies in Nova Scotia, such as Theriault, not only the biggest firms in the biggest centres.

Nova Scotia has extraordinary researchers and entrepreneurs, and we need to make it easier for innovations to move from prototype to production; give businesses the predictability to invest in equipment, facilities and workers; and help those businesses compete in allied markets around the world. A stronger defence industrial base is about more than jobs. It is about the capacity to act when our security demands it.

In a crisis, countries compete for the same equipment, materials and components. A country that cannot maintain its equipment, replenish its supplies or raise production when demand surges is more vulnerable. Our crews at Greenwood that patrol the Atlantic and answer the search and rescue calls 24-7 depend on equipment that is maintained, supplied and sustained without interruption.

• (1340)

[Translation]

That is why sovereign capability and secure supply chains matter. Every critical component we can produce here strengthens our resilience. Every critical system we can maintain here strengthens our independence. Every Canadian innovation we can develop and master strengthens our sovereignty.

[English]

Building a stronger defence sector is not only about preparing for the challenges we face today. It is also about giving Canada the capacity, confidence and independence to meet the challenges of tomorrow. It is also about making sure that when those investments come, they are felt here at home in Nova Scotia and across Canada, from the hangars in Greenwood to the businesses across the Annapolis Valley, and of course to all of Nova Scotia.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people of Acadie—Annapolis.

Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was incredible. I know he has continuously supported the members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Atlantic Canada plays a really important role for the Department of National Defence. The member spoke a bit about some of the opportunities that this provides for companies in the defence sector in his riding. Could he elaborate on why doing the same thing we have been doing in the past has not been working, and why it is so important that we put in place a Crown corporation that would allow the men and women in uniform to get the equipment they need faster and, more appropriately, Canada-purchased equipment?

Chris d'Entremont: Madam Speaker, this is the crux of what we are trying to do. As I said in the beginning of my speech, the question we are really trying to answer is, how do we build capacity within Canada?

Let us go back a number of years to when we talked about the navy's requirement for new frigates. In order to build those, we had to create a whole new system. The Irving shipyard, or the "ships here now" process we went through, created a \$1 billion system. I thank the previous government for doing that and thank this government for its continuation of that, but we need to build true capacity within our system. It is no different from working with A.F. Theriault, the airport in Yarmouth or other companies in South Shore—St. Margarets that can build the capacity and equipment that our armed forces so dearly need.

[Translation]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the time the Defence Investment Agency was created, another mechanism had been in place for decades. The need to procure military

equipment is nothing new for Canada. It has always existed. The government has purchased aircraft and had ships built in the past. None of that is anything new.

What forces the government to create a new agency now, one that is going to release the government from some of its responsibilities? We can all agree that the agency will bear the blame for any major errors or mistakes, whereas the government will take credit for any success. We already know how that works. What has happened in recent years that makes another agency better qualified than the Department of National Defence to handle this kind of procurement? That is the message being sent to public servants and the Department of National Defence.

Furthermore, why does it take a friend of the Prime Minister, a former Goldman Sachs colleague earning a salary of \$700,000 a year or more, to do work that public servants and the existing department could very well have done themselves?

Chris d'Entremont: Madam Speaker, I am asking myself the same question as my Bloc colleague: Is everything working the way it should right now? It takes years and years to acquire new equipment, whether ships, aircraft or even something as basic as the socks soldiers put on before lacing up their boots. We need a new approach that takes into account the potential within supply chains across Canada as well as the opportunities available in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces so we can manufacture more equipment here at home. The current system is not necessarily the best one. We must invest in a procurement process that meets the needs of the Canadian military.

• (1345)

Tim Watchorn (Les Pays-d'en-Haut, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe that the Defence Investment Agency has truly demonstrated over the past year that a dedicated organization is needed to manage military procurement. I am thinking in particular of the 190 armoured vehicles we purchased over the past year, the accelerated submarine procurement process and the assault rifles purchased this year.

Could my colleague explain how this new Crown corporation would be better positioned than the Defence Investment Agency, operating under the Department of Public Services and Procurement, to deliver the equipment our military personnel need more quickly?

Chris d'Entremont: Madam Speaker, we need to look at the complexity of the entire system we have right now. We are working with three or four different departments. We need to find a way to streamline the system. The purchasing of submarines is the largest military procurement project in Canadian history, and it was done fairly quickly. Although we do not have the full picture yet, this purchase will allow Canada to acquire the best underwater capability possible. It is something we need. Canada has been needing new submarines for 25 years, even 40 years. Thanks to the Defence Investment Agency, we finally have a system that makes their procurement possible.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is very fitting that today, October 24, on the launch of the Royal Canadian Legion's national poppy campaign, I rise here to support veterans and to speak to Bill C-40, the strengthening Canada's defence sector act.

Today we are here to discuss some important legislation that would accelerate defence procurement, strengthen Canadian identity and reinforce Canadian sovereignty. This bill represents a major step in modernizing how Canada would equip its military. Above all, this legislation is about building a stronger, more capable Canada, a Canada that continues to defend itself across emerging threats, protecting its interests and keeping Canadians safe.

This bill comes at a very defining moment in our country. Our government is making a generational investment to help rebuild, rearm and reinvest in the Canadian Armed Forces. However, our investments are only part of that equation, as we must also ensure that they translate into effective military capabilities delivered to the Canadian Armed Forces quickly and efficiently and that they deliver real economic benefits for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

To meet these important commitments, we established the Defence Investment Agency, or the DIA, as we are calling it here today, as a special operating agency within Public Services and Procurement Canada back in October 2025. In just one year, the DIA has helped accelerate and advance a number of major defence projects. The legislation we are proposing would build on this momentum. It would give the DIA the additional tools and authorities it needs to keep doing this work even more quickly and efficiently. It is important to know that we are also not starting from zero.

With that in mind, I would like to take a couple of minutes to highlight some of the important projects this DIA has been able to advance over the past year to strengthen our armed forces, as well as discuss how Bill C-40 would ensure we keep delivering at the pace that our military needs and that Canadians expect.

I would be remiss if I did not speak about what some of these investments with the DIA mean for my home riding of South Shore—St. Margarets and for rural communities across Atlantic Canada. When we talk about procurement, shipbuilding and marine capability, we are talking about more than just ships. We are talking about good-paying jobs. We are talking about advanced manufacturing. We are talking about skilled trades. We are also talking about the future of our rural coastal communities, which have been building and servicing vessels for generations.

In South Shore—St. Margarets, we understand the marine sector because we live it. We are Bluenosers, by the way. Many of us were raised on the water, many of us live on the water and many of us have spent generations building, maintaining and innovating in Canada's marine economy. We know how to build marine. What is remarkable is that Atlantic Canadians only represent about 6% of Canada's total population, yet our region is home to over 20% of Canada's full defence infrastructure and capabilities. That expertise did not appear overnight. It was built by generations of tradespeople, engineers, fabricators, welders, machinists, shipbuilders and

marine workers, who continue to contribute to Canada's security and prosperity every single day.

That is why defence procurement is so important for ridings like mine. When our government announced the historic \$11-billion program for new icebreakers at Davie, the largest shipbuilding contract in Quebec's history, it was more than just an investment in ships. It was an investment in Canadian workers, an investment in Canadian capacity and an investment in the more than 1,500 Canadian suppliers that support our shipbuilding sector from coast to coast to coast.

I am proud to say that many of those suppliers are located in rural Nova Scotia. When major contracts are awarded to companies like Davie or Irving, the benefits do not stop at the gates of those shipyards. Those benefits ripple outward through an entire network of Canadian suppliers and manufacturers.

• (1350)

In my riding, one of the best examples is Hawboldt Industries in Chester. Hawboldt recently secured almost \$40 million in contracts with Davie for its cranes, winches and specialized marine equipment. That contract represents more than one company's success. It supports jobs through Atlantic Canada's manufacturing supply chain. It creates work for fabricators, engineers, steel suppliers, machine shops, transportation companies and tradespeople. I could go on. It strengthens the industrial capacity that Canada needs not only to build vessels, but to sustain and service them for decades to come.

My riding is also home to companies like ABCO industries, a recognized leader in advanced manufacturing and metal fabrication. We are home to the Lunenburg foundry, Lunenburg Shipyard Alliance and East River Shipyard, all of which are contributing to Canada's marine industrial base through vessel reconstruction, fabrication, repairs, refits and maintenance. These companies might not make the big national headlines, but they are absolutely essential to Canada's defence readiness.

While our shipyards may build the next generation of vessels, companies in my riding along the south shore help maintain and service the fleets that Canada relies on every day. That work supports highly skilled jobs. It supports critical industrial expertise, and it ensures that Canada retains the ability to maintain and repair key assets here at home.

The DIA's goal is not simply to acquire equipment faster. It is about fundamentally transforming how we approach defence procurement. Historically, major acquisitions have involved several federal departments, each with its own level of different important responsibilities. National Defence identified military requirements, Public Services and Procurement managed procurement and contracts, and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada oversaw industrial and economic considerations.

While this arrangement brings valuable expertise across government, it creates duplication. It delays. It creates uncertainty as projects are moved along these different organizations. The DIA is helping to change that, and we are seeing the results of that in my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets, in little rural Nova Scotia.

By bringing together military, technical, commercial and procurement specialists from across government, the agency is building integrated teams that can work collaboratively from the earliest stages of a project. Instead of relying on the same sequence of hand-offs between organizations, the right experts can work together earlier to assess options, resolve problems and keep these projects moving along. The DIA is also introducing a more flexible approach to procurement that includes engaging with industry earlier, streamlining decision-making capabilities and considering existing commercial and military solutions where appropriate.

This work is closely connected to Canada's defence industrial strategy, the DIS, which is helping to ensure that our defence investments also build the industrial capacity, skilled workforce and secure supply chains needed to produce and sustain critical capabilities here at home. At the heart of this approach is to build, partner and buy, baby, buy. Building in Canada where we have that capacity, or where we are developing capacity, is strategically important. We are partnering with our trusted allies, with collaboration, and that is providing access to better capabilities, technologies and production opportunities. The “buy” part means buying existing capabilities from trusted partners when building or partnering is not the right solution.

This approach is helping us consider military requirements and industrial opportunities together from the onset. It is a more streamlined approach. It helps Canadian businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises, compete for defence contracts to develop new technologies and grow their operations. It also strengthens our ability to maintain and sustain essential military equipment in Canada.

• (1355)

Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Nova Scotia has over 14,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces and defence families. It is the number three province in terms of the population of our defence community. Nova Scotia has been punching above its weight in terms of the defence industry.

The hon. member talked a lot about what we are going to be procuring, but she also talked a little about how it is important to have not only equipment but also supports for the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families.

Statements by Members

Could she elaborate a little about making sure that we get them the equipment they need when they need it, to make sure that they can focus on the task at hand and not be worrying about whether they have the tools necessary?

Jessica Fancy: Madam Speaker, of course, our members of CAF are some of the hardest-working people that we have here in Canada, and we need to support them. How do we support them? It is by giving them the tools they need, by giving them the housing and infrastructure they need and by giving them the hospitals they need within base. We have let our infrastructure go for a little too long, and things like our DIS and our procurement strategy help streamline that process so that we are better able to help support our CAF members, as well as our SMEs.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL ARTIST DAY

Ernie Klassen (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 25, Canadians and people around the world celebrated International Artist Day. Founded by White Rock artist Chris MacClure, the day recognizes artists and the work they do. October 25 was chosen because it is the birthday of Pablo Picasso, one of the most influential artists of the modern era.

Artists often spend years developing their craft, yet the focus is usually on the finished work rather than the person who created it. Chris MacClure created International Artist Day in the belief that artists should be recognized during their lifetimes, not after they are gone.

Canadians can take pride in knowing that this international day was founded by a White Rock, B.C., artist whose vision helped draw attention to the lasting impact art has on our lives. Art preserves moments in time, captures how people see the world, and leaves behind a record for future generations. On International Artist Day, Canada took time to recognize the artists whose work enriches our communities and our daily lives.

Statements by Members

● (1400)

CANADA-TAIWAN TRADE

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims that diversifying trade is a top priority, yet he has been sitting on a trade agreement with our democratic ally Taiwan.

The Canada-Taiwan trade co-operation framework arrangement was finalized in March 2025. It would help strengthen trade, investment and supply chains with one of our largest trading partners. It is a win for Canada, yet it has languished on the Prime Minister's desk for 18 long months. The question is why.

Why do we have the delay? Is it because of the Prime Minister's ill-conceived strategic partnership with the Beijing dictatorship? Is it because the Prime Minister is taking his cues from Beijing? It certainly looks that way.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Tom Osborne (Cape Spear—Mount Pearl—Paradise, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *Below* is now the number one show on the Netflix global top 10 for a second straight week.

With almost 40 million views, it has reached number one in 82 countries. It is also officially the most viewed debut for a Canadian Netflix title ever. This builds on a strong run for Canadian productions from *North of North* to *Wayward*, reaching a cumulative 48 million views since June.

The success of Canadian storytelling is translating into real results. In 2025, viewing of Canadian content in Canada grew by nearly 20%, while almost 65% of Netflix members worldwide watched Canadian content.

Below was filmed for 75 days across Newfoundland and Labrador, including in St. John's, Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove, Brigus South and Pouch Cove, employing more than 700 cast members. *Below* contributed more than \$90 million to Canada's economy, most of it in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer sounded the alarm in her latest report. She is projecting that federal deficits will add over \$400 billion by 2031, nearly \$39 billion more than the Liberal government projected in the spring. Meanwhile, the economy grew by 0.9% this year.

The Minister of Finance was delighted last week, but with growth expected to be 1.5% in 2027, what is there to be delighted about? Interest on the debt will reach \$83 billion by the 2030-31 fiscal year. It is still being charged to the credit card of Canadian families.

Canadians need an economy that produces more. They do not need mounting deficits. The Conservatives are proposing tax cuts and have a plan to save \$150 billion by eliminating wasteful federal

spending. It is time to put growth, affordability and fiscal responsibility back at the forefront.

* * *

ALSTOM

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer, Alstom was awarded a landmark contract to design, engineer, manufacture and provide support for 313 new rail cars that will serve passengers across the country.

That is good news for Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, where Alstom's North American headquarters are located. That is where the teams will do the design and engineering work for VIA Rail's future trains. At the peak of construction, this project will create or support 185 jobs in Saint-Bruno and, in total, more than 1,000 direct, indirect, or related jobs across the country.

Our region plays a key role in Canada's economy. Our teams are talented. They are full of ideas and know how to build the trains of tomorrow. This contract showcases our region's expertise. I would like to congratulate Alstom on this success.

Buying local means supporting our jobs and our know-how. Our government is leading by example. Quebec is playing a key role in this effort. Together with Quebec, we are building a stronger Canada, where we are masters in our own home.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

FAMILY ASPIRATIONS

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last few times my wife and I have announced that we were expecting, we got a lot of congratulations, but there were always a few people who said it must be nice. They are happy for us but sad about the fact that their own family goals have not been realized. These comments reflect how Canada is becoming a more and more challenging place to start and grow a family.

My wife and I started our careers and bought our first home before 2015. It was a different time. Today, homes and jobs are out of reach for too many young people. A rigid parental leave system makes it more difficult to integrate work and family life, and this contributes to the fact that fewer Canadians are reaching their family goals. While I would like to encourage young couples to just go for it, I understand that many see their family formation aspirations blocked at every turn.

As my wife and I prepare to welcome our seventh child, we are committed to continuing this fight for the next generation of families so that life is affordable, leave is flexible and the sublime joy of parenthood is available to all.

* * *

[Translation]

SWISS DAY ON THE HILL

Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, we celebrated the first-ever Swiss Day on the Hill.

[English]

Parliamentarians, business leaders and diplomats gathered for the inaugural Swiss Day on the Hill, capped by an evening reception complete with a chocolate Matterhorn, handcrafted by our friends at Le Cordon Bleu here in Ottawa.

Canada and Switzerland are both federations built on linguistic diversity. In fact, Switzerland has four national languages: French, German, Italian and Romansh.

[Translation]

In both of our countries, diversity is our strength.

[Member spoke in German, Italian and Romansh]

[English]

Our nations are close partners in trade, innovation and research, and Swiss Canadians have enriched our communities from coast to coast. The conversations we start today can become tomorrow's partnerships.

I thank the many organizers and supporters for bringing this celebration to the Hill.

[Translation]

Long live the friendship between Switzerland and Canada.

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[English]

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, is a devastating and debilitating disease. A diagnosis, quite simply, is a death sentence. There is no cure. ALS knows no social boundaries. It robs people of their ability to walk, to speak, to swallow and eventually to breathe. For those diagnosed with ALS and their families, the challenges are immense. We need to ensure that Canadians diagnosed with ALS have timely access to medications and the resources they need. We need to support research that brings us closer to better treatments and, one day, a cure.

This evening I will be co-hosting a reception with the ALS Society of Canada in the Speaker's dining room from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. I encourage all of my colleagues in the House to please attend.

Behind every ALS diagnosis is a person, a family and a community. We must continue to stand with them and work toward a future in which no Canadian has to face this terrible disease without hope.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

ALAIN LEFÈVRE

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to my friend Alain Lefèvre. In addition to being a brilliant pianist and composer, Alain is what Gaston Miron called a “ferocious beast of hope”, a man who has not lost faith in human nature despite the wars and ideological divisions of our time.

Through his art, he promotes eternal values like love, friendship and peace. The man who helped us rediscover the genius of composer André Mathieu and who has performed in some of the world's greatest concert halls is a modest man who thrives on kindness rather than worldly status.

On Saturday, Alain was awarded the lifetime achievement award in music by the International Peace Alliance. Through the refined language of his music, Alain promotes a culture that makes us better people and that inspires a desire in us to love others. May he continue to inspire us for many years to come.

Congratulations to Alain and Jojo.

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[English]

CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, imagine getting a phone call from someone who sounds just like a family member, only to find out it is a scam. With artificial intelligence, scammers are finding new ways to trick Canadians. October is Cyber Security Awareness Month, which highlights the need to be careful about the links we open and the information we share online.

Fortinet Canada, a proud Burnaby company, has launched a “P.A.U.S.E. and Fortify Your Online Defence” campaign. It offers free cybersecurity resources for students, educators, businesses and families. The advice is very simple: Before clicking a link, take a moment to check the website address, be careful about sharing personal information and report anything suspicious. More than 400,000 students across Canada have access to this free cybersecurity curriculum through their schools.

These schemes can happen to anyone in Canada. Canadians need to know what to look out for and where to get help if they become victims. Knowing when to stop, check and ask questions can make the difference in protecting seniors, young people, newcomers and all Canadians from online scams.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

COST OF LIVING

Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Clarke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, markets are predicting it, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is predicting it and even Tiff Macklem of the Bank of Canada is indicating there is a good chance that interest rates are going to go up, maybe even as early as this Wednesday.

Last Monday alone, the five-year bond yield that drives fixed mortgage rates rose by over 14% basis points, but what does that mean for Canadians? Well, if someone has a \$250,000 five-year, fixed mortgage that is renewing in the next three to six months, that means their mortgage payments are going to go up about \$3,000 to \$4,000 this year. What family in this affordability crisis has an extra \$3,000 to \$4,000 for their mortgage payments? The reason for this is the government's out-of-control spending. Its credit card budget is driving inflation, driving interest rates higher and higher, and making life unaffordable for Canadians.

When will the government finally rein in its spending so Canadians can afford to live?

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650TH BIRTHDAY OF GURU RAVIDAS JI

Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, communities across Canada and around the world are celebrating the 650th birthday of Guru Ravidas Ji, a spiritual leader highly regarded for his unwavering stand on human rights against caste-based discrimination. His vision of a society rooted in harmony, mutual respect and inclusion has been carried forward by members of the Indian diaspora, enriching our communities through service and leadership.

I invite all members of this House to join me this evening at a special event I am hosting to celebrate this important milestone and welcoming on Parliament Hill patrons and community leaders from across the country.

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BRITISH COLUMBIA ELECTION

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Lorne Doerkson and the B.C. Conservatives on their resounding election victory. British Columbians delivered a clear mandate for change, jobs, affordability and common sense. Voters rejected Premier Eby's attempt to make the election about Donald Trump instead of his government's dismal record. They want action on job losses, rising costs and the struggling economy. Lorne Doerkson's team will advance major projects, deliver tax relief and restore fiscal responsibility. Repealing DRIPA will provide investors greater certainty.

Congratulations locally to Lawrence Mok, Doug Morneau and Darryl Kropp.

Now, the Liberals must step up. British Columbians cannot afford more delays and empty promises. They must fast-track approvals, remove investment barriers and work together with a new B.C. Conservative government to fire up B.C.'s economy and get people back to work.

[Translation]

TRIBUTE TO MEN OF TERREBONNE

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last October 11, I organized a "Tribute to Men of Terrebonne" ceremony in honour of five outstanding men—

The Speaker: May I ask the hon. member to start again? There was too much noise in the chamber.

Tatiana Auguste: Mr. Speaker, last October 11, I organized a "Tribute to Men of Terrebonne" ceremony to honour five outstanding men for their amazing contributions to our community.

Today, I wish to honour Chadi Ayoub for his commitment to the arts and to promoting the region's culture; Éric Barrette, for his dedication to education, sports and the success of our youth; Gilles Bordonado, for his contribution to journalism, communications and our community's development; Raymond Paquin, for his incredible work to preserve our history and heritage; and Dr. Harry Max Prochette, for his devotion to the health and well-being of our citizens.

These five men remind us that commitment comes in many forms, but always targets the same goal: to improve the lives of others. To each of these gentlemen, I offer my gratitude for your dedication and your contributions to our community. You are the pride of Terrebonne.

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● (1415)

[English]

BRITISH COLUMBIA ELECTION

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have good news. This past Saturday, the people of British Columbia delivered a strong and historic message. For the first time in nearly 100 years, British Columbians elected a Conservative majority government.

The B.C. Conservatives secured a powerful mandate of over 60 seats, bringing an end to the nine years of the costly NDP government. From the Lower Mainland to the interior, from the Fraser Valley to communities large and small, British Columbians chose change. They chose a government committed to lowering costs, cutting red tape and putting hard-working families first.

I want to congratulate Premier-elect Lorne Doerkson, every Conservative candidate and every voter who refused to accept the status quo.

This was more than just an election victory. It was a powerful reminder that common-sense Conservative principles resonate with Canadians. The blue wave is strong, our movement is growing and this is just the beginning.

GORD HUME

Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour the incredible life of Gord Hume, a Londoner who passed away recently at the age of 76.

Gord was born in Saskatoon. He came to London in 1980. He first worked in news media, but made his most lasting contributions to our community as a city councillor. He was elected in 1997, was on the council until 2010, and especially contributed, through the millennium committee formed in 1998, to the revitalization of the Covent Garden Market, to the revitalization of the Central Library and to what was then called the John Labatt Centre, but is now called the Canada Life Place. This is the home of the London Knights, which is a landmark in London, to say the least. Gord also worked as a novelist, producing a number of books, and wrote widely on municipal government.

This was a true Londoner. This was a great Canadian. Our city is less because of his passing. Our city was great because of Gord and people like him.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, demand is soaring. *Le Journal de Québec* reported that a charity called Le Marginal served 400 meals in a single evening. That is five times more than 10 years ago. However, it seems that the Prime Minister has learned nothing. He is still forecasting \$730 billion of inflationary debt within five years, which will further fuel inflation.

Why are Canadians being asked to pay more for his debt than for the food they put on their tables?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people of Quebec City who are watching us will realize that, sadly, the leader of the Conservative Party, who is the Leader of the Opposition, did two things when the House had the opportunity to vote on the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, a measure that helps 12 million Canadians, including many in Quebec City. One, he voted against the benefit. Two, he instructed his caucus to vote against it. The people of Quebec City will remember that.

On this side of the House, we will always be there to stand up for the people of Quebec City.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of these inflationary Liberal programs are not working for the 400 people who were in need of a hot meal.

It is not just the demand for hot meals that is skyrocketing. The Liberals' inflationary debt is too. According to a report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the Prime Minister is going to add \$730 billion to our debt. That is going to drive up the cost of living. It is going to cost a family of four \$6,000 in interest a year.

Oral Questions

Why must Canadians feed the Liberal debt instead of feeding their families?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after spending two decades in the House, the Conservative leader should know one thing: When it comes to helping Canadians, he should put politics aside and vote to help them. Twelve million Canadians will receive the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, which provides up to \$1,891 for a family of four. That is money that is going into families' bank accounts to help them.

Will the Conservative leader stand up and say that he will now support our measures to help Canadians?

● (1420)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister is out of touch, Canadians are out of money and the debt is out of control. More inflation is on the horizon as the Parliamentary Budget Officer calculated that the government is expected to add \$730 billion to our national debt over the next five years. That is three-quarters of a trillion dollars more on the national credit card, working out to \$40,000 in debt for every single Canadian. That is more handouts to corporate power brokers, more interest to bankers, and more food and housing inflation for Canadians.

How does he expect them to pay this bill?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. Canada has the strongest fiscal position in the G7. We have one of the most educated workforces in the world. We are able to build planes, build ships and build cars in this country. We have the critical minerals to power the economy of the 21st century. We have an abundance of energy and we are going to produce even more. We are the only G7 nation with a free trade agreement with all the other G7 nations. This is what is building Canada strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is absolutely right that Canadians are very educated. They are educated enough to know that the government is cooking the books. The Prime Minister is dividing his deficits on three credit cards. One he calls operational spending, another he claims is investment and a third goes to Crown corporations. However, Canadians understand that just because the Liberals put their debt on three different credit cards does not mean they do not have to pay the interest.

Given that Canadians understand that, when will the Prime Minister get this basic financial lesson?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing Canadians understand is that the Leader of the Opposition keeps talking the Canadian economy down. He keeps talking against the industries in this country.

Oral Questions

We have the strongest fiscal position in the G7. We have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. We have one of the lowest deficits in the G7. We are the only country with Germany in the G7 to have an AAA credit rating.

We are going to build Canada strong and we are going to do it with all Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Liberal government that is driving the Canadian economy down. It is doing it with credit card debt, and the interest on it is not free. It comes with interest.

What is the biggest expense in this Liberal budget? Is it health care? Is it seniors? No, the fastest-growing expense is interest on the debt. The average family of four will spend \$6,000 on federal taxes just for the debt, not for health care and not for our military.

How does the Prime Minister expect a family to spend \$6,000 when they cannot afford groceries?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is what the Prime Minister is spending money on: 5,000 new jobs in Churchill Falls, 8,000 new jobs for Contrecoeur, 1,000 new jobs for Nouveau Monde Graphite, 18,000 new jobs at Darlington and 30,000 new jobs at Pickering.

Rather than talk down the economy, why do the Conservatives not help us add new jobs to the Canadian economy?

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FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, debt interest is the fastest-growing item on this government's budget. It does not buy a single doctor, a single soldier or a single protection at our border.

Here is what this rising cost means for a family of four. Five years ago, it was \$2,400 in interest on the debt for that family. Right now, it is \$6,000, and in four years, it will be \$8,000 in taxes paid not to get any services but just to pay the bankers.

Will the Prime Minister come to the finance committee and tell that family where they are going to get \$8,000 for interest to his banker friends?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one would expect that after 20 years in this House, the Leader of the Opposition would read The Fiscal Monitor. If he took the time to read it, he would see that public debt charges are at 1.7%, one of the historical lows we have seen in Canada and well below the 6.5% in the 1990s.

Canada has the strongest fiscal position in the G7. We are going to use that to build this country, help Canadians and defend our sovereignty. We are going to build Canada strong.

• (1425)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 is a major departure. It allows pipeline projects to bypass environmental impact assessments. It would allow swaths of our territory to be designated as being of national interest, thereby suspending the application of environmental laws. It also limits consultations to one year. This means that Ottawa could build the Marinest pipeline in Quebec without an environmental impact assessment, by suspending environmental laws and rushing through consultations with first nations.

Do the Liberals realize that they are gearing up for a social acceptability crisis?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, Internal Trade, and One Canadian Economy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that our colleague from the Bloc Québécois wishes to characterize a series of decisions in a way that is not entirely accurate, but as we have said many times in the House, the bill before Parliament is specifically intended to expedite, in a responsible and rigorous manner, projects that are in the country's economic and social interest.

Just because we are moving faster does not mean we are not meeting our environmental standards or fulfilling our obligations to first nations. On the contrary, we are going to do things the right way.

Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 15 young people aged 26 or younger are suing the federal government. They accuse the government of jeopardizing their future by failing to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Prime Minister has answered them by tabling Bill C-39, which seeks to build pipelines by circumventing environmental standards. His response is to lock them into fossil fuels for at least 50 years. Young people are right to say that the Liberals are jeopardizing their future.

Instead of fighting these young people, why do they not correct course?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec youth, like young people across Canada, dream of a future where the country continues to grow, develop and evolve.

The Churchill Falls project alone is going to create thousands of jobs, and as the largest renewable energy project in North American history, it is going to prove that projects can get done faster without lowering our standards or expectations as Canadians.

* * *

LABOUR

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 is also an attack on workers' rights.

The Liberals are curtailing the right to strike through their interpretation of section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. The Canadian Union of Public Employees has already announced its intention to challenge this decision in court. The Canadian Labour Congress argues that it undermines decades of job stability. Another trade union has warned that it could encourage employers to bargain in bad faith. Quite simply, the minister has succeeded in uniting everyone—against her.

Does she finally realize that she needs to go back and do her homework?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with its provisions reforming the Canada Labour Code, Bill C-39 does exactly the opposite. The Minister of Jobs will now have to take certain caveats into account to ensure that section 107 is only applied in specific situations. This is the very opposite of a ban on the right to strike. It is, in fact, a recognition of the constitutional right to strike in Canada.

[English]

FINANCE

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has warned Canadians that the new finance minister and Prime Minister will not even meet their own fiscal targets and anchors. The Prime Minister, that is, refuses to meet the standards he has imposed on himself and promised. If the Prime Minister is continuing to break these promises, they are about as unreliable as previous prime minister Justin Trudeau's fiscal promises.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that he himself approved using the credit card to run up the deficit?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that member's leader has been in the House for 8,100 days. He has produced nothing but negativity and divisiveness, and he never has a plan.

When someone is a leader, they can throw their hands up and deny and blame everyone else. A real leader is going to get things done. What about half a trillion dollars through the Canada investment summit? What about non-U.S. exports doubling over the next decade? What about the highest level of foreign investment in our country in decades? On this side of the House, we have a plan. That leader can continue with empty parking lot press conferences and rhetoric.

• (1430)

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I happen to think the members of Parliament from multiple parties who have spent decades in this place have made valuable contributions to this country.

The fastest-growing expense in this budget is interest on the debt. In fact, in just a few years, almost 14¢ of every dollar earned by the government will go to paying interest on the debt. When the Prime Minister came in, that number was just over 10¢.

Oral Questions

On behalf of all of the young people who will be saddled with the credit card-like spending and debts and deficits of the Liberal government, I ask, why do the Liberals keep breaking their fiscal promises?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say that in 8,100 days, the Leader of the Opposition did build six affordable houses. My riding's hockey team, the Saint John Sea Dogs, has gone to almost as many Memorial Cups as that.

On this side of the House, we have a plan to build our economy. We have a plan to direct investment in major projects and to increase jobs. We have a Prime Minister with world-class economic and business credentials. The Conservative leader has never worked one day outside this House. Canadians see it. Canadians know it. They stand with our side.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is acting like a gambler hiding his debts from his family. He hides \$300 billion of debt in Crown corporations and call it an asset. He calls \$19 billion in subsidies and tax credits an investment. He shreds the debt-to-GDP ratio and invents a new one. Every dollar the Liberal government borrows must ultimately be paid back, and it is paid back with dollars earned by and taken from hard-working Canadians.

When will the Prime Minister stop playing accounting games and tell us how he is going to repay his credit card budget?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on affordability. Just a few weeks ago, 12 million Canadians across the country received the additional deposit of the national groceries and essentials benefit. This is helping curb the cost of everyday essentials and groceries. We have also cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We are going to continue to be there to support them each and every day.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are building a mountain of debt. My generation and my children's generation are going to be crushed under it and the Liberals do not seem to care.

Interest is the fastest-growing expense in the government. It is not health care, infrastructure or defence; it is interest. The Prime Minister is mortgaging our country's future but making the book so confusing that no Canadian can see what the bill actually is. Balancing the budget and repaying Liberal debt would cost each household another \$14,000 in taxes each year for a decade.

When will the Prime Minister explain how he is going to repay—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Oral Questions

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the national groceries and essentials benefit has helped benefit Canadians right across the country. In fact, in our province of Ontario, the national groceries and essentials benefit has helped five million Ontarians, including in the member's riding.

We are going to cut taxes for them. We are going to support them along the way, while creating good jobs and investing in Canadians as well. We will continue to be there to support them.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what do a leaky roof, a growing credit card bill and Canada have in common? The longer we ignore the problem, the more expensive it gets. Our economy is barely growing, borrowing is way up, and interest rates are on the rise. The Prime Minister promised to put the brakes on spending, but instead he is racking up crazy credit card debt.

If his plan is working, why do 12.5 million Canadians, one in three people, need a grocery assistance benefit just to put food on the table?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our colleagues here, I want to congratulate the new government of B.C., the premier-elect and his team.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The member may continue.

• (1435)

Hon. Gregor Robertson: Mr. Speaker, I thank outgoing Premier Eby and his team.

To speak directly to the question from the member opposite, this government is focused on delivering on affordability, whether that is through tax cuts on income tax, the groceries and essentials benefit or the fuel excise tax. We have brought down the costs. We have seen rents come down for 24 months in a row. We are delivering on affordability. There is a lot more work to do. We could use some support from the Conservatives rather than them ranting and raving about it.

[Translation]

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report is damning for the Liberal government. A deficit of more than \$330 billion is projected over five years. Meanwhile, interest on the debt will be over \$60 billion next year. That is money that will never be used to help Quebec and Canadian families who are struggling to make ends meet. The Liberals are spending recklessly, but it is Canadians who are paying the price.

When will the government get its spending under control and stop using our children's and grandchildren's credit cards?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am left completely perplexed when I hear the Conservatives talk so much about inflationary programs without ever defining what an inflationary program is. Is it, for example, the 219,416 children in Quebec who receive more than \$800 million through the Canada child benefit every year to help their families pay their bills? Is that an inflationary program? The Conservatives voted against that.

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians want is to have money in their pockets from a good job. That is what they need, not cheques from the government.

On Friday, the Minister of Finance was bragging about the economic situation. The Parliamentary Budget Officer just trimmed her outlook for growth to 0.9%, and inflation is projected to be 2.8%. While the minister is patting himself on the back, families are struggling to make ends meet.

I would invite the minister to take a look at the front page of the *Journal de Québec*. The number of requests for food assistance is skyrocketing. That is what life is like under the Liberals. They need to stop racking up endless debt.

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hearing the member speak like that, I can understand exactly why Quebecers rejected the Conservative approach. On this side of the House, we believe that we can grow the economy with major projects, such as the high-speed rail project, the Contrecoeur port project, the Nouveau Monde Graphite project and the Port of Québec project. We also believe that the government has a role to play in ensuring that the most vulnerable people get the help they need. Some of the ways we are doing that include a tax cut, the Canada child benefit, the Canadian dental care plan, the Canada groceries and essentials benefit and the national school food program. These are all measures that the Conservatives voted against but that make a real difference for millions of Quebecers and Canadians.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister travelled to Turkey to strike a deal with President Erdoğan's authoritarian regime. He stated that Canada and Turkey have shared values, including "human rights, individual freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law". The fact of the matter is that the Turkish regime persecutes LGBTQ+ people. It imprisons political opponents and journalists. It is massacring the Kurdish minority. I could keep going.

How can the Prime Minister use the reputation of Quebec and Canada to trivialize that regime's transgressions?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mona Fortier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we firmly believe that every individual deserves to live with dignity, to feel safe, and to be free to be themselves. Canada will never turn a blind eye to discrimination, persecution or oppression based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Engagement does not imply approval.

However, by diversifying our partnerships through trade, investment and economic co-operation, we are creating opportunities to strengthen high-level ties and advance human rights.

Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, speaking of hypocrisy, this morning, Canada signed a joint statement condemning the genocide-like violence in Sudan that is being committed by the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF.

Who is the primary supplier of military equipment to the RSF? It is the United Arab Emirates, whose crown prince the Prime Minister of Canada is hosting tonight. This morning, Canada condemned the massacres, but tonight, it is hosting a banquet in honour of one of the people responsible.

Once again, Canada is downplaying human rights abuses.

Will the Prime Minister at least raise this issue at his event tonight?

• (1440)

Hon. Mona Fortier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we firmly believe that everyone deserves to live with dignity, to feel safe and to be free to be themselves. We are continuing our efforts to work with the United Arab Emirates and we will continue those conversations.

In fact, the Prime Minister will be meeting with the U.A.E. team today, and we will see how we can continue to work together.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Scot Davidson (York—South Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is heartbreaking. Right now, in Bradford and in towns and cities across Canada, every shelf in the food bank is bare. Despite the continued generosity of the community, food banks cannot keep up with demand. This is the consequence of Liberal failures that have seen food prices keep soaring, far outpacing what everyday Canadians can afford. People should not have to rely on government or charity just to put a meal on the table.

When will the Prime Minister reverse his inflationary policies so that Canadians can afford to eat again?

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those same Canadians are asking when the Conservatives are going to change their approach. When are they going to start standing up and supporting the government when we put forward initiatives like the groceries and essentials benefit and the Canada child benefit? We stand up and support a national

school food program that serves food in the member's communities, but he still stands up and votes against it time and time again, against the very Canadians who benefit from the support the government is working to deliver.

Scot Davidson (York—South Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals can pretend that their expensive programs are working, but the record numbers of Canadians lined up at food banks can tell us that they are not. Food bank usage in Canada has a record 2.35 million visits in a month, and nearly one in five clients is employed. These are working Canadians who used to make ends meet and now cannot because of the government's failed policy.

If the Prime Minister thinks life is so affordable, why is a full-time job not enough to feed a family?

Leslie Church (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretaries of State for Labour, for Seniors, and for Children and Youth, and to the Minister of Jobs and Families (Persons with Disabilities), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians are facing challenges right now. Food is the beginning, but this also extends to the work we are doing to bring down the cost of renting or buying a home, one of the highest expenses that we know Canadians face. We have renewed our child care deals to keep building a program that is saving families thousands of dollars a year. We are making massive investments in students, in training and in the skilled trades. We are investing in the things that are going to build prosperity and build a bright future for all Canadians.

Jagsharan Singh Mahal (Edmonton Southeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is costing Canadians more. In 2026, food banks in Alberta have seen more than 230,000 visits. This represents a staggering 9% increase from last year alone. These numbers should alarm every Canadian.

Will the Liberals acknowledge that relying on food banks is now the new normal for Canadians, or are they totally out of touch?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when times are uncertain, our government shows up. It is why residents in the member's riding and those across Canada are receiving the groceries and essentials benefit, receiving close to \$1,890 this year.

That is not all. We are leaning in. We are supporting them with child care and supporting them with dental care. We are investing in Canadians, and that is how we build Canada strong.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the face of poverty is changing, and not for the better. People who were donating to food banks a few years ago are now in need of help themselves. Working individuals and dual-income families are being forced to seek food assistance. Six years ago, the Moisson Québec food bank in Quebec City was serving 35,000 people. Now it is serving 84,000 and 35% of them are children.

The Minister of Finance is preparing the budget that he is going to table in a few days. Could he rise and explain to Canadians why they are having such a hard time making ends meet after 11 years of Liberal governance?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, we made the school food and nutrition program permanent for children across the country. We achieved a participation rate of 80% of public schools across the country, and we are serving meals to 400,000 more children. This investment will continue in the coming years, but every time there is a vote in the House to support this program, the members opposite vote against this investment in children's nutrition.

• (1445)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more than three million Quebecers need help and food assistance, among other things.

In my region, in my riding, the charitable organization Amélie et Frédéric has seen a 50% increase in demand over the past three years. I received a message from this organization just a few minutes ago, saying that it is getting more and more requests from people aged 75 plus and even 80 plus. These are people who have worked their entire lives and contributed to our society, but who now have to ask for food assistance so they can get enough to eat.

Once again, can the Minister of Finance explain why, after 11 years of Liberal management, seniors are still struggling to get by?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada child benefit is helping 12,700 families in my colleague's riding. The members opposite vote against that program every single budget. In addition, more than 20,000 people in my colleague's riding are receiving dental care, but he votes against this investment in dental care for children.

We are here for families and for Canadians. We are helping those who need it. It would be nice if the members opposite would stand with us and support us in these measures.

* * *

*[English]***CHILD CARE**

Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many families in Scarborough—Agincourt and across Canada are concerned about the cost of living and managing expenses such as child care.

Can the Secretary of State for Children and Youth provide an update on what the government is doing to make life more affordable for families?

Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt for her advocacy.

We are working with the provinces and territories across the country to deliver affordable child care that works for families. Fees are down across the country, saving families thousands of dollars.

We know there is more to do, which is why we recently announced a four-year extension with the Province of Ontario, a \$12-billion investment in early learning and child care. In the province of Ontario, 39,000 new spots have been created, and we will continue to work with Ontario to deliver on the goal of 86,000 new affordable child care spaces.

* * *

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 10 months ago, the industry minister promised that she was going to sue Stellantis and get the jobs back. Did she sue? No. Did she get the jobs back? No.

Guess what. The industry minister is now saying that she is going to sue Stelco and get the jobs back. Has she sued? No. Has she got the jobs back? No.

When will the minister stop the talk and get results? Does her word to workers actually mean anything?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, have the Conservatives ever denounced the American tariffs? No. Have they done anything to prevent them from hurting us? No. That is why we need to make sure we have our eyes wide open when dealing with Stellantis and when dealing with Stelco.

When it comes to Stelco, we will do everything to bring the jobs back. There are 11 days left. The clock is ticking, and we will make sure to protect jobs.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, did the minister say anywhere in that answer that she was really going to sue? No. It is all talk and no results with the Liberals. She went on a diatribe about a whole bunch of things that the opposition should do in the face of American tariffs. Here is news for the minister: They are the government. They are the one who are supposed to do something about it.

I will go back to this: Does the minister's word actually mean anything? At the expiration of her second 15-day notice, will she sue, yes or no?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

• (1450)

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a month since Stelco announced that 350 Hamilton steelworkers would lose their jobs. Here is the Conservative five-point plan to protect the steel industry and its workers: get a steel deal with the U.S., which the Prime Minister promised a year and a half ago; end illegal foreign steel dumping; get rid of the industrial carbon tax; pre-approve multiple LNG projects; and sue Cleveland-Cliffs for breaking its contract to the Prime Minister.

Which of these have you completed?

The Speaker: I want to get this straight so that everybody understands. We address questions through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Industry.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I love it when the Conservatives quote from our plan. It just validates us even more.

Jokes aside—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I cannot hear. I need to hear this.

The hon. Minister of Industry.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, my colleague just referred to how we can support our steelworkers. Our steelworkers are victims of the American tariffs, and we have been there to support them. That is why we will make sure we protect the jobs in Hamilton.

Stelco needs to get back to us in 11 days. The CEO cannot say that he will advocate for American tariffs at a time when he committed to making sure that our steel would go south of the border tariff-free.

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister broke his promise of getting a steel deal. The Liberals continue to allow the illegal dumping of foreign steel into the Canadian market. The Liberals refuse to cut the industrial carbon tax so that it is less expensive to work, produce and invest in Canada. The Liberals could take action today by taking Cleveland-Cliffs to court as they said they would. The Liberals' lack of action makes Canada look weak.

Will Canada continue to get bullied by Trump and his buddies, or will the Prime Minister file the lawsuit today?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have started the legal process under the Investment Canada Act. Under the Investment Canada Act, we need to send a demand letter. The demand letter is supported by true evidence. Of course, we can provide it to the Conservatives if they want. It is 15 pages long with all the evidence.

The undertakings are clear. We need to make sure that Cleveland-Cliffs protects the jobs at the Hamilton and Lake Erie facilities, but it also needs to abide by the commitment of advocating in favour of tariff-free access. It cannot have its cake and eat it too.

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told the European Parliament that people from the EU should be able to live, work and study in Canada. He said this in Europe before telling this Parliament or Canadians anything about it.

The Prime Minister's immigration levels are already outpacing our housing, our health care and our jobs, so I have three questions for him. How many more non-citizens will this new EU deal bring to Canada? Will they count in the levels plan? What will the impact be on our hospitals, housing and social services?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need to know that we are in control of our own destiny and that we are focused on balance and controlling our immigration system. Canada is working on a deeper transatlantic partnership that will give us more independence in a changing world, and as the Prime Minister said in Strasbourg, nobody will dictate Canada's future. We will always do what is right for Canadians.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody believes that immigration is in control in Canada.

Canada already has an existing free trade deal with Europe called CETA. Under CETA, labour mobility is strictly limited to very specific categories of EU citizens for short, defined periods. CETA explicitly does not grant access to the general labour market or allow permanent residence for people in the EU. Now, a leaked document suggests that the Prime Minister is planning to remove CETA's narrow safeguards in this bid for a greater integration with the EU. Given the EU's current open border crisis, this is a very bad idea.

Will the Prime Minister commit to everyone in this place that he will not lift CETA's migration standards?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CETA is something that we should all celebrate. After 10 long years, trade with the European Union is up by over 75%—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

● (1455)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of International Trade, from the beginning.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, we just celebrated 10 years of CETA. In fact, two-way trade is up by over 75%. Service is up by over 90%. We have much more room to grow through our digital trade agreement, which we are negotiating right now and will unlock another \$5 billion of export opportunities. This is what it means to continue to grow our economy and build Canada strong.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Europe's open border policies went so badly that they had to adopt a migration pact, which requires countries to take asylum claimants or pay a massive fine, and now the Prime Minister is telling foreign parliaments and foreign newspapers that he is going to have greater immigration levels from the EU. The immigration minister will not give Canadians any details, but Canadians deserve transparency.

How many more non-citizens will this deal bring to Canada, and what will that mean for Canadian hospitals, housing, jobs and social services?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the European Union presents a lot of opportunities to Canadian workers and businesses. In fact, we have talked to chambers of commerce and boards of trade across the country that are looking at more opportunities in energy, technology, digital trade and financial services. The European Union presents billions of dollars of opportunities for our export markets, and that is what we will be pursuing.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very telling that the Prime Minister will not even let his immigration minister give basic details about an open borders pact with the EU. If he has nothing to hide, why will he not let her stand up? The reality is he made an announcement in the European parliament. He is not giving our press gallery details about it in our papers or in interviews here.

Canadians deserve answers. How many more non-citizens will come into the country? What will be the categories of non-citizens and what does this mean for provinces, like Alberta or Quebec, that are asking for more control over immigration levels?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is not and will not be an open borders pact with the European Union. What there will be is an enhanced relationship, which will keep this country on track to more than double its non-U.S. trade in the next decade. That will happen. We will have better and closer relations with our European partners. We will have closer economic ties. We will send more Canadian products, farm products and energy products, to Europe, and we will absolutely continue to work with our cousins in the European Union to keep moving forward.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is high time that the Liberals and the Prime Minister explained the Liberals' gross hypocrisy on immigration.

Over the course of 11 years, the Liberals dismantled a system that was working well. The Prime Minister told the New York Times, but not the House, that it is time to increase immigration. Meanwhile, he is drawing closer to the European Union, which, co-incidentally enough, has also lost control of immigration and lost track of millions of people.

What is the agreement with the European Union? Is Canada deporting immigrants who follow the rules because ministers have mishandled the file, all to make room for more immigrants from the European Union?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians need to know is that we are masters in our own house. We are focusing on maintaining balance and control over our immigration system.

Just as the Prime Minister said in Strasbourg, no one dictates the path Canada should take. Canada is working to establish a closer transatlantic partnership that will give us greater independence in a changing world.

* * *

STEEL AND ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 90% of Canada's primary aluminum is produced in Quebec. The industry is much more than an economic driver; for our country, it is a strategic industry.

Can the Minister of Industry tell us how our government is projecting jobs and defending Quebec's aluminum industry?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for her very important question.

Aluminum is one of our industrial strengths. We are proud of our workers in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and across the country. Last Friday, I was in La Baie to announce a \$160-million investment in Rio Tinto and Alouette, two of our major aluminum plants.

We are going to keep helping the large producers, but also the small ones, which are being hit hard by the tariff war. We are going to turn this crisis into an opportunity—

● (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill.

*Oral Questions**[English]***AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD****NATURAL RESOURCES**

David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all want Canada to grow and diversify its export markets. Today, I have good news. Strathcona Resources, a Canadian oil and gas producer, wants to export 250,000 barrels a day of crude oil from Prince Rupert. Strathcona will ship by rail existing in place today. It just needs the Liberal government to get out of the way and remove the west coast tanker ban. My private member's bill, Bill C-264, will do exactly that.

Will the Prime Minister get out of the way and repeal the tanker ban so Strathcona can help Canada become an energy superpower?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what we will do. We will work with B.C., Alberta and affected first nations to build the Pacific link, which will massively increase oil exports. We will also work with first nations to build interties between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, to build hydro in Quebec, to build nuclear in Ontario and to build the north coast transmission line in B.C.

Rather than fight against indigenous peoples, why do the Conservatives not help us build Canada?

David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was Bill C-48 that killed the indigenous-owned Eagle Spirit Energy project, so the member opposite had better reconsider his position on those issues. It is time for the Liberal government to ban the tanker ban and not leave it merely open for consideration. How about repealing it completely so that producers like Strathcona can build our energy industry and bring jobs and prosperity to Canada?

Will the Liberals get out of the way, remove the tanker ban and let Strathcona Resources export a quarter of a million barrels of oil?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will up the member by four and get a million barrels a day to the west coast by working in partnership with first nations, not against them. Maybe he could start working with us to build jobs in Canada in partnership with first nations.

Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talks about making Canada an energy superpower, yet he continues to stand in the way. Strathcona Resources has a proposal to ship up to 250,000 barrels of Canadian oil a day by rail to Prince Rupert, with exports to overseas markets to begin in as little as two years. The railway already exists. The company is ready to pursue the project. What is missing is to repeal the Liberal tanker ban.

Will the Liberals finally get out of the way, remove the tanker ban and allow Strathcona Resources to move forward with this proposal, yes or no?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the member is focused on something in B.C. Maybe she should focus a little closer to home. Her premier, Premier Wakeham, said that the federal government was instrumental in getting Bay du Nord built, a \$10-billion energy project in her province that the Conservatives are not helping support. Maybe they should figure out where they should spend their time.

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, food insecurity is not just a problem for Canadians. It is a global challenge. No matter one's circumstances, everyone deserves access to safe, nutritious food.

In my riding of Spadina—Harbourfront, local food banks, such as Spadina-Fort York Community Care at the Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre, work tirelessly to support our community. The local food infrastructure fund has been an integral tool for supporting these organizations and earlier this year, our government announced a new \$20-million community support stream.

Can the minister please update the House on how this funding will be distributed across the country and the impact it is going to have for Canadians?

Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is taking immediate action through the groceries and essentials benefit, through the school of food program and through the local food infrastructure fund community support stream. Food Banks Canada and Second Harvest will both receive up to \$10 million. These two recipients will distribute that food to eligible food banks and not-for-profit, community-based organizations across the country.

We are focused on the present, but we are also building our national food security strategy for the future.

* * *

● (1505)

JUSTICE

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Mr. Speaker, families in Richmond Centre—Marpole are concerned. With just days before the October 29 deadline to appeal the B.C. Supreme Court's ruling on drug trafficking, the Liberal government still owes Canadians an answer. What are they waiting for, the Public Prosecution Service? The tail should not wag the dog. The Attorney General has the authority to direct an appeal.

Business of Supply

Will the Liberals exercise their authority to protect Canadian families from drug traffickers, or is there something the Liberals do not want Canadians to know?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, traffickers cause real harm. That is why we have been working hard to make sure they get serious punishments. We have passed many different Criminal Code reforms in this House.

As for the appeal, we will let the Public Prosecution Service make its decision. It still has time, and I trust that it will make a good decision.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today first nations chiefs are in Ottawa at the first nations-first ministers meeting. A main topic of concern is Bill C-39, which first nations across the country have called to be withdrawn, including BCAFN, UB-CIC, Treaty 6, Onion Lake, NAN, COO, APNQL and the Iroquois Confederacy representing hundreds of thousands of first nations. Chiefs have been clear that the success of this meeting will be judged by the Liberal government's actions.

The resource minister says that he respects indigenous rights, so will he withdraw Bill C-39 now, yes or no?

Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news for the member. Right now, first nations are meeting with premiers from across this country and our government in one of the most historic first ministers meetings with first nations. First nations shaped the agenda for this meeting and we value the opportunity to hear directly from the leaders addressing their concerns and having honest conversations about the opportunities and challenges ahead.

We are doing historic and important things in Canada and indigenous people will be important in shaping this future together.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Ghana.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—FUNDING OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR

The House resumed from October 22 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:08 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Drummond relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

Before the Clerk announced the result of the vote:

● (1520)

Hon. Jill McKnight: Mr. Speaker, my phone was not working. I vote no.

Amarjeet Gill: Mr. Speaker, there were technical difficulties. My vote is no.

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

(Division No. 181)

YEAS

Members

Barsalou-Duval
Blanchet
Bonin
Champoux
DeBellefeuille
Garon
Gazan
Larouche
May
Normandin
Simard
Thériault — 23

Beaulieu
Blanchette-Joncas
Brunelle-Duceppe
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Fortin
Gaudreau
Johns
Lemire
McPherson
Perron
Ste-Marie

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Al Soud
Ali
Alty
Anandasangaree
Anstey
Au
Baber
Bains
Baldinelli
Barlow
Battiste
Begum

Acan
Albas
Allison
Anand
Anderson
Arnold
Auguste
Bailey
Baker
Bardeesy
Barrett
Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)
Bendayan
Bexte
Bittle
Blois
Borrelli
Brassard
Caley
Caputo
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chartrand
Chenette
Chong

Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold
Bezan
Block
Bonk
Bragdon
Brière
Calkins
Carney
Casey
Chambers
Chang
Chatel
Chi

Business of Supply

Church	Clark	McKelvie	McKenzie
Cobena	Cody	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McKnight
Connors	Cooper	McLean (Calgary Centre)	McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Cormier	Coteau	Melillo	Ménard
Dalton	Dancho	Mendès	Menegakis
Dandurand	Danko	Michel	Miedema
Davidson	Davies (Niagara South)	Miller	Mingarelli
Deltell	d'Entremont	Moore	Morin
DeRidder	Deschênes-Thériault	Morrison	Morrissey
Desrochers	Dhaliwal	Motz	Muys
Dhillon	Diab	Myles	Naqvi
Diotte	Doherty	Nater	Nathan
Dowdall	Duclos	Nguyen	Noormohamed
Duguid	Duncan	Ntumba	Olszewski
Dzerowicz	Earle	O'Rourke	Osborne
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Patzner	Paul-Hus
Epp	Eyolfson	Petitpas Taylor	Poilievre
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)	Powlowski	Ramsay
Fancy	Fanjoy	Rana	Redekopp
Fergus	Fisher	Reid	Rempel Garner
Fonseca	Fortier	Reynolds	Richards
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Roberts	Robertson
Fry	Fuhr	Rocheftort	Romanado
Gaheer	Gainey	Rood	Ross
Gasparro	Genuis	Rowe	Royer
Gerretsen	Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Ruff	Sahota
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Saini	Sarai
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Sari	Sawatzky
Gladu	Gobeil	Scheer	Schiefke
Goodridge	Gould	Schmale	Seeback
Gourde	Grant	Sgro	Shahnawaz
Greaves	Groleau	Sheehan	Shipley
Guglielmin	Gull-Masty	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Gunn	Hajdu	Small	Sodhi
Hallan	Hanley	Solomon	Sousa
Hardy	Harrison	Steinley	Stevenson
Hepfner	Hirtle	St-Pierre	Strahl
Ho	Hoback	Strauss	Stubbs
Hodgson	Hogan	Sudds	Tesser Derksen
Holman	Housefather	Thomas	Tochor
Hussen	Iacono	Tolmie	Turnbull
Idlout	Jackson	Uppal	Valdez
Jaczek	Jansen	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Jeneroux	Jivani	Vandenbeld	Vien
Joly	Joseph	Villeneuve	Vis
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Warkentin	Watchorn
Kelly	Khalid	Waugh	Weiler
Khanna	Kibble	Williamson	Yip
Kirkland	Klassen	Zahid	Zerucelli
Kmiec	Konanz	Zimmer	Zuberi— 298
Koutrakis	Kram		
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis		
Kuruc	Kusie		
Lake	Lalonde		
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux		
Lantsman	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)		
Lapointe (Sudbury)	Lattanzio		
Lauzon	Lavack		
Lavoie	Lawrence		
Lawton	LeBlanc		
Lefebvre	Leitão		
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)		
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)		
Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)		
MacDonald (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)		
Mahal	Majumdar		
Malette (Bay of Quinte)	Malette (Kapuskaing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)		
Maloney	Mantle		
Martin	Mazier		
McCauley	McGuinty		

PAIRED

Members

Dabrusin	Deschênes
Gallant	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Guay	Kwan
Oliphant	Plamondon
Provost	Thompson— 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1525)

*[English]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 36th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee advises that, pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the orders for the second reading of private members' bills originating in the Senate, and recommended that the items listed herein, which it has deemed should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

* * *

PETITIONS

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present two petitions.

The first petition calls on the government to suspend staff terminations at Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada and to continue operating the research centre, research farms and the organic and regenerative research program for at least 24 months to provide cost-benefit transparency and to ensure that irreplaceable research capacity and long-term studies are not lost due to hasty decisions.

The petitioners are urging not to base our good public health decisions on political sound bites. They have to be based on research.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): The second petition comes from my constituents in Winnipeg Centre who are expressing their concern with the government's ongoing violation of international law by its refusal to close the loopholes in Canada for weapons exports that enable Canadian-made arms to be used for war crimes and genocide. My constituents call on the government to fulfill the end of peace and to close this loophole once and for all.

I will always support my constituents in upholding international law, and I join them in demanding that the Liberal government do the same.

WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition on behalf of wildland firefighters. It is timely, as representatives from the BC General Employees' Union and NUPGE are here in town.

The petitioners cite that, across Canada, wildland firefighters perform life-threatening public safety duties, including wildfire suppression, evacuations and the protection of communities, ecosystems, property and critical infrastructure during increasingly severe wildfire seasons.

Petitioners highlight that, despite performing the same dangerous work as other firefighters, wildland firefighters are excluded from the firefighter category in the national occupational classification, which is a misclassification that limits their access to recognition, benefits and protections available to other firefighters and public safety workers. This recognition has been afforded to wildland firefighters working directly with the federal government as well as to other firefighters across the country, allowing them to fight for the appropriate workforce protections and benefits they need as firefighters, first responders and public safety personnel.

Petitioners also highlight that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security unanimously supported the action to address this inequity but that no corrective action has been taken so far.

The petitioners want the government to immediately correct the misclassification of wildland firefighters in the national occupational classification by recognizing them as firefighters, and remove any and all federal barriers that prevent wildland firefighters from being recognized as the firefighters and public safety workers that they are.

* * *

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 at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded division, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1530)

[Translation]

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S DEFENCE SECTOR ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-40, An Act respecting production, procurement and investment in relation to national defence and national security, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a riot broke out on Friday, October 16, 2026, at La Macaza Institution, in my riding, caused by understaffing. Frontline officers found themselves in the middle of what could have been a very dangerous situation. I want all my colleagues who were not aware of this situation to know that it was very alarming. Without the expertise of the officers on the ground, the situation could have ended very differently.

The connection I want to make here is obvious. Let me be very clear. The inmate population at La Macaza has changed in recent years. We are not talking about a junior kindergarten here. We are not talking about a day care centre. We are talking about a prison, the La Macaza institution.

This is a direct result of the federal government's policies. As everyone knows, the government chose to cut \$132 million from Correctional Service Canada. These \$132 million in cuts come on top of budget cuts being made across the public service.

Now we are learning that under Bill C-40, the Crown corporation the government wants to establish would have a friend of the Prime Minister, Doug Guzman, as its CEO. Is anyone surprised? Mr. Guzman, a former Goldman Sachs executive and banker like the Prime Minister, is expected to get a salary in the neighbourhood of \$700,000 a year. That is a little higher than what an MP or even a minister earns. I am outraged.

While staff on the ground work day in, day out to ensure public safety at the prisons in La Macaza, Joliette, Cowansville and Port-Cartier, they are seeing how budget cuts have a direct impact on their work. We are being asked, as parliamentarians, to vote to give a \$700,000 salary to a friend of the Prime Minister. This is no joke. That is the reality and it is insulting.

I will explain why. It is because we also learned that Mr. Guzman allegedly threatened to leave the Defence Investment Agency, and that it was as a result of this blackmail that the government decided to make the agency into a Crown corporation. Agency officials testified to this at the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

I want to explain to Quebecers and Canadians what this change really means. The creation of a Crown corporation means establishing a company that is independent from government with a board of directors and a chief executive officer. The Crown corporation will not be accountable to Parliament. I want to emphasize that: It will not be accountable to Parliament. The government will not be responsible for its day-to-day operations.

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As everyone knows, Canada already has plenty of Crown corporations, including the CBC, the Business Development Bank of Canada, Destination Canada and Canada Post. What do those Crown corporations have in common? They provide services. They have mandates aimed at serving the public or businesses. However, the management of military and defence procurement is not a social, cultural or economic development mandate. There is no rational argument to justify the creation of a Crown corporation in this case.

The only reason I can see is that the government wants to do as it did with Bill C-5 this spring or, worse, Bill C-39. The government and the Prime Minister want free rein to ram this through and control the whole process without any parliamentary oversight. Now that is power.

• (1535)

What the Prime Minister wants is to evade legislative oversight and turn Parliament into a rubber stamp. It is easy. No one says a word, and his plans go off without a hitch. His actions go unnoticed. There is no accountability, period.

Members of Parliament are being denied three roles. I have been here for seven years and I must say I have never seen anything like this. The first is the role of intermediary between citizens and the public administration. The second is the role of legislator. The third is the role of overseeing and monitoring government actions.

Otherwise, what is the point? How will lawmakers—and I am talking about all of us, not just the opposition—be able to hold the government accountable if the government keeps undermining transparency and accountability? It is troubling.

With Bill C-40, just as with Bill C-39, we are witnessing undemocratic manoeuvres to ram through measures without parliamentary scrutiny. They want to rush this through, quietly and without anyone noticing, as I have already mentioned. What would be my role on the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates if I no longer had the right to scrutinize these matters, if I no longer had the right to know? What do we have to offer to all the people who elected us?

I represent the riding of Laurentides—Labelle. I represent a geographical area, but above all I represent people. My riding is home to 92,897 people. When I rise in the House, I am speaking on their behalf. I am speaking in the interests of my constituents. I am speaking with them in mind.

When the Prime Minister and the government seek to limit parliamentary power, what they are really doing is limiting the power of the people. I think that is clear.

Government Orders

This authoritarian streak worries me, and I am not the only one. I do not want the government to hide behind a board of directors it has appointed in order to justify potentially dubious purchases, or to pat itself on the back when a purchase proves beneficial. I do not want the Government of Canada—which, incidentally, is the only one amongst our allies to have established a system of this sort—to be able to evade the close scrutiny of members of Parliament. We deserve a government that treats Parliament with respect. That is what people want. I want Parliament to be able to work diligently, with respect for the public and with the sound management of public finances in mind.

I am concerned. Efficiency must not come at all costs, yet that is what we are being told. We are being told that the government wants to do this in order to be efficient. We have just seen that we could have been efficient by taking care of our culture and investing in it. However, a one-sided decision was made.

In closing, I agree that the process can certainly be improved. However, we must ensure that the intentions are noble and in the common interest, not in the interest of the Prime Minister's friends.

I have seen this movie before, and I hope that things will be different this time because the situation is serious. Let us treat it seriously.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I read Bill C-40 and had the opportunity to give a speech here in the House. I think there is a bit of a misunderstanding about the bill. I will explain why. By creating this corporation, Bill C-40 will provide support so businesses can bid on government contracts. I have worked with businesses. All too often, we see that they would like to bid on contracts, but they lack the financial means or do not have the necessary financial backing, from banks, for instance. That is what Bill C-40 offers. It will support the entire sector in bidding on these contracts. It will provide loan insurance. It will make it possible to get loans.

I would like my colleague to take the time to read the bill carefully and consider the impact it could have on the sector. It will support hundreds of businesses so they can bid on contracts.

• (1540)

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, because it gives me the opportunity to mention something I did not address in my speech: the role of the procurement ombudsman. The ombudsman serves as an independent safeguard and external watchdog. When a contract is disputed and a clear answer is required, a complaint can be filed with the ombudsman. The ombudsman then appears before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, helping us get to the bottom of the matter. We correct course, if necessary. With the Defence Investment Agency, however, there will be no ombudsman. Just imagine: no transparency.

I fully agree with my colleague that we need to speed up the process, that we need to support this sector and give it a helping hand, but at what cost? It must certainly not be at the cost of undermining our democracy.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's comments regarding respect and parlia-

mentary oversight. To what extent is she confident that the Liberal MPs on the committee will accept amendments aimed at guaranteeing parliamentary oversight?

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's French is always outstanding. What we are hearing right now is a lot of lofty rhetoric. As with other files, I would like to know just how aware government members are of what is taking place. I have already spoken about wilful blindness, but ultimately we will be left dealing with the consequences of a major departure, and that worries me. If the government is going to retain all these safeguards and criteria, then what emerges will no longer really be a Crown corporation. The rationale simply does not hold water.

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for her excellent speech. When we look at Bill C-39, which follows on the heels of Bill C-5, we see the government concentrating even more power in the Prime Minister's Office by allowing the Prime Minister to designate projects as being in the national interest and circumvent environmental laws. Is Bill C-40 not simply a continuation of that same trend? How far is this going to go? What does my colleague think about that?

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, for those who follow our work, this is just the tip of the iceberg. It is unbelievable what is happening. We supposedly have a saviour for now, but what happens later? What then? All of this in the name of national sovereignty and economic development. Seriously, we are undermining our democracy. Bill C-40 is exactly the same anti-transparency process.

[English]

Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding, the beautiful Bay of Quinte, we are proudly home to the Royal Canadian Air Force's primary and largest air mobility hub, 8 Wing at CFB Trenton.

While CFB Trenton is a fascinating and awesome place to celebrate in its sheer enormity and scope of operations, we are here today to discuss important legislation to accelerate defence procurement, strengthen Canadian industry and reinforce Canadian sovereignty. We do so to benefit and bolster the work of the 5,000 military and civilian personnel who keep CFB Trenton operational 24-7, 365 days a year.

Bill C-40, the strengthening Canada's defence sector act, represents a major step in modernizing how Canada equips its military. Above all, the legislation is about building a stronger, more capable Canada, a Canada that can continue to defend itself against emerging threats, protect its interests and keep Canadians safe.

The bill comes at a defining moment in our country's history. Our government is making a generational investment to rebuild, rearm and reinvest in the Canadian Armed Forces, but our investments are only part of the equation. We must also ensure that they translate into effective military capabilities delivered to our Canadian Armed Forces quickly and efficiently, as well as that they deliver real economic benefits for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. To meet these important commitments, in October 2025, we established the Defence Investment Agency, or the DIA, as a special operating agency within Public Services and Procurement Canada.

In just one year, the DIA has helped accelerate and advance a number of major defence projects. The legislation we are proposing builds on this momentum, giving the DIA the additional tools and authorities it needs to keep doing this work even more quickly and efficiently.

It is important to know that we are not starting from zero. With that in mind, I would like to take a few minutes to highlight some of the important projects the DIA has been able to advance over the past year, as well as to discuss how Bill C-40 would ensure that we can keep delivering at the pace that our military needs and that Canadians expect.

Let me begin with air and space. Canada is a vast country. Protecting our airspace, particularly in the Arctic, requires modern aircraft, advanced surveillance systems and reliable communications. We are making significant progress on all three fronts. In May, Canada selected Saab as the preferred supplier for our future air-borne early warning and control capability. Negotiations are now advancing toward the acquisition of the GlobalEye system. This system would provide long-range surveillance and early warning capabilities, helping our forces detect and track potential threats. Because GlobalEye uses Canadian-made Bombardier Global 6500 aircraft, this project also offers important opportunities for Canada's aerospace industry.

As we strengthen Canada's air and space capabilities, we are also investing in emerging technologies. In just months, the defence drone initiative, made possible because of DIA involvement, has helped lay the foundations for a sovereign national defence drone ecosystem.

Another important initiative is the enhanced satellite communications project, polar. This project will provide our military with reliable, secure communications in the Arctic, where conventional communications can often be limited.

Working with Canadian industry leaders such as Telesat and MDA, the Defence Investment Agency has helped advance an innovative procurement approach. Rather than developing a technical solution in isolation, we engaged Canadian industry earlier, drawing on its expertise to help identify the best way forward. In August, the agency awarded Telesat a \$2.3-billion contract for the first major component of this capability. This is an excellent example of how we can move faster while strengthening Canadian technological expertise and industrial capacity.

Let me turn then to land capabilities. Our soldiers need modern equipment they can depend on. Earlier this year, our government awarded Colt Canada a contract for up to 65,402 new Canadian

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modular assault rifle systems. These rifles will replace equipment that has served our military for decades. Through the contract negotiated by the DIA, Colt Canada is committed to incorporating at least 80% Canadian content into these rifles, on top of their being built domestically.

• (1545)

This project is a great example of how the DIA is already improving readiness for our soldiers while supporting Canadian manufacturing, skilled workers and our domestic defence industrial base.

Likewise, the DIA is helping Canada move forward on the capabilities the Royal Canadian Navy needs to defend our vast waters, done most notably through the Canadian patrol submarine project. In July, Canada selected Germany-based TKMS, with the support of Germany and Norway, as its preferred supplier. Negotiations are under way to acquire up to 12 modern, conventionally powered submarines with long range, long endurance and Arctic capabilities. These submarines would strengthen our ability to detect, track and deter potential adversaries in the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans. We are planning to sustain these submarines right here in Canada.

These are just a few examples of the major defence acquisitions under way. We have been able to make significant progress on these projects since the creation of the DIA. They also highlight something important. The DIA's goal is not simply to acquire equipment faster. It is about fundamentally transforming how we approach defence procurement.

Historically, major acquisitions have involved several federal departments, each with important responsibilities: National Defence identified military requirements; Public Services and Procurement Canada managed procurement and contracting; and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada oversaw industrial and economic considerations. While this arrangement brought valuable expertise across government, it could also create duplication, delays and uncertainty as projects move between organizations.

The DIA is helping to change that. By bringing together military, technical, commercial and procurement specialists from across government, the agency is building integrated teams that can work collaboratively from the earliest stages of a project. The DIA is also introducing more flexible approaches to procurement. That includes engaging industry earlier, streamlining decision-making and considering existing commercial or military solutions where appropriate.

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This work is closely connected to Canada's defence industrial strategy, which is helping ensure our defence investments also build the industrial capacity, skilled workforce and secure supply chains needed to produce and sustain critical capabilities here at home. At its heart is a straightforward approach: build, partner, buy. That means to build in Canada where we have the capacity or where developing that capacity is strategically important; partner with trusted allies when collaboration provides access to better capabilities, technologies or production opportunities; and buy existing capabilities from trusted partners.

It would all strengthen our capability to maintain and sustain essential military equipment in Canada. That is important because every critical component we can produce domestically, every system we can maintain and repair ourselves, makes our country more resilient. The DIA would have a clear responsibility for translating these requirements into results, all while maintaining strong governance, financial oversight and accountability to Parliament through a minister.

Ultimately, our success will not be measured by the number of contracts we sign. It will be measured by the opportunities we create for Canadian workers and businesses, and it will be measured by the capabilities we deliver to our military. That is what Bill C-40 is designed to achieve: a stronger military; a stronger defence industry; and a stronger, more sovereign Canada. That is why I urge all members of the House to support the legislation.

• (1550)

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Bay of Quinte represents the largest Air Force base in Canada. It is a base that houses our C-17s, a massive equipment procurement that was purchased by the previous Conservative government without this agency, without anything. It was done through a sole-source process. It was done as an operational requirement, and it did not eliminate the need for parliamentary oversight or accountability.

Would the member agree that the purchase, along with the Chinooks and tanks during the war in Afghanistan, were all good purchases that were done for the right reasons, and they were done efficiently and well?

Chris Malette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, for his service to Canada as a veteran, especially at this time of year.

I listened earlier as the member recited a litany of shortages in sending troops into harm's way when he was an active serving member, and I would like to remind him that the program we are introducing in this bill would help address the very concerns he expressed earlier. This program is designed to help better procure items such as C-17, but we have also seen that we need everything from socks to submarines, and this legislation would help do that, not only with speed but also with great oversight.

• (1555)

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in my speech earlier, I talked about accountability and transparency. I would like my colleague to explain to me how the

government will be able to ensure transparency in this new Crown corporation. I would like him to explain that to me.

[English]

Chris Malette: Mr. Speaker, in the new legislation, the shift is about centralizing execution and accountability with what is known as the CCDI. While recognizing that major defence investments will continue to advance broader Government of Canada priorities, the CCDI mandate would be more focused on defence production, procurement and investment. It would also accelerate delivery of defence capabilities.

That does not mean there would be less oversight. The CCDI would operate at arm's length under the national defence portfolio, reporting to a new minister, called the associate minister of national defence for procurement. The Government of Canada is committed to clear accountability and a more integrated approach to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments. The hon. member for Compton—Stanstead.

[Translation]

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the Bay of Quinte for his speech on the new Defence Investment Agency. I would like my colleague to elaborate on the type of spinoffs there might be for a riding like his or mine.

[English]

Chris Malette: Mr. Speaker, the DIA would be continue to operate under its existing authorities and advance procurements while the new Crown corporation is established. The transition would be managed to maintain continuity and minimize disruption to ongoing procurements, industrial industry partners and client organizations. Earlier today, I met with a defence contractor, for instance, who is interested and already actively working at CFB Trenton in my riding of the Bay of Quinte. They are very keen on Bill C-40 to see that this exact piece of legislation would help them further bring their private expertise to work in collaboration with our defences.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I noted that, in the member's speech, he said that there would still be accountability through a minister, but with the nature of creating this as a Crown corporation, does he not agree that this would inherently set the operations of this Crown corporation at arm's length from direct ministerial accountability?

Chris Malette: Mr. Speaker, as we have seen, we are not reinventing the wheel here. We are not reinventing Crown corporations. I fail to see why, when we are talking defence procurement, we would all of a sudden have less accountability. We have many Crown corporations that operate very closely with government, but that is done with very good scrutiny.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our soldiers need equipment quickly, yet the government has spent the last year trying to decide how to organize the bureaucracy responsible for buying it. After 11 years of Liberal government, our sailors, soldiers and aviators are still being asked to make do with aging equipment while they wait for replacements, and they continue to do their jobs. They deserve a government that will do its job too.

Last October, the Liberals created the Defence Investment Agency. Canadians were told it would cut red tape and get equipment to our Forces faster. A few months later, the government decided the agency needed to become a stand-alone entity. It brought forward legislation in the spring. Now before that legislation is even completed, Bill C-40 proposes turning it into a Crown corporation.

For Canadians unfamiliar with that, a Crown corporation is a government-owned company that has its own board executives, such as Canada Post and Via Rail. That is a lot of time spent reorganizing an agency that was supposed to save time. Why did an agency inside a department not work? Why is the proposal for a stand-alone agency already being replaced? What exactly would a Crown corporation fix that the Liberals could not get right the first two times? The government should answer those questions before asking Parliament to approve another restructuring.

Conservatives have called for one clear point of accountability, with a dedicated secretariat in the Privy Council Office so that military purchases receive priority at the cabinet table. We want decisions made, contracts moving and, most of all, equipment delivered. Canadians should be able to identify who is responsible and hold that person accountable for the results.

The Liberals keep changing their minds about who should buy the equipment, while troops are still expected to do their jobs without it. They cannot put their duties on hold while the government figures out how to do its job. After 11 years, they deserve a government that can get them what they need and do so without delay.

The government keeps restructuring its defence agency rather than delivering equipment to our soldiers. The Defence Investment Agency was created to get military equipment purchased and delivered faster, but here we are, a year later, and it has yet to deliver a single piece of new equipment to our armed forces, so the government's response is to restructure it again.

Under Bill C-40, the minister could direct the corporation to carry out an activity, stop an activity or carry it out in a particular way. The legislation states "the Corporation must do as the Minister directs". Canadians should understand what that means.

What is the point of having a board and a chief executive if that cannot prevent the minister from directing what the corporation does? More importantly, where does that leave the military's ad-

vice? What safeguards ensure that purchasing decisions follow operational requirements rather than political priorities?

Our pilots need aircraft that can carry out their missions, much like our sailors need ships equipped for the conditions they face, so before any politician announces any supplier, our military's requirements should be established.

The concerns surrounding GlobalEye, an airborne surveillance system, show why this matters. There have been questions about whether the Royal Canadian Air Force's requirements were even properly considered before the government announced its preferred supplier. Conservatives have asked the Auditor General and Parliamentary Budget Officer to examine that decision.

The people who will operate this equipment understand what the job requires. They are also the ones who face the consequences if the government buys something that falls short. They should never be left trying to make announcements work after the decisions have been made.

Before the government asks for broader powers, it needs to answer for the results. What has the agency delivered? What has it accelerated? How would military requirements be protected when the minister could tell the corporation what to do? Our troops need a procurement system that not only answers to their operational needs, but also makes them the priority, always.

● (1600)

The government is hiding its debt in Crown corporations, as confirmed by the most recent PBO report; relabelling operating expenses as investments; and shredding fiscal anchors. That is what we are seeing at the Ministry of Defence. The Liberals are creating a Crown corporation to shelter military spending from parliamentary scrutiny and public visibility. Moving spending into a Crown corporation does not make it free. Canadians still carry the cost, and they still carry the risk.

Let us look at Canada Post. The government made more than \$1 billion in repayable funding available in 2025, and then announced another \$1-billion funding package this year to keep it solvent and operating. This funding is not added to the deficit; it is labelled as an asset on the financial books. Does anyone think Canada Post will repay its debt? It is highly unlikely. It has not turned a profit since 2017, and it has lost about \$5.3 billion. Calling funding "repayable" does not answer the question taxpayers should be asking: How confident are we that we will get that money back?

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Just last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that loans and advances to enterprise corporations reached \$141.5 billion in 2025. That is nearly three times the 2016 level: \$51 billion in 2016, compared to \$141 billion in 2025. This matters because the government borrows money, lends it to a Crown corporation and records it as a financial asset. Money it expects to recover is recorded as an asset, when in fact it is a highly unlikely scenario that it will be recovered. Canadians still owe the debt the government took on to provide that loan, so recording an asset does not make the borrowing disappear. Taxpayers still have to service that debt, and they remain exposed if the loan is not repaid.

Bill C-40 would create another Crown corporation with powers to make loans, provide guarantees and buy shares in companies. Having spent 15 years in commercial banking, I know that a loan is only as sound as the borrower's ability to repay it. One needs to understand their financial position and account for the possibility of a loss. Canadians deserve that same discipline from their government. What is this corporation financing? How will the risks be assessed? If repayment becomes doubtful, when and how will that be reflected in the government's books? Parliament and the Parliamentary Budget Officer need enough information to follow the money and assess the exposure independently.

The same accountability must apply to contracts. Bill C-40 would give the government broad grounds to bypass competitive bidding. It should have to explain which exception it used, why it was necessary and how it established the value for money.

Conservatives want regular reporting to Parliament and clear answers about which Treasury Board safeguards would apply to this three-times restructured defence procurement agency. If a contract goes over budget or if an investment loses money, somebody must answer for it. Canadians should not be passed from a minister to a chief executive to a board, with everybody pointing somewhere else. Canadians deserve to know where their money is going and who will answer for it.

Our troops deserve the equipment they were promised. They have kept their word to keep Canada safe. After 11 years, it is time the government keeps its word to them too.

• (1605)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the Conservatives debate this piece of legislation, I find that it is almost as if they want to find a way to vote against it.

Crown corporations, whether at the national level or provincial level, have provided all forms of services to Canadians. The Prime Minister has made very clear the commitment to grow our Canadian Forces and to support our Canadian Forces. Let us take a look at our military industry as a whole and how it can benefit by a Crown corporation. It does not take away from accountability. We can still ask questions of the ministers and the parliamentary secretaries. We can still see the Crown corporations come before standing committees.

Crown corporations at both the national level and provincial level have proven to be very successful. Why is the Conservative Party deciding to vote against—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, the member says that the Conservative Party is trying to find an excuse to vote against this bill. The reality is that the Liberal government wants to hand over a bill for us to blindly approve. Canadians sent us here to ask questions and get answers, answers we unfortunately do not often get.

The issue with Crown corporations was clearly laid out by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. She is non-partisan. This is an independent body reviewing our country's books, and she has raised alarms about the amount of debt the Prime Minister is hiding in Crown corporations. He seems to want to continue to do the same.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, judging by this bill's generosity, one would think Christmas had come at Halloween. It seems to have goodies for absolutely everyone. The reality, however, is that there is only so much money to go around, unless the government increases the deficit even more.

It is true that, in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, there are opportunities to be seized in the defence sector, whether in rescue training, ballistic defence system development, ammunition or weapon disposal, or military equipment repair. The region has a lot to offer.

However, I think that handing this responsibility over to an agency is undemocratic and reduces transparency.

As members of Parliament, how can we ensure that such an agency will be accountable when we know very well—as my time on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts has shown me—that this type of structure serves to curtail accountability?

• (1610)

[English]

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely. The priority here is to make sure that equipment is delivered to our troops, that this is done efficiently and fast and that it meets the requirements they need. Unfortunately, what we have seen so far is that the Prime Minister has taken unilateral decisions without necessarily consulting the military on procurement decisions and appointing companies. This bill would not provide any certainty that there will be transparency or, ultimately, accountability for those decisions. At the end of the day, it is our troops and our military, the people who protect us, who will be at risk.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has to be made clear first and foremost that Conservatives support our troops and support getting them the equipment they need in a very fast manner. Unfortunately, what the Liberals are trying to do is add to their creative accounting and create a shell game where they will be able to move government spending out of their deficit and make it an asset under a Crown corporation. This is all smoke and mirrors.

The member for Winnipeg North has done a great job in here of trying to provide misleading information to the House and Canadians. What we need to get down to is the facts, one of which is that this bill would not provide the transparency and accountability we deserve as Canadians and deserve as parliamentarians. The track record of this agency to date has been that it has not gotten the equipment that our troops desperately need.

Sandra Cobena: Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely with the member.

On the point about Crown corporations, because we keep getting pushed and pressed by the government, let us not forget that the Canada Infrastructure Bank is a Crown corporation, and the CEO gets compensated around \$1.5 million per year. We also know that the Prime Minister has a tendency to appoint his friends and family to positions. There are a lot of questions that still need to be answered.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, we are living in a rapidly changing world. Multiple conflicts are currently unfolding across the globe. The rules-based international order we knew for decades has been turned upside down. Technological advances are fundamentally altering both the nature of the threats we face and the tools available to address them. We must develop defence capabilities to meet these new realities.

There are also new challenges ahead. Consider, for example, the growing strategic importance of the Arctic and the need to find a way to safeguard our sovereignty over this vast northern territory. We must reinvest to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces have the equipment they need, when they need it. That means reinvesting not only in modernizing and replenishing our equipment, but also in building a defence supply chain capable of meeting the needs of our armed forces in a timely manner. That is precisely why we are debating Bill C-40 today.

Since last year, we have made major investments in the Canadian Armed Forces, and we have met our NATO defence spending target of 2% of GDP. These investments are essential for protecting our country's sovereignty. They give us the means to defend our territory, our borders and our national interests. We are also seeking to build our strategic autonomy through these investments. We want to further develop industrial capabilities and reliable supply chains right here at home so that we can meet our own defence needs and fulfill our commitments to our allies as members of NATO. This is also a measure of our credibility as a reliable international partner.

In addition to meeting security needs, these defence investments are also helping us to strengthen the Canadian economy because we are enhancing Canada's industrial capabilities. With that in mind, in February, we launched Canada's very first defence industrial strate-

gy, which seeks to transform our defence industries by prioritizing Canadian suppliers and materials. By investing in our defence capabilities, we want to promote our local businesses, stimulate our economy and invest in Canadian innovation and commercialization, while streamlining procurement to give businesses consistent and predictable demand.

As I mentioned, we have already taken historic steps to speed up defence equipment procurement while ensuring that Canadian workers and businesses benefit in the process. However, we want to go further and, as we have said before, we can do better. To improve, we have to start by identifying weaknesses in the Canadian defence procurement system and finding ways to fix them.

Specifically, I am thinking of the fragmentation between departments, because defence procurement involves multiple different government entities and ministers. This fragmentation can affect our efficiency. In addition, sometimes, procedures are too complex to meet the military's constantly changing needs. We have also noted how slow and arduous it is for the system to adapt to the immediate needs of our armed forces. We want to cut through the red tape. We want to speed up procurement and more quickly deliver critical equipment and capabilities to the CAF and our allies.

It is in this spirit that we have introduced Bill C-40 to establish the Defence Investment Agency as a Crown corporation. This agency will have a strong mandate to carry out activities related to production, procurement and investment in respect of national defence assets. What will change about this agency? It will have additional and expanded authority to move complex projects forward, and it will have the capacity and expertise to do so while developing Canada's defence industrial base. More specifically, as a Crown corporation, this agency will be able to operate with greater authority to negotiate and manage contracts in accordance with business practices more familiar to the industry. It will eliminate fragmentation by bringing the decision-makers responsible for procurement and strategic investments together in one place. It will reduce administrative burdens and facilitate access for suppliers in order to speed up procurement.

What is more, Bill C-40 proposes creating the position of associate minister of national defence for procurement to oversee this new Crown corporation. The idea is once again to centralize the activities within a single agency rather than having a fragmented system like the one we have now.

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• (1615)

The objective is to deliver better results for our armed forces.

We are already hard at work. We have already announced major investments in our armed forces since the last election. We are currently in negotiations to acquire up to 12 submarines, which is the largest defence procurement in our country's history. We are establishing a strategic partnership framework under the defence industrial strategy to expand our fleet of armoured vehicles. We announced an \$11-billion investment in an icebreaker contract for the Davie shipyard, the largest shipbuilding contract in the history of the province of Quebec.

My home province of New Brunswick is not being overlooked. In April, our government announced an investment of more than \$1 billion for the Canadian Armed Forces base in Gagetown. This includes \$871 million to recapitalize the range and training area and \$172 million to establish new ground-based air defence infrastructure.

These investments ensure that our soldiers train on infrastructure built to last the next century and truly adapted to today's needs.

In addition to these investments, another \$20 million has been budgeted to create a modern building that centralizes transition services in order to better support CAF members and their families during the transition either back to duty or to civilian life.

I want to emphasize how important this federal investment of over \$1 billion is to my province, New Brunswick. This is a significant amount with economic benefits not only for the military base, but for my province as a whole. In fact, my colleague from Fredericton—Oromocto often talks to us about the importance of investing in CFB Gagetown, both to support our CAF members by providing them with adequate training facilities truly adapted to their needs, but also for the many benefits it brings to our entire province.

I support my colleague from Fredericton—Oromocto's efforts.

Our defence industrial strategy also includes a component aimed at increasing Canadian innovation in the defence and dual-use sector. I am referring to funding for technology, infrastructure, research and equipment that serve both military purposes, for use by our CAF, and civilian applications. I am thinking of our investments in drones and surveillance systems.

It goes without saying that there is tremendous potential in the defence sector, particularly when it comes to monitoring vast territories such as the Arctic and conducting reconnaissance missions. However, these technologies can also be used in search and rescue operations. They can be deployed during forest fires and used to map our forests. They are also useful in agriculture for mapping fields. These investments improve our drone technology, which has both military and civilian applications.

The same is true of satellite technologies and the improvements we are making to access space and enhance satellite connectivity. These investments help meet the need for secure, reliable communications in remote places, of course, but there is also potential to improve cell connectivity in rural parts of the country.

I am also thinking of our investments in cybersecurity, which will help strengthen the protection of our networks and improve our ability to detect threats. This is especially important at a time when artificial intelligence is advancing rapidly. Investments in cybersecurity will have tangible benefits, particularly in terms of improving the security of our public and corporate networks.

I am giving all these examples to show that our defence investments will not just be used to procure military equipment. They will also benefit our businesses and communities. We are investing to meet the needs of our military, but we are also taking this opportunity to further enhance Canada's advantage in sectors such as AI, IT and access to space.

• (1620)

[English]

We are having this discussion on Bill C-40 as we are entering the remembrance period, and I think it is important to mention that. From October 24 to November 11, millions of Canadians wear a poppy as a visible pledge to remember those who served our country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom we enjoy today.

Wearing a poppy is a symbol of gratitude, thanking those who serve and their families and remembering those who lost their lives in service to our country. It is also a sign of remembrance and education, reminding future generations of the importance of knowing our history and remembering those who served our country. It is a concrete way to support our local Royal Canadian Legions. The poppy campaign raises funds to support veterans and their families, so making a donation is a concrete way to show our support.

This year, Remembrance Day takes on a particular meaning following the recent loss of four members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the serious injuries sustained by several others at Wainwright.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for drawing attention to the importance of base Gagetown. I spent eight years of my career posted there. I know how important that base is for the Canadian Army in particular.

My question is about accountability. The member talked a bit about it, and there has been lots of debate around that issue. However, the Liberal government, over the last 10 years, has done a good job of not accepting accountability. We had one case where we successfully censured a former minister of national defence when he messed up in a leadership role. When it came to Sustainable Development Technology Canada, unfortunately the government took the Speaker to court to prevent the will of Parliament.

Considering that he is a member of the governing caucus, which has a majority, I am not confident that the amendments that opposition members will want at committee are going to get through. Will the member commit that if the minister or the CEO of the DIA is found guilty of something, he will personally call for their resignation or firing?

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the member had the opportunity to spend several years in New Brunswick. I am also pleased that he pointed out how important the announced \$1-billion investment has been for infrastructure at the Gagetown military base in New Brunswick. That will make a real difference for our Canadian Armed Forces and for the province that I represent.

As far as accountability is concerned, obviously a minister will be responsible for this agency. He or she will be in the House to answer opposition members' questions and will appear in committee. A whole series of mechanisms will be put in place to ensure transparency and accountability within our parliamentary system. The Crown corporation will still be required to disclose financial information, undergo audits and table documents in Parliament.

We are giving this organization more independence from an operational perspective, but we are maintaining strict accountability measures.

• (1625)

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about accountability.

The procurement ombudsman regularly appears before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. When I asked him if there are sufficient safeguards or if he could analyze certain contracts that might have been awarded to cronies for certain purposes, even though that is surely not happening, he replied that he could not do his job with a new structure like this one.

Seriously, we are supposed to believe the words we are hearing when, fact, what we are talking about is total autonomy.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Mr. Speaker, as I said, accountability measures will apply. The objective of making the agency a Crown corporation is to give it more autonomy so it can invest in defence and meet current needs while strengthening our country's industrial base.

Accountability measures will apply. Committee work will be carried out, reports will be written and financial disclosure obligations will have to be met. All of these criteria apply. Members of Parli-

ment will be able to ask their questions in committee and in the House.

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche both have ridings that are partly rural. Some people are wondering whether rural areas will have access to the funding and projects that will come out of this agency.

What does my colleague think the Defence Investment Agency would do for the people in his region?

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Mr. Speaker, first, there is the \$1-billion investment in CFB Gagetown. This will have significant economic benefits for the entire province of New Brunswick.

Several businesses in my riding have contracts with the Department of National Defence or with its suppliers.

I have visited some of them in my capacity as a member of Parliament. I also document my region's ability to meet the country's defence needs and forward this information to the appropriate authorities.

When it comes to the dual-use sector, there are tangible benefits for our regions. I am thinking in particular of a research project funded by our industrial strategy at the University of New Brunswick, focusing on the security of our critical infrastructure and specifically examining Port Saint John and the Port of Belledune, which is located in northern New Brunswick.

The project focuses on ways to improve the security and efficiency of this critical infrastructure. This will have benefits not only for security but also for the civilian sector. There are many such examples.

I could go on. This provides a variety of opportunities for our businesses involved in infrastructure, such as our ports, and for our research centres that are studying defence-related issues.

[English]

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it truly is a privilege to rise today to speak to Bill C-40, the defence and national security production and procurement act. In the wake of the tragic events at CFB Wainwright just over a week ago and the launch of the Royal Canadian Legion's national poppy campaign this past weekend, we are reminded of the service and sacrifice of our Canadian Armed Forces, both past and present, and the importance of the debate we are having here today.

Turning to the bill, it pains me to say that here we go again. This is the Liberal government's third attempt to deliver defence equipment to our Canadian Armed Forces in an efficient and timely way. Perhaps three times is the charm.

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It was just one short year ago that I spoke to the Liberal government's budget implementation act, Bill C-31, when the government made the case that its recently created Defence Investment Agency needed to become a stand-alone entity outside of both the departments of PSPC and National Defence. Bill C-40 proposes to turn the Defence Investment Agency into the Canadian corporation for defence investment.

The Defence Investment Agency was launched to accelerate defence procurement, but it has failed to deliver a single piece of new equipment for the Canadian Armed Forces. Instead, the government points to signing ceremonies and preferred partnership announcements, pretending that this is the same as actually delivering.

After a decade of neglect, what our sailors, soldiers and aviators need is a procurement process that equips them for the modern threats we face today. The brave men and women of our armed forces deserve the equipment they need to defend Canada and keep Canadians safe. Above all, they should be able to count on procurement processes that are efficient and accountable.

As I was contemplating my remarks for today's debate, I reflected on the question of accountability and trust: Do I trust the tired old Liberal government to do the right thing with respect to defence procurement? Let us look at its track record. One's trust would be misplaced on so many fronts, but it is especially the case when it comes to trusting the Liberal government to do the right thing on procurement. I have had the honour of serving in this place for almost two decades, so I want to remind some of my colleagues who have not been here that long of a very sad saga.

Canada joined the joint strike fighter program under the former Liberal government in 1997. That is almost 30 years ago. In 2010, under the leadership of a Conservative government, Canada finally selected the F-35, a fifth-generation fighter jet, to replace our aging fleet of CF-18s. Then, in a twist of overt political opportunism, former Liberal prime minister Justin Trudeau, at the time the leader, campaigned on a promise to never purchase the F-35. This kicked off approximately seven years of Liberal stonewalling, obstructionism, foot-dragging and delays. The Liberals even concocted the silly idea of buying old jets from Australia.

Then, in 2022, the same old Liberal government ended up choosing the F-35 as the CF-18's replacement. I guess we can always count on a Liberal government to break a promise. However, this saga did not end there. In 2025, the same Liberal government once again put the F-35 procurement under review.

Military procurement should be in the best interests of the Canadian Armed Forces and Canada's national security and should not be politicized, which leads me to another area of concern with this proposed legislation, that being the potential erosion of parliamentary oversight and transparency.

This seems to be a pattern for the Liberal government. In order to fix and speed up the broken defence procurement system, the Liberals created a special agency and appointed the Prime Minister's friend Doug Guzman, who has no background in national defence but asked for a job. He was handed the position of the first CEO of the Defence Investment Agency, with a salary greater than the highest paid federal public servants on the payroll. Four months lat-

er, the government announced the need for the agency to be a stand-alone entity, and before that could happen, it introduced legislation to convert the DIA into a Crown corporation, overseen by an associate minister with unprecedented powers.

● (1630)

The changes contained in Bill C-40 could remove much-needed parliamentary oversight from the DIA, creating the inevitable mismanagement of taxpayer dollars and waste the government is known for. With billions of tax dollars at stake, Conservatives have serious concerns that the Liberals are increasing the opportunity for political interference and decreasing accountability.

I am sure members will recall the revelation of a potential conflict of interest, which still exists, surrounding the Liberal government's Alto rail boondoggle and the finance minister. The prospect of the finance minister making decisions as part of the federal government's budgetary process, which presents distinct benefits and advantages for his partner and her employer, and acting and voting in Parliament to give those effect, is deeply troubling. We can consider the Prime Minister's most recent pre-Thanksgiving announcement to subsidize heat pumps. Brookfield has a big stake in the retrofit and heat pump business via Enercare and Trane, and the Prime Minister has a lot of deferred shares, options and carried interest.

Meanwhile, there is growing evidence that the DIA or the Liberals themselves may have already decided on Saab's GlobalEye as the preferred supplier for the airborne early warning and control platform without proper consideration or consultation with the Royal Canadian Air Force. Political interference seems to be second nature for the government.

I raise these examples to remind Canadians why we cannot simply trust this Liberal government and to make the case for the need to ensure strong oversight and transparency. To be clear, Conservatives are on the record. We support one point of accountability for defence procurement, not adding layers of bureaucracy to an already bureaucratic system. This is why the rules around sole-source procurement and other reporting requirements must be strong.

Conservatives believe that the powers conferred to the CEO by the new associate minister should be scaled back when it comes to decisions to sole-source a procurement, and the government should be required to disclose when it uses national security exceptions to allow for sole-sourcing procurements, including which subsection was supplied. This is not currently a requirement in Bill C-40. I am concerned that the measures proposed in the bill are not strong enough. Instead of taking the politics out of procurement, the bill would ensure that Liberal insiders would benefit from contracts with no transparency, accountability, Treasury Board oversight or sufficient reporting to Parliament.

In conclusion, this tired Liberal government's first and second attempts to reform defence procurement have not proven successful. Like Build Canada Homes or the Major Projects Office, the DIA is just the latest new Liberal bureaucracy delivering bottlenecks instead of progress. As a result, it is only logical that members of Parliament should have concerns about this third attempt to fix defence procurement.

Defence procurement is a matter at the heart of our sovereignty and our security, but after a decade of Liberal neglect, our military has been left unprepared for the threats we face. The world is changing. Symbolic announcements do not build or buy the equipment the Canadian Armed Forces require. Faster procurement does not require less accountability. The CAF needs swift action to procure equipment, and Canadian taxpayers deserve transparency and accountability for those expenses. These two requirements are not in conflict, even though it seems like the government wants to promote that view.

As a result, my concern is that the lack of transparency in the process being proposed by this bill is a design feature, not an unintended flaw. Bill C-40 would not deliver the equipment our forces desperately need, nor would it protect taxpayers from Liberal corruption. Conservatives will be opposing Bill C-40.

• (1635)

[Translation]

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by our colleague from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, who talked about procurement. Our colleague has been here for several years now. She was in the House when the Harper government was in power. At that time, defence spending was well below the 2% threshold that NATO requires of its members. In 2013, it was less than 1%. In 2014, it was 1.01%, and in 2015, it was 1.2%. Our government has exceeded the 2% target. In addition, we are on track to meet the 2035 target of spending 5% of our GDP on defence.

Our colleague said earlier that it was important to speed up procurement. Will the Conservatives support measures to streamline procurement, improve preparedness and establish the Crown corporation?

[English]

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, after all is said and done, more is always said than done with the Liberal government. This is not the first time that the government has used creative accounting. We have seen this time and time again with the government including items that have not been considered for defence spending, including

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veterans' pensions and Transport Canada airplanes, as well as the entire Canadian Coast Guard budget, in order to get to our 2% NATO commitment.

If we put that together with recent reports that the Canadian Armed Forces are facing another round of internal belt tightening, the Liberals are proving once again that they are not serious about defence.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague speak about the lack of transparency. This issue has come up frequently, and it is important because it goes to the heart of the debate we must have as members of Parliament. We must remember that an agency would not be subject to the same standards of accountability. I believe the government should provide us with a briefing on this matter. It would be useful to hear senior public servants outline the differences between having an agency and having a minister responsible for public expenditures. This is clearly a major concern for my colleague. I would like to hear her views on the matter.

• (1640)

[English]

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I would have to say this: No one is questioning the creation of a defence agency, as other countries also use this model. However, as usual, the government's overreach and willingness to remove transparency and accountability from the process really do need to be examined.

Of course, single sourcing and Crown corporations have been used and proven successful when appropriate safeguards or regulations are in place. However, I would say the tools are not the problem. Those wielding the tools are the problem.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek was around during the Harper era when we bought a lot of equipment for our Canadian Armed Forces members. They were sent out to Afghanistan with virtually nothing. We had to buy everything from tactical lift aircraft to helicopters, tanks and new LAVs; the list goes on and on.

We did it without having a defence investment agency. A lot of that was sole-sourced. A lot of that was meeting the urgent operational requirements of the Canadian Armed Forces. A lot of that was about national security exemptions that were put in place. That was all done through a secretariat that the former prime minister set up and led himself. That empowered the ministers, the deputy ministers and all the departments to get the job done fast without creating new bureaucracy.

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Why does my colleague think the Liberals are creating the Crown corporation? Is it to ensure that Doug Guzman does not rage-quit, or is it to avoid transparency in following Treasury Board guidelines?

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the work that he has done on this national defence file, as well as the work that he has done in reviewing this bill and pointing out the flaws that are inherent within it.

When I think about what is motivating the government and the options that I have been given, I would have to say I believe it is both.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Finance; the hon. member for York—Durham, Aerospace Industry; the hon. member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River, Ethics.

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by paying tribute to the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and to all veterans. We have started wearing the poppy in remembrance.

Let me now turn to Bill C-40. Our government is making major investments to help Quebec businesses enter and expand within Canadian and international defence supply chains. To be clear, these investments are not about military procurement alone. They are also about jobs, innovation, economic growth and ensuring that Quebec workers and businesses are at the forefront of one of the most important industrial opportunities of our generation.

In April 2026, for example, a total of \$4.5 million was allocated to Aéro Montréal, Propulsion Québec and Sous-traitance industrielle Québec, or STIQ, to support small and medium-sized businesses. This is excellent news for the Lower Laurentians region. These investments will help Quebec businesses integrate into Canadian and international defence supply chains, market new technologies and become more competitive at securing contracts both domestically and abroad.

With this support, STIQ will help manufacturers meet the standards required to participate in defence projects. Aéro Montréal and Propulsion Québec will help businesses in the aerospace, electric mobility and smart transportation industries, which have a strong presence in the Lower Laurentians, to access new defence markets and win contracts with Canada, allied countries and major defence contractors. These investments are part of the broader regional defence investment initiative, which is providing \$64.9 million to Quebec over three years.

This regional initiative prioritizes business growth and productivity projects, particularly for SMEs, to help them meet existing or future needs of the Canadian Armed Forces, NATO or allied countries. These projects aim to increase their production and innovation capacity; improve their productivity and competitiveness; explore and expand into new markets; meet defence certification and qualification standards; support business start-up and growth, with the aim of integrating into national or international defence supply

chains; and respond to calls for proposals from prime defence contractors and the Government of Canada.

We want Quebec businesses to increase their production capacity. We want them to develop innovative technology. We want them to improve their productivity, meet defence certification requirements and compete successfully in global and domestic markets. Most importantly, we want workers and communities in Quebec to prosper.

Projects funded by the regional defence investment initiative should support hundreds of well-paying jobs across Quebec. Thanks to our regional offices, such as Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, or CED, and Export Development Canada, or EDC, support will be available across the province to help businesses in large and small communities to take advantage of opportunities and access Canada's growing defence-related investments.

These investments are being made in a province that is already a major hub for defence and innovation. Quebec has over 8,500 jobs in the defence sector, which accounts for about one quarter of the total workforce in Canada's defence industry. Quebec's aerospace sector is one of the most sophisticated in the world. I am not sure whether members have heard me mention this in previous speeches, but the Lower Laurentians is home to several aerospace companies, such as L3Harris, which maintains the F-35s we were discussing earlier; Airbus; Bell Textron, a helicopter supplier; and MHI RJ Aviation Group, which is developing all sorts of new technologies to meet the needs of the future, because when it comes to defence, we no longer need the same equipment as before.

The province's advanced manufacturing sector is internationally recognized. These research institutions are making advances in artificial intelligence, digital technologies, communications, sensors, optics and highly advanced materials.

● (1645)

As defence spending increases, both in Canada and amongst our allies, these forces place Quebec, and of course the Lower Laurentians, in a strong position to seize a growing share of these new opportunities. Businesses operating in aerospace, information technology, security, advanced transportation, critical minerals and precision manufacturing will have opportunities for growth.

When it comes to transportation, I would like to point out that my riding is home to the Nova Bus electric bus assembly plant, Blainville is home to test tracks and the neighbouring riding is home to Paccar.

SMEs producing drones, optical systems, simulators, surveillance technologies, electronic components and specialized manufacturing equipment are already well positioned to play a greater role in defence supply chains.

In fact, the number of Quebec businesses interested in the defence sector has more than doubled over the past year. This shows both the confidence of Quebec entrepreneurs and the magnitude of the opportunities that lie ahead. We do not need to speculate on what these opportunities might bring. We can already see the results within the Quebec companies that are creating jobs, developing advanced technologies and competing in global markets.

Consider a company like CAE in Montreal. As a global leader in flight simulation and training technologies, CAE has benefited from defence-related investments that strengthened Quebec's and Canada's global leadership in simulation and training technologies.

As an aside, my son is a commercial pilot, and he teaches courses on CAE simulators in Saint-Hubert. I wish my son all the best as he pursues his career as a commercial pilot.

These investments support research, exports and highly skilled jobs. Our task now is to build on this success and create the conditions for more Canadian companies to grow, innovate and remain competitive. This is precisely the goal of our government's new defence industrial strategy, under which we have committed \$6.6 billion over five years to strengthen Canada's defence industrial base.

We are investing and improving supply chains, accelerating innovation, and improving access to capital for Canadian businesses. Through its first-ever defence industrial strategy, the government is strengthening the industrial foundations underpinning Canada's security and economic resilience.

By combining long-term investments in both defence and industrial capabilities, the strategy supports businesses and Canadian workers, improves our supply chains and makes Canada a trusted partner to its allies.

We are making historic investments in Canada's defence ecosystem to transform our armed forces. We are creating good, well-paying jobs for Canadians across the country and, most importantly, we are supplying the Canadian Armed Forces with the equipment it needs to protect Canada's security and sovereignty.

The defence industrial strategy acknowledges a simple fact: Canadians should benefit from major defence investments. For that reason, our government is prioritizing Canadian suppliers, Canadian materials and Canadian innovation. This is also why we created the Defence Investment Agency: to modernize procedures, speed up projects and help Canadian businesses participate more actively in defence procurement opportunities.

What does this mean for Quebec?

For Quebec, these investments mean more procurement contracts. They mean opportunities for SMEs and growth in the aerospace and advanced manufacturing sectors. They mean investments in research and innovation.

I am not going to take up any more of the House's time, although I could go on at length about the many positive aspects of all this. Our objective is to help workers, businesses and communities in Quebec and across Canada.

I am ready to take my colleagues' questions.

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• (1650)

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech on military procurement, which is an extremely important issue.

I would like to ask her a question. At CANSEC in May, everyone was taken by surprise when the government announced its intention to acquire the GlobalEye, an aircraft manufactured by Saab, without first consulting the Canadian air force. To everyone's great surprise, this announcement was made without any consultation whatsoever.

With Bill C-40, which would create the office of secretary of state for defence procurement, it is clear that the minister will have the power to make decisions himself. Worse still, the CEO, Mr. Guzman, will be able to unilaterally decide what he needs and what he wants for the country without necessarily consulting the Canadian Armed Forces.

Does my colleague believe that this is the right approach? Should the government be making purchases without consulting the military?

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to what was done in the past. When the Harper government was in power, investment was below 2%. In 2013, it did not even reach 1%. In 2014, it was 1.1%. We committed to reaching 2%, which we have already done. In addition, by 2035, we will reach a target of 5% of our gross domestic product.

I assume my colleague is aware of this, but in the past, 70% of defence equipment came from the United States. Now, we want to invert that pattern. We want Canada to produce 70% of the equipment. We want to use our own supply chains and our own industries to manufacture it. If my colleague had truly listened to my answer, he would have realized that it was a good idea to look elsewhere when it came to aircraft procurement.

• (1655)

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really liked the fact that my colleague started her speech by paying tribute to our veterans. I would like to point out that, yesterday, I attended the unveiling of a new veterans monument in Lavaltrie in my riding. This wonderful monument was created by Claude Des Rosiers and depicts a man and a woman in uniform. I think that is an important step forward. We are very pleased to see that the monument represents everyone. Women are an active part of the armed forces. I want to commend the City of Lavaltrie, the Société d'histoire et du patrimoine de Lavaltrie and everyone involved in the erection of this monument.

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In her previous answers, my colleague spoke a lot about the fact that, under the Harper government, defence spending was below 2%. It seems to me that there are much smarter ways of increasing spending than giving a \$700,000 salary to the head of a new agency that will allow the government to escape responsibility and not have to be held to account.

I would like my colleague to comment on the salary of this CEO. It seems to me that there are more worthwhile ways to increase spending, ways that would be more respectful to our military personnel.

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, the goal of the investments we are making in defence is to have dual-use applications. We have to ensure that we develop private companies while we develop defence applications. In the Lower Laurentians region, in Mirabel, there is a hub dedicated specifically to developing autonomous technologies, including drones. There will be a dual use: the private sector and the defence sector.

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the examples provided by my colleague. She took us on a tour of her riding, Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, this summer. In fact, I think one of the businesses she took us to could benefit from the Defence Investment Agency.

I would like my colleague to provide more examples of businesses in her riding that might benefit from this agency.

Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, when my colleagues came to the Lower Laurentians this summer, I did indeed take the opportunity to tell them about all the opportunities we enjoy, but we did not have enough time to visit all the businesses. We did visit Abipa. What makes this company unique is that it produces 3-D parts. In the aerospace industry, it is much easier and safer to build moulds for parts, since only one part is required.

We also went to Blainville to visit the test tracks, where the range of all vehicles, including autonomous vehicles, is tested. That is not all, for there is also the development of drones and all sorts of autonomous vehicles, such as personal watercraft, quads and drones used to deliver medication. They will have dual-use applications, in both the private and defence sectors.

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today simply to object to Bill C-40.

Before going further, I first want to say that I have always supported the idea of finding a way to fix our military procurement system. I was a soldier myself for a time. Later on, and since my election, I have seen the full extent of the ineffective management plaguing Canada's defence procurement.

Yes, that needs to change. We have models to guide us. Other countries, like Australia, for example, or Great Britain, have different ways of doing things. Today, unfortunately, the government is heading in a completely different direction. In presenting the bill as a way to speed up defence procurement, the government is prevaricating. In reality, this is not a plan to provide the Canadian Armed forces with equipment. It is a blatant attempt to create a secretive bureaucratic structure. The government is asking for a \$1-billion blank cheque to circumvent parliamentary oversight and line the pockets of Liberal insiders.

The facts are clear. I am not making this up; the information comes directly from official Department of National Defence reports. In 2026, we have warships that are rusting away, military equipment that is worn out and fighter jets that are obsolete. More than 40% of our core naval fleet is unfit for training or operational missions. Half of our core army vehicles are out of service. The situation is even worse in the air, where 57% of the fleet is unusable. Why are we in this situation?

The answer is not complicated. The government has systematically underinvested in national procurement, allowed personnel to become exhausted and accumulated nearly \$10 billion in allocated defence funding that was never spent. My colleagues heard that correctly: \$10 billion earmarked for defence—that is, defence investments—has not been spent and has not been used. It has sat idle, gathering dust on a shelf in the Liberal bureaucracy.

The situation has gotten so bad that, last May, members of the Canadian Armed Forces were asked to return basic gear like rucksacks and tactical vests because of a severe shortage of equipment. That is serious. We are being forced to tell soldiers to bring back their rucksacks either because we do not have enough for new arrivals or because soldiers are deploying somewhere and there is not enough equipment. Members are also being asked to return their tactical vests.

As I said, I served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 22 years. Of course, we have already lived through what is known as the decade of darkness, under Jean Chrétien. It was terrible. That is why seeing this sort of thing happen again in defence management is almost like post-traumatic shock. This is a national disgrace.

While soldiers are short on flak jackets and rucksacks, what are the Liberals doing? They are creating ministerial positions, adding more administrative structures and appointing their friends in high finance to positions with huge salaries. What is more, Bill C-40 also establishes the Canadian corporation for defence investment.

This is the third time. It is the third time in a year that the Liberals have changed their minds about the structure of the agency. First, it was supposed to be an agency within Public Services and Procurement Canada. Then, four months later, the Liberals introduced Bill C-31. They decided to make this body an independent agency. Now, with Bill C-40, it is becoming a Crown corporation with unprecedented powers under the responsibility of an associate minister of national defence.

When we ask the Liberals why they have done this once, twice and now a third time, we get no answer. They cannot explain it, but we understand. We understand perfectly well what they are trying to do. By turning the agency into a Crown corporation, the Liberals are freeing themselves from Treasury Board procurement rules. It is deliberate. Crown corporations have their own rules. By creating a Crown corporation, the government is no longer accountable to Parliament. It is no longer accountable to anyone. It is not subject to the same rules. Bill C-40 would create a Crown corporation that would allow the person in charge to spend up to \$1 billion at a time without any accountability. I repeat, it is \$1 billion, not \$1 million. This is taxpayers' money that can be spent without any accountability.

• (1700)

The rules are not the same. It does not work the same way. There will be no accountability or transparency to Parliament. I am not making this up. The Parliamentary Budget Officer made this clear in her report dated October 20. She said that the government's extensive and growing reliance on Crown corporations since 2016 amounts to creative accounting designed to conceal the government's true debt picture and obscure the country's fiscal sustainability. This is just another Liberal scheme. It is nothing new; it dates back to 2016. The Liberals think that if they create this organization or that Crown corporation, they can do things behind closed doors and keep everything hidden.

When it comes to defence, rather than having transparency, proper equipment and investments like we want, the Liberals are going to hide all that in a Crown corporation. That is why we oppose this approach. What is more, who did they choose to head up this body that will spend public funds in a non-transparent manner? They did not choose a retired general, a recognized military procurement expert or someone who knows the needs on the ground. No, instead they chose Doug Guzman. Who is he? Doug Guzman is a very close friend of the Prime Minister. Their friendship dates back to when he was working at Goldman Sachs. This person told the Prime Minister that he would really like to have a sweet government job, and the Prime Minister told him that he would appoint him to be the CEO of a Crown corporation for defence procurement and that that would be the best thing that he could do for him.

We, on this side of the House, spoke out against that. The Conservatives questioned this approach that involved appointing a guy from Goldman Sachs to be the CEO of a Crown corporation. What is more, he will be able to do what he wants. He will be able to spend however he wants and he will be paid very handsomely to do so. I heard my Bloc Québécois colleague ask this same question earlier. This person will be paid a salary of \$679,000 a year and, even worse, he will receive bonuses. As we know, even when people in government are not doing a good job, they still get bonuses. We see it all the time. People are getting bonus after bonus even when they are losing money. With bonuses, this CEO could be earning up to \$900,000 a year. That is the highest paying job in the Government of Canada. By way of comparison, the Prime Minister of Canada, who is responsible for the whole country, earns \$435,000 a year. The chief of defence staff, who leads the entire Canadian Armed Forces, who is ultimately responsible for the

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lives of our soldiers and the security of our country, earns a maximum of \$329,000.

Once again, some well-connected Liberal insider figures that his friend the Prime Minister might be able to land him a sweet job in this new outfit, so they put him there on a salary of \$600,000 a year, plus bonuses, and put him in charge of billions of dollars. He will be able to do whatever he wants. No one will ask him any questions. Who would not want a job like that? Once again, this shows exactly where things are headed: a very Liberal way of doing things, opaque and unaccountable, with someone who has no known qualifications for the job being paid an enormous salary. Speaking of pay and compensation, CEO-8 is the highest executive classification in Canada. There are people in some of the most senior positions in the country, with extensive expertise and experience, who do not earn that much.

Once again, we are dealing with a bill that began with a good idea: changing the way things are done in Canada. Unfortunately, the Liberal agenda has once again taken hold. This will, once again, ensure that Liberal cronies make money. We do not know where the money will go. There is a glaring lack of oversight. Will operational requirements be met? Will the real needs of the armed forces be met, given that we have already seen announcements like the one about the GlobalEye? To everyone's surprise, an aircraft was announced that, from a tactical and technical standpoint, does not meet those requirements. Unfortunately, we have not seen the last of this.

• (1705)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that Conservative members stand in their places and prefer to continue with character assassinations. If we take a look at Quebec hydro or the Ontario health system, we will find that the CEOs are very compatible. In fact, they might even be more compatible than what is being suggested here.

Is the member suggesting that everyone's appointment to either a federal Crown corporation or a provincial Crown corporation is strictly a political, partisan appointment? If that is the case, I suggest the member needs to realize that things have changed since the last federal election, when Canadians chose a Prime Minister who is moving and pushing to get our Canadian Forces equipped—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I was clear when I spoke about the skills required for the job.

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Was what Mr. Guzman did at Goldman Sachs a good thing? It probably was. However, is he the right person to run an opaque Crown corporation responsible for military procurement and for meeting operational requirements? That is what we are questioning. We are also questioning the fact that he is receiving an astronomical salary. As I mentioned in my speech, if the government had appointed someone with military procurement and supply expertise to a key position, that would be entirely appropriate. However, if someone turns up out of the blue and the only criterion they meet is being a friend of the Prime Minister, it is reasonable to ask questions.

• (1710)

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles for his foresight and for urging everyone to open our eyes so that everyone understands what is going on here.

This is no ordinary approach, and he has rightfully denounced a form of collusion or, at the very least, proximity, which is the key factor in securing a “prestigious” position. As a taxpayer, I am concerned. There is a fundamental function in this Parliament: that of the Auditor General. However, we know full well that an agency like this cannot be thoroughly audited by the Auditor General. The AG does not have access to the same information as she would if the agency fell under the responsibility of the department, as it should.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on any other possible ways the government might be able to pull a little stunt like this and avoid being accountable to the public, which will benefit the Prime Minister's friend.

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned a few times in my speech, that is the problem: It is the lack of transparency. When something is opaque, it means we cannot see what is going on. We are left in the dark.

That is the main danger posed by Bill C-40, which would establish a defence procurement Crown corporation headed by someone coming from Goldman Sachs. Everything is closed off. Everything is opaque. We know nothing, and we will know nothing. That is precisely what should not be happening. That also explains why the Liberals have changed the way they have presented this file not once, not twice, but three times. It is also why they cannot answer the simple question of why they have changed course three separate times.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his many years of service in the armed forces.

As he knows, the previous Conservative government successfully implemented single-source procurement projects to support our soldiers in Afghanistan, without disregarding parliamentary oversight. Why does he think the Liberals want to avoid transparency and parliamentary oversight?

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my colleague for his 20 years of service in the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. He experienced first-hand, on the ground, the impact of ministerial decisions regarding urgently needed equipment. At the time, Stephen Harper's Conservative government han-

dled those matters exceptionally well. What we are seeing today is a return to the dark ages of Jean Chrétien's Liberal government. I lived through it myself as a member of the military. It was complete chaos. Once again, we are heading back to an era of opacity and secrecy, instead of transparency for our military personnel, for Parliament and for Canadians.

[English]

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CFB Wainwright is no longer front and centre in the news, but many of our service personnel are still in a critical situation from injuries and burns. We also think of the four who lost their lives at this time. It is a reflection of the dangerous work that our military, the navy, the army and the air force do, whether in combat or during training exercises. Our thoughts and prayers are certainly with the families and friends of these four soldiers and those who knew them, as well as with the numerous personnel.

This strikes close to home because I did my basic training at CFB Wainwright and was involved in other military exercises afterward. That was decades ago. I have lived a full life since then. I want to live longer, but it has been decades. These young men had their lives cut short, and as we approach Remembrance Day, we reflect on the tens of thousands of Canadians who died on the battlefield, who drowned in the North Atlantic after their ships were torpedoed and who suffered unimaginable horrors as prisoners of war in internment camps under the Japanese or as slave labourers. It was terrible.

About a decade ago, my wife and I had the privilege of going to Normandy and visiting Juno Beach, where the first Canadian Army landed, and around town. If members have not had a chance to see it, I would encourage them to the site at some point in their life, and other places in France and throughout Europe, such as Vimy Ridge. There are pictures of Canadians moving throughout the town under the hail of machine gunfire. Hundreds were killed and wounded. Lest we forget.

Canadians are peace-loving. We have a tradition of peacekeeping. My father served in the Royal Canadian Air Force for 36 years and was based across Canada, in Germany and with the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Ismailia, Egypt and the Golan Heights. Growing up in a military home and having served in the military, I can say the Canadian military has always been on my mind and in my heart.

I remember growing up during the years that Pierre Elliott Trudeau was the Liberal prime minister of Canada. I know that those were difficult days for the Canadian military. There were numerous base closures. Our troop strength was slashed and in many ways crippled. We went from having the third- or fourth-largest navy and air force to now being way down on the list, and it is dropping. Our ranking, as far as our military capacity goes, is dropping year by year, it seems. Our overall ranking is now 28th in the world. Our air force is 30th. Our navy is 45th. It has steadily dropped under the Liberals. I am not talking about our personnel. They are excellent. They are dedicated, loyal and professional, and I think they are admired wherever they are. I am talking about how under the Liberals, we have seen an ongoing decline and erosion of our military capacity in spite of the increased dangers we are facing.

I understand that after the iron curtain came down, there was a peace dividend and people thought there would be no more war, but things have changed. Humanity has not changed, though.

● (1715)

We were not prepared for previous world wars. We were not prepared for the First World War or the Second World War. One cannot just be ready at the call of a bugle. It takes training. It takes equipment. It takes investment. It takes enough personnel, too, and enough training.

As for the Liberals, we are hearing a lot of talk but seeing little concrete action. I did not say “no concrete action”, because they will point to this expenditure or that expenditure, like the building of a new bureaucracy. The Liberals are very crafty. They will say they are on track to meet NATO's defence obligations, but a lot of it is a sleight of hand. For example, they have the Coast Guard now as part of their defence calculations, which was not there beforehand. There are other things that were never part of the defence calculations but now are. The percentage is going up, but actually, in reality, it is going down. As a matter of fact, it is not just staying the same; the investments we are seeing are going down. It is getting worse.

I talk with service personnel. The training budget and operating budget have been slashed year after year. This year it was another 10%. The operating budget is already low. It is tough. The infantry, for example, needs to be able to shoot ammo, but a lot of times, even ammo is at a premium. It is really tough. As recently as 2024-25, 40% of maritime key fleets were not serviceable for training and operations, as well as 50% of key army vehicles and 57% of aircraft. Those figures are actually getting worse.

We then have the retirement of the Snowbirds. They are part of the military. They are a symbol of Canada, a very important symbol. The Liberals said they were going to bring a replacement aircraft, that they were going to close this down and replace these jets in the 2030s, forgetting that they just modernized these aircraft in 2021 for \$29 million. Modernizing the aircraft is not the reason.

We are living in a dangerous world, and the Liberals are just traipsing along. Think of what is happening in the battlefields in Ukraine and Russia right now. We have to be much more nimble and ready for hostilities. The Conservatives believe in equipping

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our forces quickly but also in being sensitive to the Canadian taxpayers, who foot the bill.

Under the Harper Conservatives, we bought 650 new LAVs, light armoured vehicles; 500 tactical armoured vehicles; and 100 Leopard tanks. The previous government, under Chrétien, was actually disposing of them. We bought two main battle tanks, 82 armoured heavy support vehicle systems, 50 Nyala armoured vehicles and 37 M777 howitzers. For the air force, we bought five brand new CC-177 tactical Globemasters so we can move equipment around. We bought 21 Chinook helicopters and 17 new CC-130J Hercules models. We upgraded our CF-188s and made the decision to buy the F-35. We got things done.

We did not need another bureaucracy under the Defence Investment Agency, which has been in operation for 10 years and has not had any purchases, nothing. The Liberals now want to make it a Crown corporation that is at arm's length. Well, that is fine. It is not at arm's length, because under the terms, contrary to all other Crown agencies, it must do what the minister requires it to do. It has much less accountability to Parliament. It can move things around, have contracts and do sole-source contracts that are in its interest, not accountable to Parliament. This is a travesty.

● (1720)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is truly amazing, the amount of misinformation we get. We had one member who said recruitment is down. The reality is that recruitment, people wanting to join the military, is at a 30-year high. The member said our actual spending is going down. What a ridiculous statement that is. Under Stephen Harper, it was 1% of the GDP. Today, it is at 2% of the GDP. Do some simple math and you will find that it has gone up.

We then listen to the arguments as to why the Conservatives do not support a Crown corporation. My God, you need to do more research. Transparency and accountability will improve under a Crown corporation. I know. I was in opposition for 20 years, and they can improve—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The member knows to address his comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge has the floor.

Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot from this member. He seems to be the only person the Liberals put forward, and he is a fine doctor of spinning.

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With recruitment, the number of people who apply does not mean the number of additional personnel who have been accepted and trained. We need to train these people. We are not paying for a training budget. Everything is falling apart, and we can place that on the Liberals.

The Liberals talk about the percentage. As I mentioned, a lot of what they are doing is budgetary hocus-pocus.

• (1725)

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his deep respect for veterans. I sincerely appreciate it.

If the parliamentary secretary is willing to listen, my question is this. My colleague mentioned several times in his speech that creating a Crown corporation could reduce the government's accountability to parliamentarians. That is a very serious concern for us, and it seems to be becoming a very bad habit. We are seeing the same thing with Bill C-39, where the Canada Industrial Relations Board could call for arbitrations without the minister getting involved. Then the government can stand up in the House of Commons and say that it is an independent body and that it is not its responsibility.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his comments. I agree with him.

I think this is yet another way for the government to shirk its responsibilities.

We do not know what it intends to do about expenditures. Often, when we see other expenditures, such as those related to the green fund or other initiatives in which the Liberals' friends are heavily involved, it becomes a serious problem. That is why we really want all of this to be carried out under the scrutiny and control of parliamentarians.

[English]

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech and for pointing out the accounting issue with the Coast Guard. The member opposite knows full well that the Coast Guard spending clearly does not meet NATO's own definition, which requires it to be trained, deployable and operating as a military.

In committee, I was interviewing three generals who, in my opinion, should be the ones running the Defence Investment Agency, not a banker buddy of the Prime Minister. Bill C-40 would give the newly created associate minister the direction that the DIA must follow his directions, not "may" but "must", with little written accountability to this House.

Do you agree that this would give, as has been pointed out by many people, unprecedented levels of power to one person? Is that a dangerous thing?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I will just remind the hon. member to direct his questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge may respond.

Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Vancouver Island for his service in the military for many years. He knows the navy file.

It is a challenge. I'm sorry, I have lost track of the question, but I will say that we are very concerned, as far as procurement goes, that it is going into the hands of one minister who is not accountable. Basically, that minister is accountable to the Prime Minister. Again, we are seeing this all over, where the Prime Minister has the control and a budget of billions of dollars, because we do not see a lot of respect from him toward this chamber anyway.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all support better defence procurement in equipping our military. Today I would like to use my time to suggest a number of protections Parliament should put in place as regards Bill C-40 before we grant sweeping financial and procurement powers to the Defence Investment Agency through this bill. As currently drafted, there are still some important and, as of yet, unanswered questions about governance that I believe we need to address if we are to do the best we can for those who risk their lives on a daily basis for our freedoms.

Bill C-40 is the Liberals' third incarnation of the Defence Investment Agency in just one year. In May, the DIA was to be an agency under direct ministerial management. Five months later, it has been reimagined as an independent Crown corporation. DIA investments will be supported by public capital, also known to Canadians as "our money". Government purchasing power and regulatory decisions will be used to de-risk private investments. I submit that Canadians providing the money and assuming the risk inherent in de-risking deserve to know that our military, not private investors, is going to reap the rewards.

Let us consider one scenario that could happen under Bill C-40. Let us say the DIA acquires shares in an American manufacturer with the finance minister's approval, because there are no actual "invest Canadian" requirements in this bill. Private equity funds and pension funds may also own shares. The agency then awards that manufacturer a substantial defence contract, perhaps even without a competitive bidding process, where an applicable exception permits it through the bill.

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Now suppose a competing Canadian manufacturer develops a better product at a lower price. The DIA will have a choice. It can award the contract to the competitor, potentially reducing the value of its own investment, or it can continue supporting the company in which it has a financial interest. This creates the potential for conflicting incentives within the same institution, and there are no provisions in the bill to ensure that the objective of equipping our military with the most appropriate option at the best possible price would supersede the competing objective of growing the DIA investment portfolio.

That is why Parliament should insist that procurement decisions and investment decisions be made independently, with additional scrutiny when the DIA proposes awarding a contract to a company in which it holds an ownership interest. It should also establish clear financial rules governing those investments. The government should not be able to take on disproportionate financial risk while private investors enjoy most of the upside. Independent valuations, limits on financial exposure and a requirement to demonstrate that ordinary Canadians are receiving a fair return for the support they provide should all be enshrined in this bill.

From a governance perspective, the DIA can have a board of as few as three directors, including the executive chairperson, the CEO and the deputy minister. There is no guarantee of any independent directors, let alone an independent majority. While ordinary audit requirements apply, there is no mandatory audit, investment or risk committee. More remarkably, the transition provisions allow the first executive chairperson to exercise all the powers of the board alone until such time as additional directors may be appointed. Especially in light of the competing investment objectives I identified earlier, Parliament should amend this bill to provide for independent directors, mandatory financial risk oversight and a prohibition on major investment decisions until that governance structure is in place.

Executive compensation is another area that should also be examined closely. Cabinet determines base remuneration, but the bill does not establish how executive performance will be assessed. Compensation incentives can produce very different decisions. Will bonuses reward the amount of capital investment, the financial performance of the portfolio or the delivery of equipment to our military? Parliament should be able to ensure that the DIA is primarily focused on serving our military and protecting Canadians.

• (1730)

That brings me back to the Prime Minister's initial decision to appoint an investment banker rather than someone with a defence procurement background to lead this corporation, because it tells us something about the government's ambitions for this institution. The government would not simply be creating an organization to buy military equipment. It would be creating an institution that could also finance the businesses and industrial capacity behind that equipment. The inherent competition between those objectives makes conflict of interest rules especially important here.

The DIA would interact with banks, investment funds and companies whose executives may have long-standing professional relationships with its leadership. Enforceable and transparent disclosure and recusal procedures, including rules for transactions involving

former employees, clients and business associates, should apply to everyone making investment and procurement decisions.

We have already seen what can happen when government financing organizations operate without effective conflict of interest controls. In 2024, the Auditor General identified 90 cases at Sustainable Development Technology Canada in which conflict of interest policies were not followed, involving decisions on nearly \$76 million of funding. Parliament should have learned something from that experience.

Bill C-40 contains very broad exceptions to competitive procurement, including contracts intended to support strategically important Canadian industries and products previously supported by government research funding. There is no question that some exceptions are necessary in defence procurement where national security or urgent operational requirements can impact the calculus. However, Parliament should ensure that the normal governance safeguards are put in place: requiring written justification, offering the possibility of independent review and appropriate reporting when competition is bypassed.

We also need to address ministerial directions. Section 9 would allow the minister, or the assistant minister and associate minister in this case, to direct the corporation's activities and require the corporation to comply, yet there would be no equivalent express requirement to table those directions in Parliament. That would create an uncomfortable arrangement where the corporation is supposed to have commercial independence but ministers retain substantial influence without the transparency normally associated with formal directions to Crown corporations. All material ministerial directions should be documented and disclosed, subject to legitimate national security restrictions.

The same principle applies to the corporation's finances. Bill C-40 would provide a revolving \$1-billion payment authority for the corporation, a separate \$1-billion authority for ministerial activities, and the possibility of loans from the Minister of Finance. Those provisions would not establish a single overall limit on the corporation's financial exposure.

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The bill should provide for a complete accounting of the available funding mechanisms, the limits on borrowing and guarantees, and the source of funding for equity acquisitions. Parliament should receive regular reports showing how much money has been invested, who has received it, the value of outstanding guarantees, the losses incurred and the returns earned. Canadians should be able to understand what has happened to their money.

Bill C-31 provided for a legislative review within three years. Bill C-40 would extend that period to five years. With that, the government would be creating a more complicated financial institution, while waiting longer to see whether it is working. That should be corrected.

Canada needs a more effective defence procurement system. We need our military to be properly equipped, and we should be developing Canadian industrial capacity wherever it makes strategic and economic sense, but the priority must remain the defence of Canada and the interests of Canadian taxpayers. Governance matters. Many of the provisions I have spoken about today may be quite dry, but they are very important. It is not just conflicts of interest that matter. It is also the appearance of those conflicts.

When government acts as investor, lender, guarantor and customer, the opportunities for private profit can be substantial, and so can the opportunities for financial losses, poor procurement decisions and preferential treatment. The government has decided it wants to use these powers. The responsibility of Parliament now is to ensure that they are exercised under rules that protect the public interest. The Defence Investment Agency should not become a place where private investors get the financial rewards of government decisions while ordinary Canadians are left paying the bills.

I submit that we have opportunities to improve the governance provisions in these bills and that we ought to do exactly that.

• (1735)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with the member when she says that governance matters. I am an advocate for a Crown corporation because in my years both in opposition and government, I have seen the benefits of a well-run Crown corporation, both at the provincial level and at the federal level. It can provide a high sense of transparency and accountability. When we take a look at the potential mandate for this particular one for military procurement, we see that it is good not only for Canada's defence but also for our industry as a whole, if done properly.

I would agree with the member's comments that governance is important. Are there changes the member would like to see that could enhance a Crown corporation?

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, I would submit that if the hon. member had listened to my speech, he would know that I have just proposed a number of very specific measures that I believe would enhance the governance of this particular Crown corporation.

I do agree with him that there are some Crown corporations that have excellent governance mechanisms. At the moment, on the surface of the bill before us, I think there is much room for improvement.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech, which was, I must say, forceful and very firm.

We know that transforming the Defence Investment Agency into a Crown corporation means that certain watchdogs, such as the procurement ombud, will not be able to scrutinize its activities.

Is that a concern of my colleague's?

• (1740)

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question, and I am continuing to work on being able to answer questions in French.

[English]

I do agree that there are some significant transparency issues. I am encouraged in some ways by the fact that this is really the third iteration of the organization. However, there have been many concerns around transparency and accountability raised in the chamber thus far, and I would urge the government to pay close attention to them. I think there is substantial and significant work to be done on the bill.

Jonathan Rowe (The Eastern Peninsulas, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was not very long ago that BC Ferries awarded a contract to China. That was not in the interests of the Canadian people, and most people we talked to on the street thought it was absolutely ridiculous. Meanwhile, the federal government gave billions of dollars to BC Ferries, but the Liberals just shrugged their shoulders with no regard.

Would allowing this Crown corporation open the door for the Crown corporation to be sucked into the American military complex? We would then have a situation such as BC Ferries, where it would be awarding contracts that the Canadian people may not appreciate.

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the concern he shows for people in my community, who, like the people in his community, are dependent upon ferry services for most of their daily existence. This is one of the reasons I wanted to highlight the importance of the fact that there are currently no investment Canadian provisions in the bill.

Many members have raised issues, and I think a number of them are legitimate. I hope the government is paying attention to these debates and remarks, and that the Liberals will go back to the drawing board and make some improvements to the bill that would enhance the impact of these very important decisions on Canadians.

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Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague reads bills carefully. I am wondering if she noted that it is not the Minister of Defence or even the associate minister for defence procurement who is actually named in the bill, but the Liberals will fill in the blanks later from cabinet.

Tamara Kronis: Mr. Speaker, again, it goes to the fact that the bill feels like one that is half-baked.

There are so many possibilities. I go back again to the fact that it would not just be an actual legal conflict of interest that we need to be concerned with. We need to also be concerned about appearances. Right now, I think that the government is actually leaving itself vulnerable to all kinds of unintended consequences if Parliament is not given a chance to have a substantially amended and improved bill.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 10 to concur in the tenth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair and at the conclusion of the time provided for debate or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred pursuant to Standing Order 66.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the contents of the unanimous consent motion. Is the House agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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STRENGTHENING CANADA'S DEFENCE SECTOR ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-40, An Act respecting production, procurement and investment in relation to national defence and national security, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a true honour for me to rise in the House on behalf of the residents of my constituency of Davenport. I am rising to speak to Bill C-40, the strengthening Canada's defence sector act. I am also speaking as the chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, and I am very proud also to serve as the vice-president of the NATO parliamentary assembly.

I spend a lot of time with parliamentarians from across our alliance, and what I hear from them helps explain why this bill is so important right now. Let me start with what the bill would actually do.

Bill C-40 has two parts. The first part would establish as a Crown corporation the Defence Investment Agency, which we launched just over a year ago. Its job would be to carry out the production, procurement and investment of defence assets for the Canadian Armed Forces, the Department of National Defence and our NATO allies. Its chief executive officer would report to the board of directors, and the corporation would remain accountable to Parliament through a responsible minister.

The second part of the bill would amend the National Defence Act to create an associate minister of national defence for procurement so that, for the first time, defence procurement would sit under one responsible minister. It would also update the Defence Production Act, which would allow Canada to stockpile critical supplies and to invest directly in our defence and security sectors. This is what is in the bill. I would like to spend the rest of my time talking about why we absolutely need it.

For over 70 years, Canadians have lived within an international order that we helped build after World War II, one based on rules, on open trade and on strong institutions such as NATO and the United Nations. It was never perfect, but it brought us decades of peace and prosperity. That world has changed in a very significant way, and I agree with our Prime Minister when he says, "We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition." We are watching the rise of authoritarianism and, in some places, fascism. Russia continues its brutal war against Ukraine, and the tariffs imposed by our closest neighbour have hurt Canadian workers and shaken the global economic system that so many of our jobs depend on.

I know that many of the residents in my riding of Davenport are feeling this. When I talk to people at community events or at the door, I hear a real unease, a sense that something fundamental has shifted. To me, they are right to feel this way. I do not think we can afford to be nostalgic for the world as it was. We have to deal with the world as it is today.

One of the biggest changes is in the nature of war itself. Admiral Pierre Vandier, who leads NATO's Allied Command Transformation and recently visited Canada, has been warning that the lines among peace, crisis and war have broken down and that our adversaries are working around the clock, below the threshold of open conflict in what he calls the grey zone. NATO now has a name for this: cognitive warfare. It means our adversaries are not only trying to take territory but are also trying to change how we think, they are trying to divide us and they are trying to make us lose faith in each other and in our democracy.

Let me put it simply: An attack on Canada today may never involve a single soldier crossing our border. It could mean someone stealing our data or our money, spreading disinformation in our communities or trying to get into the systems that run our water and electricity.

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Admiral Vandier also said, “The most expensive commodity today is time”, and that line has stayed with me because time is precisely what our current procurement system has been costing us. Canada, as we know, is the second-largest country in the world by land mass, with the longest coastline on earth and an Arctic that is opening up and attracting more and more attention from others. Defending a country this size takes the right equipment, delivered on time. In the past, too often we have not delivered.

Our public servants have worked incredibly hard on these files. The problem, though, is a system that was never built for the speed this world now demands. As a result, our women and men in uniform have too often waited years, sometimes decades, for the equipment they need to do their job. That is why we are proposing a Crown corporation.

The change we need is urgent, and I believe we need a dedicated institution with the authority to deliver it. As a Crown corporation, the agency would be able to negotiate contracts using commercial practices that industry already understands, and it would bring procurement and strategic investment together under a single mandate so decisions can move much faster.

● (1745)

Allies like the United Kingdom, Australia and Sweden have had dedicated defence procurement bodies for years, and this bill would bring Canada in line with all of them.

I know some members of this House will say that a new Crown corporation simply adds more bureaucracy. I would say it does the reverse, because it brings work that is now split across three departments into one place and removes many duplicate approvals. I also want to be clear that accountability matters. The corporation would still follow Treasury Board rules. It would still be audited, it would still report to this House and it would still answer to a minister.

Now, I want to take a moment to speak to a question I often hear from residents of my constituency of Davenport, a community that has always cared deeply about peace and social justice. People often ask me, “Why are we spending so much on defence?”, and whether that money and effort should be going towards peace instead. I want them to know that I share their commitment to peace. Where I have landed is that in today's world, peace has to be protected, and that requires us to be able to defend ourselves. Strong deterrence is often what stops a dangerous situation from turning into a war. I believe that a Canada that can defend its own sovereignty will be a much stronger voice for peace, human rights and diplomacy around the world.

This is also about our responsibility to our allies. Every time I meet with my NATO colleagues, I hear about how much they are counting on Canada to do its part, because collective security only works when every member contributes. I am proud that, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, Canada has met NATO's 2% target, and that we have committed to reaching 5% by 2035. Bill C-40 is how we will make sure that this investment turns into real capability for our forces and our allies, delivered on time.

I also want to mention jobs. Our defence industrial strategy aims to have 70% of defence acquisitions go to Canadian firms and to create up to 125,000 good-paying jobs. Our goal is that when

Canada buys, we build here in Canada, using Canadian steel and aluminum, and the talent of Canadian workers. We are already seeing this happen with more than \$11 billion for new icebreakers at Chantier Davie in Quebec and with an expanded armoured vehicle fleet that will sustain thousands of jobs in London, Ontario.

Does this mean that all is done? Absolutely not. We have so much more to do, but this bill is one important step, and it gives us the institution we need to get this work done at the speed this moment requires.

My grandparents came to this country in the 1950s, and Canada gave them a safe, free and democratic place to build their lives. I think about that often and about our responsibility to protect what earlier generations built for us, especially now when the world feels so much less certain. I have a lot of confidence in Canadians. I believe we can protect our sovereignty, stand with our allies, grow our economy and continue to be the voice for peace in the world. I believe that Bill C-40 will help us do that.

I urge all members of this House to support this bill, and to send it to committee where we can study it carefully and make it even stronger.

● (1750)

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Davenport for laying out a lot of the reasons why we need quality defence equipment for our Canadian Armed Forces and laying out the threat that we face with global instability.

However, the other point I wanted to make was, historically, in the previous Conservative government, there were massive amounts of equipment delivered without the need for a defence investment agency in a very timely fashion, and I felt the benefits of that wholeheartedly.

I want to correct the member a little. She said this bill has two parts, when it actually has three parts. The third part is that this act needs to be reviewed within five years.

Would the member commit to holding the government to account to ensure that review happens, because we have more than 13 pieces of legislation right now that have not been reviewed and that review is overdue?

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Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his extraordinary contribution to our country. I know that he served in the Canadian Armed Forces. He is also heavily involved in the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. I always value his voice, his questions and his wisdom as part of our team.

I know the hon. member made a reference how, in the past, this Crown corporation would not have been needed. That is why I spent quite a bit of time in my speech talking about how the world has so transitioned and transformed. We are in the middle of a rupture. We have to do extraordinary things at this particular moment. What I would say to the member is, indeed, we do need this Crown corporation now, and I think I have explained the value of it.

In terms of his question around the third part, and whether we would be open to review, I would say that is why we have committees. It is important for us to discuss these ideas at committee.

• (1755)

[Translation]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a very specific question for my colleague.

She praised the new structure a lot, although we think it will be unnecessary. Apart from that, does she not feel a little uncomfortable at the thought that the head of this new structure is going to be paid twice as much as the Minister of Finance and that—to be blunt—this executive used to work with the Prime Minister and is a good friend of his? How does she feel about that?

[English]

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the hon. member about the importance of moving this bill forward to committee. I think there is always room for us to make recommendations if there are areas that we think we need to improve.

I will remind everyone that this bill would help us streamline Canadian defence procurement under a Crown corporation. We would build a system that is faster, more efficient and ready to meet Canada's needs today and into the future.

I would say that in terms of accountability, under the system that we are proposing as part of part 1, the chief executive officer would be accountable to the board of directors for the management and administration of the corporations. It would also be accountable to the Government of Canada through a responsible minister and would have strict financial and reporting requirements, participate in audits and be subject to parliamentary oversight.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Longueuil—Saint-Hubert has a military base with real soldiers who work extremely hard to protect our territorial sovereignty with known expertise in the defence sector.

How will this legislation enable our businesses to contribute more to keeping Canada safe while stimulating the local economy and creating good jobs for our workers?

[English]

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his excellent work on the Standing Committee on Immigration

and Citizenship. I want to mention, in response to his excellent question, that developing our defence industrial base is absolutely critical to what we are trying to do and what this bill is trying to help us do in terms of strengthening Canada's defence sector.

We are aiming to have 70% of defence acquisitions go to Canadian firms and to create up to 125,000 good-paying jobs. I will tell colleagues how that is going to be good for—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Davenport for splitting her time with me.

I am rising at this hour, grateful for the chance to address Bill C-40, but I am very much wanting to share with other members in this place that, as we are speaking here, there is a group of very dedicated peace activists making their way to Ottawa. They call themselves the peace train. I joined them on Friday in Vancouver and rode with them as far as I could before having to get off the train to make sure I got an airplane back to Ottawa in time for today's debate, but it is telling and important that people across Canada are increasingly being drawn to the peace movement. They recognize that our country is going through a transformation from being a country celebrated around the world for historic work for peace.

Of course, former prime minister Lester B. Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize for creating peacekeepers within the United Nations. He did so when resolving the Suez crisis, which at the time cost the lives of Commonwealth soldiers, some of whom are still buried in Gaza. We cannot reach their graves, of course, because of the ongoing genocide, but we gathered on that peace train. Their slogan is, "Train is a verb", and they are calling for the re-establishment of the Lester B. Pearson peacekeeping centre for training.

We are now falling behind allies around the world in our failure to keep up with the numbers and support for peacekeepers. I learned the other day that we have cut funding for the removal of landmines. One of our more recent signature accomplishments under the former minister for foreign affairs, the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, was the Ottawa process that led to the treaty to ban landmines. We are MIA on the treaty for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We do not even send observer delegations to the UN meetings, although some of us as parliamentarians do attend with global parliamentarians for the prohibition of nuclear war.

As such, it is worth noting this with great sadness.

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I should mention we were greeted at the Edmonton train station by one of my heroes, the former member of parliament for Edmonton Strathcona. He served as a Progressive Conservative in that capacity, and then he was a senator in the Canadian Senate and the ambassador to the United Nations from Canada on nuclear disarmament, a position that no longer exists, which is telling all on its own. The hon. Doug Roche met us and encouraged us. He said to please take the message forward that Canada needs to be active in nuclear disarmament. We are not.

Right now and in this debate, there is no doubt. On behalf of the Green Party, I need to say that we support making sure that we address the gaps in adequate support to our military, the brave, very dedicated and self-sacrificing young men and women who choose to join the Canadian Armed Forces. Of course, very heavy on our hearts right now is the tragic loss in CFB Wainwright from the wildfire of last weekend, but it is worth noting that there is a transformation happening in Canadian society writ large, where, in referring to military spending, we no longer refer to it as something we need to do in our own defence, but as a growth sector for our economy.

It was not that long ago that former president Eisenhower warned the United States of the perils of relying on a military-industrial complex, but we are building one here. Our arms exports have gone up dramatically. We did not used to be an arms-trading country. Project Ploughshares tracked it and just reported last year that there was an all-time high of billions of dollars coming into Canada from our sale of military equipment and military arms, yet sometimes we dress this up as though we are supporting a Canadian defence sector.

I noted just before the last speech, and the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith made note of the fact, that nothing in Bill C-40 says that where we spend money on defence has to benefit the Canadian economy, especially when we move more and more to arm's length. That spending could be supporting U.S. corporations, or whatever, around the world where armaments are made or jet fighters are built. We want to be spending money on those and will be doing so increasingly at arm's length from political accountability.

• (1800)

Of the newly announced spending since last year's budget from the government, fully 70% of new spending is going to the military. I will also highlight this announcement: The Prime Minister announced that a subsidy of \$2 billion in federal public funds, described as building Canadian jobs and supporting Canadian industry, will be going to General Dynamics' operations in London, Ontario, to build armoured personnel vehicles. Of course, General Dynamics in London, Ontario, is a wholly owned subsidiary of General Dynamics in the United States, so there is nothing there about where we are putting our funding and building in preparation for our own defence, which Canadians certainly support.

There is a lot of concern over our defence in the Arctic, a vast region where we are inadequately prepared for conflict. We are very concerned as Greens about making sure that the Canadian navy has the resources it needs. We are an ocean nation with three oceans, and we are not even prepared for the kind of marine

surveillance we need against illegal fishing. There are a lot of ways in which we need to see defence spending lifted.

Bill C-40 fits into a pattern that I am seeing from the new government, and I want to spend some time speaking of the pattern that extends beyond military spending.

Of course, as we know, the Defence Investment Agency was created on October 2 of last year as a special operating agency. Other members have mentioned what has gotten done since the creation of this special operating agency, and now we would be moving it to a Crown corporation. It is important to note that while the CBC website says that the Canadian corporation for defence investment "will report to a newly created associate minister of defence", the bill does not say that. It says that the Governor in Council "may" create a position for an associate minister of defence. When it refers to the responsible minister, it does not say the responsible minister is the Minister of National Defence. It says that at some point in the future, cabinet would decide who the responsible minister for this bill should be. Meanwhile, decisions would be made increasingly by a Crown corporation that operates at arm's length from the government.

We know that when we have debates in this place, people ask things like whether the government will commit to restoring a line for VIA Rail, for example, which is a debate I remember from within the last day or so. The response from Liberal members is that they cannot interfere with a Crown corporation. They cannot tell it that it must restore a stop because it is a Crown corporation and is separate. This bill would indeed create a Crown corporation. The Defence Investment Agency would be a Crown corporation and would remove a level of direct accountability in a line of authority to the minister.

The other thing that happens is that sometimes my Conservative colleagues refer to this as the growth of bureaucracy, but I question that, because the people working in these Crown corporations do not necessarily work as civil servants within the Government of Canada. They can be hired from the private sector or wherever they come from.

I am drawn to a comparison, and this may seem far afield. There is a corporation called Epiq. The Government of Canada, through Health Canada, has given Epiq the contract to manage the class-action funds available for the thalidomiders, the people in Canada who have had a lifetime of experience as survivors of thalidomide. They do not like the term "victims". Epiq, a foreign for-profit corporation, is making \$1 million a year in often refusing basic justice to thalidomiders.

That is just a small piece of a growing pattern of passing things out of government over to third party private sector consultants. I question if Bill C-40 will deliver results for our defence contractors, our military and our men and women in uniform, or if it will be just another shadowy government operation that we cannot track.

• (1805)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the leader of the Green Party, who has been around for many years, whether as a parliamentarian or a non-parliamentarian, is always looking at how governments can be made accountable. I am sure she is aware of this. We talk about Crown corporations. I believe that with a proper mission statement, a Crown corporation can do society a great favour being at arm's length from government. I am sure the member would agree with that. The issue is making sure that there is a transitional action to support transparency and accountability. I believe this legislation provides for that.

Does the member have some specific amendments she would like to bring forward? Even if she does not name them now, I think providing them to the minister would be advantageous.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will bring forward amendments to committee, and I will certainly propose them to the minister. The difficulty is the pattern. We have seen it with Build Canada Homes, which was first a special operating agency with no accountability and then a Crown corporation. Now there is the Defence Investment Agency, which was first a special operating agency. I imagine that next we will see the Major Projects Office be made into a Crown corporation.

Again, there were two rounds of announcements and a flurry of setting things up that may or may not deliver results. Certainly, the legislation would not ensure anything. It has a lot of wide open space for future decisions.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not necessarily opposed to a Crown corporation. There are many examples of Crown corporations that have worked well. There are examples of ones that have been quite the opposite.

What it says in the bill is that the Defence Investment Agency “must”, not “may”, follow the direction of the newly created associate minister. Does the member worry that this is putting too much power, in fact almost ultimate power, into the control of one person, who would be in control of billions of dollars? Does that cause her concern?

• (1810)

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of power in the hands of one minister, but the legislation is like a pretzel. It does not say that there will be an associate minister of natural defence for procurement. It just says, in clause 13, that the Governor General “may” appoint an associate minister. It is possible to imagine that there will never be one.

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[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, some people are in good shape. I congratulate the pages for their outstanding work.

Very briefly, I want to hear my colleague speak to any amendments that could be proposed. Personally, I am very concerned about accountability. When we asked, the procurement ombudsman said there is nothing he can do. If the ombudsman has absolutely no oversight authority, how can we put some kind of safeguard in place to ensure that everything stays above board?

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I think the Bloc Québécois's participation in committees is important. Unfortunately, I do not have the opportunity to sit on committees as a member. I will still present amendments because it is not just a matter of speed. It is a matter of accountability. I see that as the key issue.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, does the leader of the Green Party have the intention of supporting the legislation so that it goes to the committee stage?

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I certainly support it going to the committee stage, but I hope the government will not run roughshod over the committee and insist on inadequate testimony and witnesses. Too many committees are rushed to conclusion under the new government, and I find it very difficult to say that bills have been properly studied.

Blake Richards (Airdrie—Cochrane, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when rising on a debate about defence procurement, the debate needs to start with an acknowledgement and a thanks to the people it is intended to serve. That is the men and women who serve in our Canadian Armed Forces and who have served in our Canadian Armed Forces. I think it is especially important as we approach Remembrance Day, but it is something we need to do every single day of the year. We need to remember, pay our respects to and show appreciation for what they have done for the freedoms that we all enjoy. I know there are a number of veterans here in the House, even at this present moment.

I want to point out that I am so honoured to live in the community of Airdrie, Alberta. It is so great at showing respect and remembrance. Just yesterday, I had the opportunity to join, as I do most years, in placing crosses at the LAV monument that we have for our Afghanistan mission and those who served in it at our museum in Airdrie. It was organized by the Airdrie Veterans Memorial Committee. People like Jason and Shawnee Hoffman, Bob McNevin, Dianne Kuhn and others were instrumental in making this happen. This gave us an opportunity to place a cross on the ground in front of the LAV monument for each of the 158 Canadian Armed Forces members who gave their lives serving our country in Afghanistan.

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This weekend coming up, I will have an opportunity, on Veterans Boulevard, to lay crosses for all who have fallen in all the different conflicts we have served in, the local members of our community who have given their lives in sacrifice for our freedoms. It is such an honour to represent a community that gets that right. Of course, we will have our major Remembrance Day ceremony organized by the Airdrie legion branch. I just want to make sure that we all remember, when we are talking about defence procurement, that this is what it is all about. It is about the men and women who serve this country and we need to make sure that we get it right for them.

When standing to talk about Bill C-40, that is where the struggle is for me. It seems like the government's answer to everything is more government bureaucracy. That is what we are seeing in this bill. It is another example in a long list of examples. Conservatives clearly support getting the brave men and women of our Canadian Armed Forces the equipment they need to defend our country and to do their jobs. We support a process that is efficient, that is accountable and that is driven by operational requirements. What we struggle with and what we cannot support is treating another organizational chart as a substitute for actual procurement.

There is a record that is worth remembering. When our forces needed equipment for operations in Afghanistan, our previous Conservative government moved to ensure we acquired those essential capabilities. That included things like the Leopard 2 battle tanks, Chinook helicopters, Hercules tactical transport aircraft, C-17 Globemaster strategic airlifter, M777 howitzers and LAVS, armoured vehicles. All of those were among the equipment that was purchased during that period of time. They were not just announcements about a future process. They were the kinds of capabilities that our forces needed right then to do their jobs.

We also launched the national shipbuilding strategy and we ensured that Canadian businesses had opportunities in the F-35 production and supply chain. Our position has been that Canadian industry should benefit from defence investment, though the military must still be able to acquire proven equipment quickly when it cannot be produced here in time. However, the first consideration should always be the security of Canada and the operational needs of our men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I think the F-35 is a particularly instructive example of what happens when political decisions keep changing the course of procurement. The Conservative government announced the F-35 as the intended replacement for the CF-18s. In 2015, of course, Justin Trudeau campaigned on a promise not to buy the F-35s. The Liberal government then pursued an interim Super Hornet option before launching another competition in 2017.

• (1815)

In 2022, after all of that, the Liberal government actually selected the F-35. Then in 2025, the government put procurement under review again. Canada is actually now contractually committed to 16 aircraft, while the fate of the remainder remains completely uncertain. Our pilots cannot defend Canadian airspace with another political reset. They need clarity about the aircraft that they will fly. They need the infrastructure that will support them and the timetable for bringing that capability into service. They need planes. They need jets. That is what they need.

That is a perfect example of the kinds of delays and bungling that we see from the Liberal government when it comes to defence procurement. This problem is not confined to fighter aircraft. There are also questions about the government's announcement that it had entered into negotiations with Saab concerning the GlobalEye airborne early warning and control platform. That was an announcement of a preferred supplier, not a signed procurement contract. Conservatives have called for the Auditor General and the Parliamentary Budget Officer to examine whether the appropriate process was followed, and whether the air force's operational requirements were properly considered.

Canadians deserve to know how these decisions are being made, whether the operational needs of the armed forces are being put first and whether taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money. At the same time, the condition of the equipment already in service shows why decisions matter and why decisions need to happen quickly. The 2024-25 national defence figures show that 59.6% of key maritime fleets, 51% of key land fleets and 42.3% of key aerospace fleets are not serviceable. Our soldiers, sailors and aviators need working equipment. They do not need just simple announcements about how Ottawa will organize the procurement process. They actually need the equipment.

Now let us consider this so-called Defence Investment Agency. In October of last year, the Liberals established this Defence Investment Agency as a special operating agency within Public Services and Procurement Canada. In the spring of this year, they proposed a stand-alone agency through Bill C-31, and now, with Bill C-40, they propose a Crown corporation under a new associate minister of national defence for procurement. That is three versions of the same initiative in about a year. They are not even able to be efficient at creating efficiencies.

The government's own plans proposed about \$31 million over four years to establish the original agency, and then another \$104 million over five years to establish the stand-alone entity. However, the question still remains, what did the original structure actually deliver? What did the second proposal solve? Why are we now being asked to approve a third model before Canadians can have a clear accounting of results, if any? The Liberals promised to remove duplicative approvals and red tape when they created this agency, that was supposed to be the point of it. Yet here we are debating another structure, another board and another ministerial title. It is more bureaucracy. The government needs to tell Parliament and Canadians which decisions were delayed, which barriers remain and how this bill supposedly removes them. Otherwise, it risks replacing them with yet another announcement.

The bottom line here is the men and women in uniform serve this country and defend our freedoms, putting their lives on the line every day. Wainwright, of course, is a tragic example of how every single day they put on that uniform, their lives are on the line. What we as parliamentarians owe them and what the government owes them is to ensure they have the equipment and the resources they need to do their jobs. What we seem to be getting from the government, instead, is more bureaucracy, delays and red tape. The one thing that we never seem to see is actual results for the men and women who we send, on behalf of this country, to defend our freedoms, and that is pathetic.

• (1820)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just because a Conservative says it, does not make it true. We have a record number of people applying to become members of the forces. In fact, last year was a 30-year high.

We have a Prime Minister and a government that is investing 2% of the GDP into the Canadian Forces. We can contrast that to the 1%. If we factor out the Coast Guard element being brought in, like the United States has done, we are still miles ahead of what the member's leader, when he sat in cabinet, had in contributions to the Canadian Forces.

The pay has gone up, as well as the materials, and now we are talking about a Crown corporation. Tell us why you oppose Crown corporations.

The Deputy Speaker: I will not be answering the question, and the parliamentary secretary knows he is not to speak directly to the member.

I will let the member for Airdrie—Cochrane respond.

Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I notice from what the member had to say is that Liberals like to choose their words very carefully, because they have to keep their story straight. If they do not keep their story straight, then no one is going to believe them. The bottom line is that people do not believe what they have to say. When the member says that applications to join the Canadian Armed Forces are up, well, the problem is that there is another example where the Liberals' red tape and their bureaucracy gets in the way. It is such a slow process that many people end up dropping out of that process before they ever get through it. That is the first problem.

The second thing I will point out is that we hear time and time again from members who serve in our Canadian Armed Forces about the delays in getting their procurement. We have also heard from veterans who have served this country about getting the benefits they have earned through their service to this country, which is because there are too many bureaucratic processes already. All the Liberals are proposing to do is add more bureaucratic process on top of all that. That is not going to fix the problem.

[Translation]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier in my speech, I mentioned the concern that an agency like this could become a place merely for rubber-stamping, where people just sign off and say, "There you go, it's done." I

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would like to know whether my colleague shares this concern about a structure where parliamentarians may not always be aware of what is going on and cannot keep a close eye on things to make sure the Prime Minister's friends are not given preferential treatment.

• (1825)

Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, what matters is delivering results. The members of the Canadian Armed Forces must be given the resources they need to do their jobs. There must be no additional bureaucracy. That is all that matters.

[English]

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the member for his advocacy for veterans. I do not know anybody who has been stronger as an advocate for our vets over the last number of years.

This is what Liberals do with a bill like this. When they really do not want to do something, they say, "You know, we need a law in order to do the right thing", when they could be doing the right thing as it is. When Liberals really want to do something, the Prime Minister just does it on his own. Whether he wants to be an EU associate member or have a gun grab, he just does it, but when the Liberals do not want to do something, they create a need for a bill.

Is another bill really necessary for another bureaucracy for the government to do the right thing when it comes to military procurement?

Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, the answer is simply no. The bottom line is that the men and women of the armed forces need the equipment to do their jobs. They do not need more bureaucracy. The bill proposes to create more bureaucracy, but it does not necessarily propose to get the men and women the equipment they need to do their jobs, and that is the problem with the bill.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a typical day in Ottawa. I started off this morning speaking about the Liberal tanker ban and how the Liberals are piling on red tape instead of solving the problem, and lo and behold, here we are at the end of the day talking about military procurement. It is the same theme. It is more Liberal red tape instead of trying to cut through red tape to get results.

We have heard some fine speeches, with some things I even agree with from government members who were talking about the importance of the military and so forth, but what is the substance of the bill they put before the House today? It is a third iteration of a defence agency. It would be more bureaucracy: a new Crown corporation with unprecedented powers to administer. It would reshuffle the bureaucratic structures, giving the Liberals a bit more power with less accountability and not delivering on the results that Canadians expect.

Government Orders

We are, of course, debating this bill and this issue at a time of intensifying conflict and challenge around the world. I believe we are in the midst of a new kind of cold war, with escalating conflict and competition between free democratic nations and authoritarian revisionist powers that would like to undermine freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This is the nature of the struggle and competition we face today. In the midst of that challenge, we need a Canada that is strong, that meets its NATO spending commitments, that does not just focus on dollars but on capabilities and results, and that is building partnerships with like-minded democracies to stand up to authoritarian revisionist powers and expand the space of human freedom by defending the freedom of our people here at home and by defending and advancing the space of freedom around the world. This requires a strong and principled Canada acting based on our values and building up our capabilities.

In the midst of this, unfortunately, the Prime Minister has emphasized a foreign policy that prioritizes a renewed pivot to engagement with the CCP, which is the only thing consistent about Liberal policy over the last few decades. The one thing the Liberals have not changed is that they will always look for any excuse to deepen relationships with the Government of China, often in ways that are not at all in Canada's interests.

The Prime Minister also speaks about middle-power partnerships. It is important for the House to note that when the Prime Minister speaks of middle powers, it is a description of size, not values. There are many different kinds of middle powers, some with which we have many common interests and values and others with which we do not. We on this side of the House prefer instead to emphasize the importance of seeking strong partnerships with like-minded nations where we share common values and objectives and where we can work together to advance our interests and values in a challenging world.

All of these things require strengthened Canadian capacity and capabilities, which is why we have been calling for more investments in our military since the beginning. I recall that in 2015, in the very first thrown speech of the government, it called for a leaner military. It was signalling even then a desire to reduce the capacity of our military. Conservatives pushed back then. We have pushed back consistently, calling for a strong Canada with stronger capabilities in our military capacity and in other areas so that we can defend our interests and values here at home and around the world.

The tension that has been caused between Canada and the U.S. because of the decisions of the American administration is unfortunate. In the midst of that dynamic, it is all the more important that we emphasize the strength of Canada and the defence of our values, and that we not allow Liberal politicians to use this as an excuse to pivot toward tightening relationships with authoritarian powers. We need strong relationships with democracies. We need more democratic partners around the world. We need to strengthen our collaboration with democratic partners everywhere and to do so on a foundation of strengthening our own capacity and capabilities.

This bill, unfortunately, is not about doing this. This bill is not about moving toward the kinds of real changes and results that we need to see. Rather, it is about a bureaucratic reorganization, with bureaucratic changes that do not deliver the results that our country

needs and that are required at this time. As I said at the beginning, we have a government that wants to send signals and talk about its commitment on certain things, but that has involved putting forward legislation that piles on, moves or shifts red tape without delivering results.

● (1830)

Bill C-40 is not going to strengthen our ability to equip our military in these challenging times. We have been calling on the government for years to make the commitments that are required. That includes defending our own security, defending our country from foreign interference. It includes addressing the very real threats to this country that come in various forms, combatting foreign interference, not developing strategic partnerships with powers that are hostile to our interests and our values, but instead building up our capacity, defending our interests and defending our security. That is very much what we need to be doing right now. In these times and in all times, we need a strong Canada with those enhanced capabilities. That is what we stand for in the opposition, in believing there is a better way and we need a government that is focused on results.

I will say, in conclusion, the government will ultimately be judged by the results. It is not going to be judged by the words, by the number of bills, by the fact that again we have a third iteration of a new defence procurement in barely more than as many months. The government will be judged by whether or not it delivers in defending our security, in protecting our country from hostile actors, in building up our economy and in the various commitments that it has made. We will hold it accountable not for the words, but for the results that are delivered on defence and on every other file.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have deep respect for my colleague, even though we sometimes have differences of opinion in the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The question I have for my colleague is this: Does my colleague truly believe in diversifying our markets in order to strengthen our trade ties with other countries, our allies, to be specific? Does he believe in that?

• (1835)

[English]

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, not only do I support diversifying our trade, but I worked as a staffer in the Stephen Harper government that led the way on this diversification. In 2006, when Conservatives took office, we had barely any engagements in terms of free trade outside of North America. After Stephen Harper's tenure in office, we had signed free trade agreements with nations representing over two-thirds of the world's GDP, with Asia-Pacific, as well as the European free trade area, the European Union and various individual countries. We made significant progress. The problem was that the Liberal government that followed did not follow those trade agreements with the kinds of infrastructure development and development of opportunities that would have allowed us to seize those opportunities.

We needed to build up the infrastructure capacity to really realize the potential of those trade agreements, but it is not correct at all that this idea of diversifying our trading arrangements is something new. It is an old idea championed by Conservatives and left on the shelf by Liberals for 11 years.

[Translation]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear from my colleague, who is known in this House for his strong sense of ethics and who often speaks out precisely on issues concerning the close ties that might exist, for example, between a prime minister and a friend he appoints. Curiously, we realize that this is exactly what is happening with this proposed agency. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this.

[English]

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the kind words. Yes, I think ethics in government is very important, and I am concerned about the concentration of power associated with this bill, as well as the potential abuses that could occur of that power. I look forward to further study on these issues at committee, but I very much share the concerns raised by my colleague and hope this issue will get more airing when it is studied at committee.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to build on that last question a little bit. This organization, this Crown corporation, if it comes into existence, is going to have the ability to literally be accountable for tens, if not hundreds, of billions of Canadian taxpayer dollars. I have concerns over the lack of parliamentary oversight with the way this legislation is currently drafted and how this minister and this CEO will be reporting back, if at all, because it seems to be lacking that within the legislation itself.

Does the hon. colleague share the same concerns about the lack of parliamentary oversight and accountability within the bill?

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, yes, I do. I thank my colleague for raising this issue. The fundamental question in the debate on Bill C-40 is what the legislation would actually change. This is an opportunity for us to talk about various issues in military performance, military procurement and foreign policy more broadly, but the question in our vote is, "What would this bill actually change?" The effect of this bill is a concentration of power, a lack of accountability and a bureaucratic restructuring to some extent, but it is de-

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signed to mask a lack of results we have seen from the government on this and many other files.

[Translation]

Natilien Joseph: Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to job creation in Canada. Can my colleague send a message to our small and medium-sized enterprises that Bill C-40 will benefit them and help them create good jobs?

[English]

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the state of jobs in this country. We have not heard the government address this, but we have the lowest workforce participation in this country in almost 30 years. I have big concerns. We have put forward a substantial jobs plan to address it, which I will be talking about a little more in the upcoming late show, so stay tuned.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

[English]

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

• (1840)

James Bezan: There have been discussions among all parties to have Bill C-40 pass on division.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried on division. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on National Defence.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 6:43 p.m. so we can adjourn the House.

The Deputy Speaker: It is agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

FINANCE

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am following up on questions I asked earlier about jobs.

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We face an ongoing jobs crisis in this country, most notably underlined by the latest job numbers, which show a 29-year low in workforce participation. That is, a smaller percentage of Canadians are in the workforce today than at any time in the last 29 years. In the midst of that, we see continuing hints by the government that it intends to increase payroll taxes, to increase the tax on jobs, and my earlier question was about whether the government intends to do that and why it is teasing the possibility of increasing the tax on jobs.

Conservatives are opposed to increasing the tax on jobs. We think this is the worst kind of tax, and certainly during a jobs crisis, increasing the tax on jobs is a terrible idea.

Meanwhile, my question highlighted the fact that the government is attacking vocational institutions by arbitrarily cutting off student grants to students at vocational institutions. This is notable because last week in the House, the minister responsible for jobs launched an absolutely vicious attack on career colleges on the floor of the House of Commons. It was really a shameful display from a minister of the Crown showing complete ignorance of the important role that vocational career colleges play in this country. It is shameful that the minister who is supposed to be responsible for jobs would say the things she said.

Here is what has happened. A few bad actors, in many respects masquerading as career colleges, have been allowed under the government to abuse the system and take advantage of immigration programs. There have been bad actors who have abused the system, and there has been a failure of enforcement in that regard. However, in response to that, the government has tried to tar all career colleges with the same brush, ignoring the fact that many career colleges do excellent work, are well regulated and provide critically important career-relevant training programs to Canadian students to prepare them for Canadian jobs.

We recognize on this side of the House that union training halls, not-for-profit colleges, universities and private vocational colleges are all part of an important training ecosystem that is working to prepare Canadian young people for Canadian jobs. The government's decision to arbitrarily cut off students who are learning career-relevant skills at private vocational institutions is not right and not defensible.

It has been hard for us up to now to understand why the government is doing this, but the ignorant and vicious attack on career colleges from the Minister of Jobs and Families that we heard last week in the House underlines exactly why we have this problem. It is because the minister has refused to engage with career colleges, refused to talk to students who are at those institutions and refused to understand the work they are doing.

The minister and the government should be ashamed of themselves. At a time when we desperately need trades workers, when we desperately need the right training that aligns with the needs of the labour market, and when vocational institutions are very much engaged with private sector companies to prepare young people for the jobs that exist in this country, we have a government that is arbitrarily cutting off students at career colleges. This is going to have a negative effect on young people, especially from middle-

and low-income backgrounds, who are trying to get relevant labour market skills.

I want to ask the government if it will apologize for the outrageous display from the minister, ask her to rescind those comments and educate her about the issue.

● (1845)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if anyone should be apologizing, it would be the member across the way. I had to listen through four minutes of the member saying something that is, to be kind, a stretch of one's imagination in terms of reality, if I can put it that way.

If I were to tag onto his ending comments, one of the things I would highlight that came out of the spring economic budget for all Canadians was the investment and the commitment the Prime Minister and the government have made to a fantastic program, which is the Red Seal program. Members can think of the dozens of trades, skilled trades, that are out there. We have a government that is going to increase the numbers to somewhere between 80,000 to 100,000 Canadians. A vast majority, I would suggest to members, are young Canadians. Where do we think they are going to get the skills from? They are going to get the skills from the workforce and post-secondary institutions.

When we think of the reality of numbers and of recognizing the importance of our post-secondary institutions and, I must say, many of our secondary facilities across Canada, I think it is a very powerful statement of reality that the government has made the commitment to.

The member opposite makes reference to young people on the issue of jobs. Of course jobs are important. There is no doubt about that. As a government, since we were elected back in the last federal election, just over a year ago, we have had a net increase of jobs, at 150,000 plus. That is even at a time when we have had to deal with Trump tariffs in trade. We have still been able to get a net increase of 150,000-plus jobs. That does not mean we have stopped there. We continue to build that stronger and healthier economy by a number of initiatives that the government has brought forward, because we understand the value of jobs.

The member talks about youth unemployment. The member opposite was working for Stephen Harper when his leader was a part of the cabinet of Stephen Harper and when youth unemployment, back in 2012, averaged over 14% that year. Contrast that to the last year, where it is under 14%. Unlike the Conservatives back then, who actually cut things like summer youth programs, we continue to maintain them and, at the end of the day, look at expanding programs like our Red Seal program, which is going to get more youth working.

Of course we are concerned about youth unemployment. I believe that the government's actions have shown that. Of course we are concerned about overall unemployment. What does the member think is one of the driving factors for our Prime Minister, the cabinet and, in fact, the entire government caucus in pushing to build major projects? This attracted literally a half a trillion dollars of potential investments back in September when the Prime Minister hosted a summit for the world to come and talk about investing in Canada, which is historic amounts of money. This is not to mention the amounts of projects there are, working in collaboration with provinces and indigenous people, to build a stronger and healthier Canada for all.

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend has a difficult job. He has to defend whatever nonsense lines of the government of the day. Here are the facts from Statistics Canada. In terms of job numbers, we are at a 29-year low in labour force participation. We can check the Statistics Canada job numbers to confirm that. A big part of the solution to that would be to train Canadian young people to fill Canadian jobs and to pursue strong alignment between what businesses are actually looking for in skills and what is being made available to young people in skills development, to train young Canadian people for Canadian jobs.

Rather than support vocational institutions that are at the front lines of doing this, the government made the arbitrary decision to cut off student grants to those students and then the minister viciously attacked those institutions on the floor of the House.

Right now, under the government, a Canadian student can get a grant to study in a foreign institution. They cannot get that grant to study those labour market skills at a career college right here in Canada. How does that make any sense?

• (1850)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is not defending the federal government; it is stating the facts of reality. The member might want to twist the numbers, but I used a very specific example. He was working for Stephen Harper in 2012, when the economy was doing well and youth unemployment was over 14%. Contrast that to under 14% with the current Prime Minister, given the environment we are in today.

Every job is important. We continue to push for more jobs for all ages. In terms of colleges and universities, how we train people, it is about working in collaboration with provinces. The provinces play a leading role in ensuring that the labour market is actually connecting post-secondary facilities with future employment opportunities. The federal government supports, co-operates with and works toward that.

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to follow up on a question I asked the Minister of National Defence about the now infamous Maritime Launch Services' so-called spaceport in Nova Scotia. Clearly this is a project where federal money is being spent, and has been spent, without proper due diligence. It is, of course, also being spent very quickly. Just to recap, it was \$200 million over 10 years for a piece of property that the company is paying only \$13,500 a year to lease. That is a great ROI for the company, but it is not so good for the Canadian taxpayer.

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One area of concern I want to follow up on is the technology safeguards agreement. I see my colleague looking a little puzzled, so I will give him the opportunity to google it while I am asking my question. The technology safeguards agreement is a great idea. It is a government-to-government agreement that sets out the rules for protecting sensitive U.S.-origin space technology and technology that is used outside the U.S.

This is important, because without a technology safeguards agreement, U.S.-origin rockets or U.S.-origin technology cannot be launched from Canada, including from the concrete pad of Maritime Launch Services. Other countries have reached technology safeguards agreements with the United States, including, fairly recently, the United Kingdom. As I understand it, substantive negotiations were completed by Canada and the United States in August 2024, at least according to Global Affairs Canada press releases.

Could my colleague give the House an update on the status of that agreement, because it is completed but not yet signed and in force? Without that agreement, the company, which the government is now funding to the tune of \$200 million, will be unable to launch any U.S.-origin technology or goods, which is the majority of the market it is seeking to access with its spaceport. Could my colleague give us an update on the government's status in getting this agreement completed?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was provided the question that was posed, and that is what tonight is supposed to be about: reflection on the question that was posed. The question the member posed the other day in the House was all about the spaceport and why the government is investing in a spaceport.

Unlike the Conservative Party, we recognize that the spaceport is not optional. It is mandatory. When the Prime Minister or the government talks about sovereignty, having the ability to launch is part of that. Canada is in a great position to work with the European Union and others in being able to launch satellites or other objects into space. This is critical, the ability not only to launch but to expand the industry here in Canada. We are talking about the potential of literally hundreds of millions or billions of dollars of future investments, developing an industry that is there already and advancing it significantly.

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I think of Magellan in Winnipeg, which manufactures and produces satellites. We cannot put those into orbit. Canada does not have the ability today to launch military satellites, if doing so was deemed to be in our interest. We would have to approach other nations. We are creating a launch pad, and now we are also adding on to it one that, I believe, is in Newfoundland. The member might want to do a quick Google search on that. He will find that from a military perspective and, in particular the one we are talking about tonight, from a civilian perspective and in light of potential contracts, both internally and coming into Canada from other nations, it is in Canadians' best interest.

It is going to develop that industry so companies like Magellan and others in our nation will be able to advance in that whole spectrum of development and manufacturing. It will allow Canada to set its priorities. We will not have to go to SpaceX or any other foreign entity in order to do the things we believe are important as a nation. Also, this is a growing industry worldwide. Why would we not want to take advantage of the technology we have already and advance it to the next level?

Space sovereignty is very important. It is a part of the government's agenda. We will continue to move in that direction because it will give us not only sovereignty but the advancement of technology and growth of our workforce by providing good-quality jobs.

I would invite my colleague across the way to come to Winnipeg, visit Magellan and look at some of the things we can develop and have the potential to put into space. Some are already going into space, but that cannot be done from Canada. We have to go to other nations to get that done. I believe having the space launching pad will be a positive thing for all of us.

• (1855)

Jacob Mantle: Mr. Speaker, I am not really debating the member on the potential benefits of having a space industry. That is not really the question. The question goes to the heart of what he suggests is the potential opportunity, because that opportunity, or at least a large portion of that opportunity, will not exist unless we complete this technology safeguards agreement.

I would invite him to ask Magellan whether it does anything that does not include U.S. technology. I would hazard to say that it does use U.S. technology, and it cannot be launched by rocketry in Canada if it uses U.S. technology. To access the opportunity, we need to complete this agreement. The reality is that many U.S. companies are further advanced than Canada when it comes to this. That is why a lot of rockets and things are being launched from the U.S. rather than Canada. If we want to do it ourselves, we have to build that expertise and knowledge here in Canada.

If the member does not know the answer, could he commit to coming back with an answer, or could he give us an update today? When will we see this agreement completed?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is a question the member might want to pose during question period. This is a follow-up to questions that are posed in question period for additional details. If the member is unable to get the answer, he can come back to me and I would be happy to see what I can do for him.

However, I want to sincerely invite the member to Magellan in Winnipeg. I think he might be surprised by the degree to which we have the technology already in Canada. In fact, I would argue that there are certain space element projects that the United States comes to Canada for. It is not just the United States. We have a labour force that not only can sustain itself on space development, but can grow that industry, and part of growing that industry is looking at having the ability to launch.

ETHICS

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to follow up on a question I posed regarding the ethical cloud surrounding the Prime Minister in respect of decisions that his government has made to the benefit of Brookfield and, by extension, his personal financial portfolio.

It is an undisputed fact that the Prime Minister has vast conflicts of interest with respect to Brookfield. Indeed, he has acknowledged more than 100 such conflicts of interest. Notwithstanding this, he has dismissed concerns about these conflicts on the basis that his assets are in a blind trust. The problem with that, of course, is that his blind trust is not truly blind because he knows exactly what went into it.

Let us look at some of the facts.

The Prime Minister stands to make tens of millions of dollars in future bonus pay from a Brookfield investment fund that he set up when he was the chair of Brookfield. Accordingly, he knows exactly what companies the fund has invested in because he hand-picked the companies. What exactly is blind about that? Then there are the Brookfield stock options for which the Prime Minister stands to make millions. What is blind about that? All of this to say that there is nothing blind about his so-called blind trust.

Since the Prime Minister took office, time and again we have seen Brookfield at the front of the line, doing very well under the government. I will provide some examples.

The government funnelled half a billion dollars to the European Space Agency. Why the European Space Agency? Could it be because Brookfield has a 50% ownership in the space agency's headquarters? Could that be the reason or part of the reason?

Then, there is the Pathways Alliance carbon capture scheme, involving billions of dollars of investment in carbon capture. The leading carbon capture company connected to Pathways Alliance is Entropy. Who owns Entropy? None other than the same Brookfield investment fund the Prime Minister's future bonus pay is directly tied to. What a coincidence.

Then there is the \$50-billion maple fund that ties the retirement savings of millions of Canadians to Brookfield, and on it goes.

Billions of dollars are flowing to Brookfield as a result of decisions made by the government. When Brookfield does well, the Prime Minister does well. That is verified by none other than the chief operating officer of Brookfield. What we have amounts to one big conflict of interest involving the Prime Minister.

In the face of that, the ethics committee issued a report in the spring calling on the Prime Minister to end these conflicts of interest by divesting himself fully from Brookfield. Why has he not?

● (1900)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member clearly demonstrates is that the Conservatives are more focused on personal attacks and character assassinations than they are on public policy and the many things this government has done.

I remember sitting in the third party in the House of Commons. When Justin Trudeau was first elected as leader of the Liberal Party, the Conservatives started personal attacks against him, and from day one after he became prime minister, consistently that is all they did. It is somewhat sad, because at the end of the day, it is this thing here, that thing there and this thing here, and then they line it all up, and oh my God we have a conspiracy. We call that a tin-hat theory.

The Prime Minister was the the governor of the Bank of Canada and the governor of the Bank of England, and he was an economist extraordinaire. He is very well respected around the world. Through his leadership, the government has made numerous decisions to build a stronger and healthier Canadian economy.

What we just saw is something we saw a bit earlier, when Conservative members stood up and said that the Crown corporation on military procurement is all about corruption. That is what some of them tried to imply, but it is good public policy. The Conservatives can continue to try to do character assassinations and try to paint everything as being corrupt. They can do that all they want, but at the end of the day, I can assure the member that our Prime Minister, who was elected just over a year ago, and this government are going to continue to be focused on Canadians and not the Conservative agenda.

If I were to put on a conspiracy hat, I could ask members to imagine all the Conservatives, when they were in government, voting for farm protection procedures or enhancements, or those who argue here for getting discounts on diesel. I could say they are trying to fill the pockets of their families and so forth because they are farmers: How can a person be a farmer and vote for something that is going to benefit a farmer? I do not do that. I do not question their integrity. I do not question the ethics of that, because we have an

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Ethics Commissioner. I have more faith in the Ethics Commissioner than I do in what I have witnessed from the official opposition over the last number of years, because its sole focus far too often seems to be on character assassination. I do not hear other entities outside of the House of Commons, such as NDP governments, Conservative governments, different stakeholders, and indigenous community leaders, talking about corruption in Ottawa.

Sure, there is always going to be room for improvement when working collaboratively, but I believe that as a government, we have been reaching out and working collaboratively with all levels of government in numerous areas. We will continue to do so because it is the right thing to do. It builds a stronger and healthier Canada for all.

● (1905)

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, let me spell it out for the parliamentary secretary. The Prime Minister has significant financial interests in Brookfield. He elected not to divest himself of those interests. Consequently, he does well when Brookfield does well, and Brookfield has done very well under his government, to the tune of billions of dollars. Which of those facts does the parliamentary secretary dispute?

In addition to the so-called blind trust, which is not a blind trust, the Prime Minister set up an ethics screen, which he has repeatedly defied, including by meeting with Brookfield on multiple occasions in direct contravention of the screen the Ethics Commissioner set up. Also, he refuses to disclose times when conflicts were identified but he made a decision anyway. Why is the Prime Minister hiding those potential conflicts?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as members know, the system we operate under today, in terms of blind trust and what the expectations are for prime ministers, is something that was in place long ago. In fact, I believe it was Stephen Harper who put it in place. The same rules have applied to Stephen Harper, to Justin Trudeau and to our current Prime Minister.

Our current Prime Minister has gone out of his way in working with the independent officers of the House of Commons, either directly or indirectly, to ensure that there is integrity in the system, including blind trust. I think it would have been the same for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Tuesday, October 27, at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:09 p.m.)

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