HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

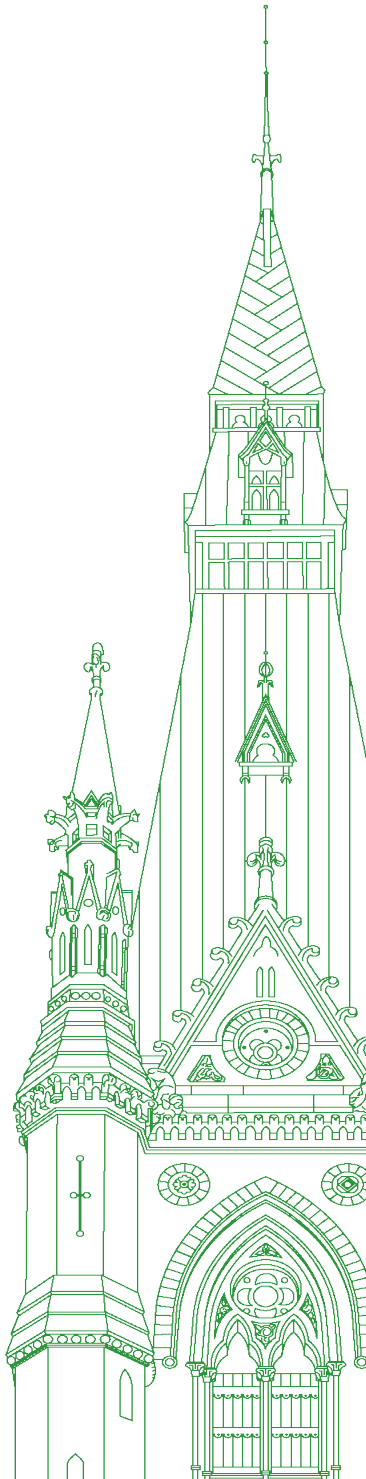
# House of Commons Debates

**Official Report**

(Hansard)

**Volume 152 No. 166**

Tuesday, November 17, 2026



Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Tuesday, November 17, 2026**

The House met at 10 a.m.

*Prayer*

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[*English*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay before the House the report of a Canadian parliamentary delegation concerning its visit to the Republic of Tunisia from May 10 to 12.

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### CANADIAN IDENTITY AND CULTURE

**David Myles (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages and to the Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, two treaties entitled "Films Co-production Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland", done in Toronto on September 13, and "Audiovisual Coproduction Treaty between Canada and the Kingdom of Spain", done in Toronto on September 13.

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence of the 37th report later this day.

### HELLENIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT

**Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.)** moved that Bill S-220, An Act to designate the month of March as Hellenic Heritage Month, be read the first time.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today as the House of Commons sponsor of Bill S-220, the Hellenic heritage month act, which would designate the month of March as Hellenic heritage month.

[*Translation*]

The month of March holds deep cultural, historical and spiritual significance for the Greek community, as March 25 marks both the Feast of the Annunciation and Greek Independence Day.

[*English*]

There are over 260,000 Greek Canadians living in Canada, and for generations, Greek Canadians have helped shape the fabric of our great country by building businesses, creating jobs, strengthening our institutions and enriching communities from coast to coast. The Hellenic community has brought with it a proud heritage rooted in democracy, philosophy, education and civic responsibility, which are values that have helped shape the very foundations of western civilization. This designation would be a meaningful way to recognize these contributions.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

● (1005)

### INSTRUCTION TO LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON BILL C-39

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP)** moved:

That it be an instruction to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-39 that, during its consideration of Bill C-39, An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy, the committee be granted the power to travel throughout Canada to hear testimony from interested parties and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, New Democrats want to build big things in this country and so does the labour movement across this country, but we cannot do that if it means hurting our labour rights in this country. We have to protect labour rights, we have to respect indigenous rights and we have to ensure the benefits of economic development flow to Canadians. It cannot mean giving cabinet sweeping powers to remove or override those rights.

I am bringing forward this motion because this is one of the most consequential pieces of legislation this Parliament has ever dealt with and Canadians deserve a voice in the legislation that will fundamentally reshape our economy. Bill C-39 is exceptionally broad, with consequences for workers and communities across Canada. The government has an opportunity to take this legislation and talk to Canadians. They should be interested in hearing what Canadians have to say across this country.

As a member of Parliament for Alberta, I can tell this House that there are a lot of frustrated Canadians outside Ottawa who feel like decisions are being made that affect them, that decisions are being made and their voices are not being listened to. I had people come to my office last week to talk to me about Bill C-39and how deeply opposed they are to it. Those individuals do not have the opportunity to come to Ottawa. They do not have the opportunity to attend the committee.

The committee has an obligation. The committee has the potential and ability to travel across this country and meet Canadians where they are. With a piece of legislation this broad, with a piece of legislation that is so dangerous for workers' rights, for indigenous rights and for environmental protection in this country, it would be a grave mistake to rush it through and to not hear from the Canadians across the country who will be impacted by this bill.

I want to be very clear. New Democrats, alongside our colleagues within the labour movement, want to make sure we are building the infrastructure that Canada and the Canadian government have neglected for decades. We want to build the housing, railways, ports, clean energy infrastructure and projects that will make Canada and Canadians more economically independent. We should be building transit and hospitals and investing in our cultural communities. These are things that all Canadians want to see the government invest in. These are strong projects we should be doing.

Canada's unionized building trades have the skills, the expertise and the highly trained workforce to deliver these projects, so of course we should be using Canadian workers, Canadian steel, Canadian aluminum and Canadian materials to build infrastructure in this country. We should be investing in apprenticeships, in training and in the next generation of skilled tradespeople. Major projects should create lasting benefit for Canadian workers and Canadian communities.

We have said, time and time again, this bill should be split. The broadness of this bill means that we have been put in a position in which, to protect workers' rights, to protect the rights of indigenous people in this country and to protect our environment, we will be voting against this legislation although we want to see parts of it. There are parts of this legislation that we want to see go forward.

I want to be very clear. New Democrats have been very propositional. The committee is sitting today. It sat last night until midnight. Many amendments were brought forward by all parties, including New Democrats. My colleague, the member for Winnipeg Centre, brought forward a number of meaningful amendments to try to improve this piece of legislation.

● (1010)

We are not trying to obstruct the building of our infrastructure in this county. We are trying to protect workers' rights, indigenous rights and our climate, and this broad omnibus legislation would not allow us to do that. We will work with the government to fix this, but I want the government to take the time to travel across this country and hear the concerns that Canadians have with this piece of legislation.

I am going to tell members a bit as well about the extraordinary opposition we have heard from labour leadership. When we hear the government of the day talk about the fact that this is a good bill for workers and fail to listen to every labour leader who has expressed deep concern and disappointment with this legislation, it is so disrespectful. It is disrespectful to the labour leaders, labour movements and workers who built this country.

I think of Bea Bruske, the President of CLC, who spoke about the ministerial intervention that undermines bargaining and encourages employers to hold out. I think of Lana Payne, the national president for Unifor, who commented that this attacks free and fair collective bargaining at a time of economic uncertainty. Marty Warren, the national director for the United Steelworkers, says that it gives corporations even more power over workers. Mark Hancock, the national president of CUPE, says this unnecessary attack on constitutional rights will worsen labour relations. He said it will not make them better, but worsen them.

Tom Doran from ILWU said that the economic importance of workers' jobs cannot justify taking away their rights. David Chartrand, the general vice-president of IAM, says that employers have little incentive to bargain if they expect Ottawa to intervene. Sean Strickland, the executive director of Canada's Building Trades Union, says they support repealing sections of clause 107 and stand with the labour movement on getting rid of that attack on workers' ability to strike.

On October 15, workers rallied outside MPs' offices in 21 communities across Canada, including outside the office of the Prime Minister and many of the cabinet ministers. The CUPE National Executive Board unanimously committed to defy the proposed strike restrictions if passed without amendment. On October 29, Canada's labour leaders announced the creation of a national labour war room to coordinate legal, political and communication efforts against the restrictions in Bill C-39. International labour organizations, including the International Trade Union Confederation, IndustriALL and the OECD trade union advisory committee have also expressed concerns with this legislation.

How many more voices from labour does the Liberal government need to hear to understand that Bill C-39, as it stands, would hurt labour relations in this country? It would hurt workers. It would undermine workers' ability to bargain. It is a bad piece of legislation, and the Liberal government has been told by the labour movement time and time again to fix it. Whether it is through a committee, a press conference, written submissions or letters, labour cannot be more clear. Not only is this legislation dangerous, but it would cause more labour disruption in this country. It would not help us build more things better. It would make it worse. It would make it harder for Canadian workers to build the things this country needs right now. Every one of us wants to see that happen. Every one of us wants to see that economic sovereignty, economic independence and investment in our infrastructure in this country. Every person wants to see that, but we cannot do that if we are undermining the rights of workers.

● (1015)

Today is the Canadian Labour Congress' Hill day. Members of Parliament from all parties will in fact be meeting with members of the labour movement, who will be raising concerns about Bill C-39. They will be meeting with members of Parliament to express those concerns. This is an opportunity, this motion is an opportunity, for the Liberal government to listen to those workers. It is an opportunity to slow down, take this legislation to Canadians and talk to Canadians across this country.

I am going to go through a list of things that I think the government could be looking at as well. If this committee were to travel—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, I am being interrupted, and I am not sure why.

**The Speaker:** I would like to call the member for Regina—Lewvan to order, please.

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps that the Conservatives do not want us to stand up for workers' rights either. I am not 100% sure what that outburst was about.

The committee has an opportunity to hear from British Columbians: from port workers, longshore workers, coastal communities that will be impacted and first nations. In Alberta, it is an opportunity to hear from the building trades, energy workers and indigenous communities, and municipalities. It is an opportunity to hear their perspectives on Bill C-39. In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, it is an opportunity to hear from agricultural producers, mining communities and railway workers. In Ontario, it is an opportunity to listen to the steel workers, manufacturing workers and auto workers. In Quebec, it is the CSN, the FTQ and other labour organizations and affected communities. In Atlantic Canada, it is an opportunity to hear from the fishers, port workers, energy workers and coastal communities.

This is an opportunity. The government has a chance right now to meet with northern communities and with indigenous communities in northern parts of this country to hear what their concerns are and why they are so against Bill C-39. This is the chance to do that. This is the chance to bring forward changes to this legislation.

The government should want the committee to travel, because of a few key things. Government members have argued that they want this legislation to create economic certainty. Canada's labour movement is warning that it instead would create years of labour unrest and constitutional challenges. Indigenous leaders are warning that the legislation would fail to respect their rights, and rushing legislation through Parliament does not create certainty.

We have seen this playbook before. It ends in the courts. Good consultation before the legislation is passed prevents delays, litigation and costly mistakes. Listening to Canadians is not an impediment to building Canada. If we cannot take the time to listen to Canadians before passing legislation, how much time will we have to spend dealing with the consequences of getting it wrong?

Both the Liberals and the Conservatives voted for Bill C-39 at second reading. Every single New Democrat voted against it. To Liberal members of Parliament, your own government says this legislation is about strengthening Canada's economy, so why on earth would they oppose hearing from the workers who make that economy function? If this legislation is to strengthen our economy, workers have to be at the heart. Workers have to be the ones who are leading this charge. To Conservative MPs, you talk regularly about Ottawa being disconnected from ordinary Canadians. Here is—

● (1020)

**The Speaker:** I know that the hon. member is not referring to a particular member directly, and I know it is sort of the royal “you”, but maybe if she could stay away from that term, it would avoid sliding into rule-breaking.

The hon. member may continue.

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Conservatives to talk about connecting with ordinary Canadians to support this legislation. This is an opportunity for the Conservative Party to put action where its words are. Members do not even need to oppose Bill C-39 in order to understand the importance of listening to Canadians with this legislation. We need to be listening to workers, to indigenous communities and to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. This is about giving the committee the tools to do its job properly.

I want to build big things in this country. New Democrats want to build big things in this country. Canada's labour movement wants to build big things in this country. There is no reason we cannot do this and do it while protecting workers' rights, while ensuring that we are respecting indigenous rights and while protecting our environment. Let us split the bill. The Conservatives should work with us, look meaningfully, engage with our amendments, work with Canada's labour movement and, for goodness' sake, take the time to get out of Ottawa and listen to Canadians. These are the people who built Canada, and the very least we can do is give them a voice in how we go forward.

I urge all members of the House to support my motion.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important that we reflect on the last federal election, when the Prime Minister made a commitment to build a stronger and healthier economy and society here in Canada, an economy that works for all Canadians. I reflect on my history as someone who has advocated for workers from the days when I was in the Manitoba legislature in the late eighties, and I disagree wholeheartedly with the assessment that the member has put on the record today. With respect to the debate on Bill C-39, for example, governments take actions to support the economy, and they can also support the rights of workers. The Province of Manitoba, through the Manitoba Labour Board, forced 350 health care workers back to work after not even one day of a strike.

I think that there is an opportunity for us to pass Bill C-39 and to continue to build that stronger, healthier economy, and that there is no need to divide the bill or have a committee go around Canada. That principle could be applied to virtually every piece of legislation that passes through the House of Commons.

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, obviously this is one of the biggest bills we have ever had. It is such a broad bill that would fundamentally change our economy, so it is not like any other bill. The member knows that. He is very aware of it. We have heard him speak in this place many times.

I will say that there are 100 labour leaders here today for the CLC day on the Hill. For every one of those 100 labour leaders who is meeting with their MP today, there are thousands if not tens of thousands of workers who were not able to come to Ottawa, who were not able to take the time to be here or who did not have the means. The government has an obligation to listen to those workers as well. Certainly, I hope the parliamentary secretary has taken the time to meet with the CLC today or has plans to do so, but by all means, let us remember that for all the workers who are here advocating for the right to strike for workers across this country, there are thousands or tens of thousands more workers who are not here whom the government has an obligation to represent.

● (1025)

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech. We support the motion she has brought forward. Bill C-39 contains measures that would have significant negative consequences on workers' rights, the environment and democracy, measures that will centralize vast powers within the Prime Minister's Office.

Could my colleague provide some examples of amendments or proposals that might emerge from a broader consultation, as she is proposing?

[*English*]

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the hon. member supports the motion. I think that is important. The Bloc has been very strong in standing against Bill C-39, and I appreciate its efforts to do that.

The hon. member asked about some potential amendments. The amendments we have brought forward in committee include things such as repealing section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, removing the proposed new ministerial powers to terminate legal strikes, protecting free and fair collective bargaining, preventing employers from determining how workers organize themselves through geographic certification, protecting collectively negotiated paid sick leave benefits, strengthening protections against worker misclassification and wage theft, strengthening successor rights to protect workers against contract flipping, improving access to first collective agreement arbitration, strengthening enforcement of the Canada Labour Code, protecting indigenous rights with meaningful consultation, ensuring robust environmental assessment and public participation and ensuring that major projects deliver tangible benefits for Canadian workers and communities.

We have brought forward all those amendments. I am interested to see what the Liberal government does with them.

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has suggested that we need to consult with workers. Our government has consulted extensively with workers. Their right to strike is constitutional. It would not in any way be threatened by Bill C-39, but they are very frustrated at situations in which 95% of the agreements are well negotiated but in 5% are sometimes working for years without a contract. Sometimes they are frustrated because people are not acting in good faith. That is what Bill C-39 would address.

Would the member not agree that for workers to be able to negotiate a good deal and for Canadians to not continually be impacted in their businesses by strikes due to not negotiating in good faith, we need to do something to make the situation better?

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, I think that is such a misguided look at what the legislation would do. Let us be honest. Labour leaders have said very clearly that this would put the power into the hands of the employers. It would take power away from workers. I think what she is describing is a fix to a problem that does not exist, at the risk of undermining the ability of workers to negotiate fair wages and working conditions.

A strike is not something anyone wants to do. Workers do not want to go on strike. It is a tool that workers have, and it is supposed to be uncomfortable. That is the point of a strike. It is supposed to be uncomfortable because it is supposed to force the employer to come to the bargaining table and bargain in good faith. If that right is taken away, why would the employer do that? Why would the employer negotiate in any way if a minister can put their finger on the scale? We have watched the Liberals do it time and time again. They have done this over and over again.

We cannot trust that the minister is not going to negotiate in bad faith in backroom deals to take away the negotiating and bargaining capacity of workers. We cannot trust the Liberals with that. We cannot trust them with the legislation.

**Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Edmonton Strathcona, for bringing the motion forward. The motion is about bringing Bill C-39 to communities across Canada to seek their input. What has happened in the House with Bill C-39, of course, is that the government has rammed the bill through. It is already at committee, with limited witnesses.

Why does my colleague think the government is resisting the idea of actually hearing from everyday people across the country with Bill C-39?

● (1030)

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. I do not understand why the Liberal government is pushing so fast and so hard to not listen to workers, to Canadians and to indigenous leaders across the country who have raised concerns. This is an opportunity. We are not saying that the government should just stop. We are saying to listen and to take the time to listen to Canadians. Take the time to travel across the country.

Spend some time. Rushing and pushing the legislation through will not result in good legislation. It will not result in our being able to build the economy and the infrastructure we need. It will result in court cases, in litigation, in delays, in strikes and in wildcat action. That is what will happen. Let us do it right. Let us listen to Canadians. Let us listen to labour. Let us get this giant piece of legislation right.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu:** Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that Bill C-39 undermines parliamentary democracy, particularly when it comes to the environment, for example. I would like to hear more from my colleague on this matter. Parliament will not decide to override certain environmental laws; the Prime Minister's Office will decide whether a project is in the national interest and whether environmental assessments can be bypassed. There is no five-year sunset clause, meaning these powers could continue indefinitely.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

[*English*]

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. This puts environmental protection in the hands of ministerial power. This is a problem.

I think about my own province of Alberta, where the federal government has an obligation to step in on coal mining in the eastern slopes. We have been waiting for years for selenium regulations to come forward. The government refuses to bring them forward. We cannot trust the current government, which continually undermines our environmental obligations, to do the right thing. We just cannot. The member is absolutely correct.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is really important that we recognize there is a constitutional right to strike. The New Democrats have a hidden motivation on this issue. On the one hand, they say they want to build a healthier and stronger economy, but what did they do on Bill C-5 when it came to one Canadian economy? They voted against it. What did the New Democrats do in regard to Bill C-39 at second reading? They voted against it.

Coming out of the last federal election, the Prime Minister made a commitment to Canadians to work collaboratively with the different jurisdictions and the many different stakeholders, including unions, to build a stronger, healthier Canadian economy and society, an economy that works for all Canadians. That is what Bill C-39 is all about.

On that point, I move:

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

● (1035)

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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.

**Chris Warkentin:** Mr. Speaker, we would request a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

● (1115)

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

*(Division No. 192)*

YEAS

Members

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| Acan | Al Soud |
| Ali | Alty |
| Anandasangaree | Auguste |
| Bains | Baker |

Bardeesy
Battiste
Beech
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Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Bendayan
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Brière
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## NAYS

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Falk (Provencher)
Fortin
Garon
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Genuis
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Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
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Rempel Garner
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Ross
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| Ruff | Scheer |
| Schmale | Shipley |
| Simard | Small |
| Steinley | Ste-Marie |
| Stevenson | Strahl |
| Strauss | Stubbs |
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| Lalonde | Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk) |
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**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

# GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

## THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from November 6 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Scot Davidson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As acting chief opposition whip, I hereby give notice, under Standing Order 43(2)(a), that all remaining Conservative caucus speaking slots are hereby divided in two.

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, as many members will know, when one starts a speech, in my case on November 6, and resumes it today, with the passage of time, it gives one a chance to reflect on what was said and what was left out.

I concentrated very much in that first effort on a section of this budget that I did not think many members had been talking about. I would now like to concentrate on an aside I made on November 6 and give it more substance today.

In my speech on November 6, I agreed with the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills North that the Government of Canada seems to be able to insist that other entities live up to generally acceptable accounting practices but apparently does not believe it has to live up to them itself. I would like to expand on that.

The productivity mega dividend has evolved from last year's budget, the productivity superdividend.

I do not know what kinds of lessons the PMO comms people are taking from the White House, but we are getting into a trend of it



being huge, and now it is even huger. It was the Building Canada Act, and now it is the building Canada strong act. I guess by next year, we will have the "building Canada really strong we did not mean it before" act. It is huge, the biggest act anyone has ever seen.

I would like to turn to page 363 of the budget to explain why I said that this budget departs from what would be considered generally acceptable accounting practices. That is in the definition of capital that goes into the 100% immediate writeoffs that are possible under the mega dividend. This is no small matter. It adds to the spending in this budget and the expansion of government debt and deficit. This one measure is $36 billion more than if we were not doing the productivity mega dividend.

I would like to expand on this. In this budget, the government has taken extreme liberties with its methods of accounting. Any current expense of any organization outside of the federal government, public or private, domestic or international, of any of those entities with an intention to form capital, is considered a capital expense. It is quite astonishing.

I see my friends nodding.

I do not usually turn to Google for help with anything, because I rather like to consider my own mind my own Google. However, Google calls these flexible domestic definitions rather than strict international accounting standards. These are indeed flexible.

For instance, if a public company or a financial institution, such as a bank in Canada, reported a current expense in such a fashion to be considered a capital expense, I can confidently predict that the management of that company and its auditors would be called on the carpet or fired. It is an extraordinary thing. No organization would dare to try such financial trickery in reporting to any bank in Canada that this is a capital expense. Organizations could classify advertising as such, because it is intended to form capital. It is hard to think of anything that would not fit within the flexibility of this definition.

Again, I say this is material, because the way in which one defines capital in order to make it fit within access to the productivity mega dividend has an impact on Canada's finances.

Certainly, the Canadian public is on board with team Canada. They want our Prime Minister to take on aggressors from other countries, whether it is the White House or anyone else who thinks they can harm Canada's economy or cost us jobs. There is a tremendous degree of public trust and goodwill, and I would urge the Prime Minister not to squander it on such trickery. We want to see support for Canadian businesses.

● (1120)

This definition, as I mentioned earlier, would apply for a mega dividend for a company. We heard this earlier in debate the other week on the opposition's supply day motion, in which they questioned why it was that the Commissionaires were not given a contract to protect the Canada Revenue Agency offices. We said we want Canadian. Is “Canada first” not our policy?

In that context, it is important that, in revisiting this definition and revisiting most of the enticements and inducements to invest in Canada, there is nothing that says it has to be a Canadian company. In fact, in debate on that day on the motion of supply, we heard government members explain that the current definition of “Canadian” could be just to have opened an office in Canada, or having a box office somewhere and saying one is going to hire Canadians. Then it is a Canadian company.

There are small and medium-sized enterprises across Canada that really need to be able to access capital for investment, and one would hope that a mega dividend of this type would be defined and prescribed in ways that particularly helped them, but it actually would do the opposite. It would particularly help foreign investors, companies that are not Canadian.

There is much else in this budget that I did not get a chance to speak to when I first spoke back on November 6. One of these issues was one I raised yesterday in question period, which is this: Why we are slashing Parks Canada? The budget, if we read it without care, says that there is $3.5 billion over a 10-year period for Parks Canada. That could be used in talking points, as I have heard it used by Liberal members, to say that they are protecting our parks and putting in $3.5 billion over 10 years.

One has to read it carefully. That is only for actual capital improvements, not the fictitious ones that work for the mega dividend. They actually work only for putting in roads, bridges and specific infrastructure. It is physical investment in parks, like rebuilding Jasper. Those get the $3.5 billion.

It is not much money, when we consider that it would be spread out over 10 years, but at the same time, we would save a relatively small amount of money, $145 million, when we consider that the mega dividend is costing $37 billion. Here we have $145 million. The government at this point has told two-thirds of Parks staff that they could be eliminated. Yesterday, in question period, the Minister of the Environment said to me that they could be eliminated, when I told her that four park wardens from the Gulf Islands National Park in my riding had been told their positions were eliminated. The minister's response was that maybe they had not told her yet what they have done.

They have been told within the Gulf Islands National Park that there will be no full-time wardens again in the Gulf Islands National Park, but that they are to rely on a warden from Pacific Rim National Park. Yes, it is in the same province, and yes, it is closer than some other parks, but as the crow flies, it is 130-some kilometres away. We need full-time wardens on the ground.

By the way, when I say “as the crow flies”, the only way one would be able to do it in a day is by flying, because it is not reachable by roads. We would be taking ferries. The B.C. ferry system has a schedule, and unless the budget is expanded to include a 24-7 available helicopter service, there is no way to quickly get a park warden on the ground who is needed to put out an illegal campfire or because someone is poaching. The park wardens are significant parts of law enforcement to protect national parks and protect visitors to the parks. They are allowed to carry sidearms. They are allowed to enforce the law, and those four positions, we have been told, are permanently eliminated.

It is not that they have received a pink note and maybe will or maybe will not be eliminated. They have told this to the Gulf Islands National Park staff and the residents of the island within my riding that has the most ground as a national park as a proportion of its land mass, Saturna Island, which is about half national park. When they negotiated with the people of Saturna Island, Parks Canada said it absolutely guaranteed them there would always be a full-time resident park warden on Saturna Island, so that promise is broken with this.

● (1125)

I love Parks Canada. I had the honour of working in the office of the federal minister of the environment from 1986 to 1988, and in that time we negotiated Pacific Rim National Park, from which they now think a park warden could cover Gulf Islands National Park. We negotiated Gwaii Haanas National Park grasslands. We negotiated parks across this country. I am very proud of being part, in a tangential way, of Parks Canada, as a representative from the minister's office, to lead those negotiations. However, I am ashamed to think of how the current approach to protecting our national parks is so reckless with ecosystems and the health and safety of the tourists who go to our national parks.

That, again, brings me to the part of this budget that most Canadians would be happy to see. I am happy to see the continuation of the Canada strong pass, which allows free access to museums for Canadians. This is great.

With respect to reduced rates on Via Rail, we really need to invest more in passenger rail. I am not speaking of Alto, which needs a lot of work. We definitely, as Greens, support high-speed rail across Canada, but we have put out a statement, which I will not go into detail on, of what is needed to repair and reform the approach taken to Alto.

We need national parks, and we need Via Rail. They are not getting support in this budget, but we are giving Canadians access to the parks for free. We have done a double whammy to Parks Canada. For more than a year, which is great, we have encouraged Canadians and foreigners to visit our national parks, to experience this national beauty. However, visitors to Banff and Jasper are less safe, because the government just cut the search and rescue program that involved 55 well-trained dogs that could sniff out, rescue and save lives. At the same time, we have encouraged Canadians to visit our national parks without park wardens in places like Saturna Island, the Gulf Islands National Park, and Kejimkujik.

Across the country, the park cuts are deep. Canadians should understand that the government is not cutting the fat. With respect to Parks Canada, it is cutting into the bone. I do not know how we fix this. We never really recovered from the 10% budget cuts that occurred to Parks Canada in 2012 under Stephen Harper, but this is more than a double whammy. It is a violation of the statutory obligation of the Government of Canada, under the Canada National Parks Act, to keep our parks healthy and secure for the next generation.

I see that I have about 15 seconds left. In that time, I will say that I will not be voting for this budget. I urge the government, at a minimum, to not make our budget a laughing stock for accountants. This is embarrassing.

● (1130)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the member's comments on Canada's productivity mega deduction. That is a deduction that allows for businesses to claim their eligible equipment expenses immediately. I think that is a very strong positive. In fact, on Friday I had the opportunity to visit Fort Garry Fire Trucks, which is an excellent company that has been in Winnipeg since 1919. It does amazing work. I would suggest to members that it is first in its class in North America in producing fire trucks and so much more.

The question I have for the member is this: Does she believe in the benefits of having that deduction?

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I will read for the parliamentary secretary from page 352, because, yes, capital expenditures and ways of increasing investment are great.

It states:

> Capital investments, for the purposes of the framework, are defined broadly as any...capital formation, held directly on the government's balance sheet or on that of a private sector entity....

There is no real precision to this definition at all. A company could go to the Government of Canada and say that although this is a current expense, they are counting it as a capital expense, because if they invest it in advertising, it will form capital for their company down the road. We need to ensure that the Government of Canada does not practise trickery in accounting that would embarrass the private sector.

**Scot Davidson (York—South Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are lining up by the millions at food banks. I note that yesterday the Prime Minister gave an economy that is bigger than us, Brazil, $560 million.

My colleague knows that I have been fighting here, since 2019, for the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund, a boots-on-the-ground environmental project, right here in Canada. We cannot even get that.

The environment is important. It is important in my riding, and it is important to Canadians right here at home. I wonder if my colleague could comment on that.

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable friend from York—South Simcoe. He has picked an example, and I hope I do not disappoint him too much. Last year, the Prime Minister broke a promise to the President of Brazil and, I think, embarrassed Brazil on the world stage. The Prime Minister had committed to attending the high-level summit at COP30 that was taking place, the first climate negotiation to take place in the geographical Amazon, in Belém.

This money is not a lot when we consider that the Canadian climate and the world's climate depend on what is sometimes called the lungs of the earth, the Amazon. I think most Canadians would be glad to see us putting $560 million into protecting the Amazon rainforest because it is connected to our atmosphere and it is connected to our climate, but it goes back to why the Prime Minister made a commitment to a foreign government with whom we are, by the way, trying to secure a trade deal. It is one of the BRIC economies. Brazil is a big economy. It is the biggest economy in South America. We could do more business.

I know that one of my friend's colleagues attacked President Lula. He recently won a democratic and free election. It so happens that the former minister of environment is an old friend of mine. Her name is Marina Silva. I am very happy to see funding go to protecting the Amazon, but I think it is paltry compared to the billions of dollars that are going to foreign multinationals.

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague what she thinks about the fact that the government is presenting this budget as a green budget. It even sent its supposedly green members, including the member for Honoré-Mercier, to say that this is a revolutionary green budget. The Minister of the Environment is currently at the United Nations conference, waving the budget around and telling people to look at how good we are and what we are doing to fight climate change. At the same time, some former members who left that party are publicly saying that the minister is lying and that it is not true that she is honouring Canada's commitment to the Paris Agreement.

It is quite clear, as we understand it, that this budget does not respect the Paris—

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have a point of order from the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if it is appropriate to indirectly make mention of a minister lying. I look to you to provide the answer.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the parliamentary secretary. I heard the same comment.

[*Translation*]

I just want to remind the member that we cannot do indirectly in the House what we cannot do directly. Members cannot accuse another member of the House of lying to someone. The member for Repentigny could find another way to say what he wanted to say. This is just a reminder, but the parliamentary secretary raises a good point of order.

The hon. member has the floor to finish his remarks.

**Patrick Bonin:** I accept that, Mr. Speaker.

We have a minister who, on the international stage, is saying that her budget will help us to meet our Paris Agreement targets when several other people are saying that it will do exactly the opposite.

To what extent does my hon. colleague think this budget amounts to greenwashing, an attempt to make a government that is in bed with the oil and gas industry appear more environmentally friendly?

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague is right. Canadian climate leaders are at the UN conference right now.

[*English*]

We have Catherine McKenna and Steven Guilbeault at COP31, and they stand for climate action. This budget does the opposite. As I said when I spoke to the budget on November 6, scandalously, on page 7 of this budget, it not only does not commit to the Paris Agreement targets, but also says that, for too long, we have been driven by targets.

The scientific community has advised us that, if we do not meet those targets, we do not have a human civilization, which would have a direct impact on our economy, but it would have a particularly large impact on my granddaughter. That will not happen on my watch.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to go back to the principle of the productivity mega deduction that is being provided to businesses. I understand what the member is saying, but I would think that she would be supportive of the principle. If we can have an immediate deduction to write off capital, that means hopefully we will see a lot of take-up on that particular program because that will generate more jobs. To me, the generation of jobs is something that is critically important to advancing Canada's economy on a number of different fronts. That is why I truly believe that Canada's productivity mega deduction is a very important aspect of the budget.

Does the member support the principle of that deduction?

● (1140)

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the parliamentary secretary that job creation is critical, and the single biggest job creator in this country is small businesses. Small businesses are not the target of the benefits in this budget. Large investment capital from foreign governments and foreign corporations are far more likely to benefit from this than small businesses in Canada, which are largely overlooked.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to move on to another issue.

Basically, the budget proposes to cut the health transfer escalator from 5% to 3% in 2028. If this happens, it will be really catastrophic for Quebec and the provinces. Ordinary people, seniors and the sick are the ones who will pay the price.

What does my colleague think about that?

**Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague from the Bloc Québécois for his question.

I agree that it is essential that we keep our public health care system secure and sustainable.

At the same time, what concerns me is that interest payments on the debt account for the largest increase in government spending in this budget. I believe that, as of next year, the amount needed to pay the interest on the debt will exceed the amount going to public health transfers, and that is a problem.

[*English*]

**Scot Davidson (York—South Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after a decade of failed Liberal policies, Canadians were told that the new leader of the Liberal Party was a financial wizard, a master negotiator, a Prime Minister who would supposedly spend less, invest more and build the strongest economy in the G7. Instead, what they got was the Wizard of Oz, with a booming voice, grand announcements and a great spectacle, all meant to distract from the fact that life has only gotten harder for Canadian families. Across the country, and in my community of York—South Simcoe, people are struggling to pay for groceries, rent and mortgages. Job losses and food bank use are at record levels, yet the Liberals have nothing more to offer in budget 2026 than smoke and mirrors.

Pull back the curtain on it all, and we will find the Prime Minister working the levers just like the Wizard of Oz. The lever he has reached for once again in the budget splits government spending into operating expenses and so-called capital investment, letting the Liberals cook the books by moving spending from one column to the other. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has taken a dim view of this creative accounting and lever pulling. According to her analysis, $94 billion of what the Prime Minister calls investment is actually ordinary day-to-day spending.

If calling spending an investment makes it free, why stop there? Based on the justification they have already been using, the Prime Minister's eye-watering inflight catering bills become an investment in hospitality and agriculture. The $60 billion in interest on the debt becomes an investment in capital markets. The possibilities are actually endless. If the so-called investments are such a sure thing, why hold back?

The budget promises an investment supercycle that will mobilize $400 billion. If the math is that good, why not spend $1 trillion to get $3 trillion back? After all, according to the government, it is just a capital investment. It might as well be free. Of course, we know the answer.

When the Liberals pick pet projects and winners and losers with borrowed money, taxpayers end up paying the bill. We saw this with Stellantis. Taxpayers committed more than half a billion dollars to help retool its plant. For a year, the Prime Minister and his industry minister promised Brampton workers that they would hold the company to its obligations with stern letters and threats of legal action. Last week, Stellantis sold the plant to an armoured vehicle maker, and the Prime Minister called it a betrayal. What he did not tell Canadians is that his own government sat at the table for months, knew the terms of the deal and did nothing to stop it. Unbelievably, the industry minister has responded by offering even more taxpayer money to the company if it keeps the plant open, instead of ensuring the conditions that would let businesses like theirs succeed here in Canada on their own.

If workers are being left behind under the Liberals, there is one group that certainly is not, and that is the Prime Minister's buddies and his Liberal cronies. They have given a $2.3-billion contract to a longtime friend of the PM, $1.6 billion for an AI firm tied to a Liberal donor now running a federal agency, a $2-billion rebate through his old firm Brookfield and hundreds of millions more to keep the media happy and quiet.

● (1145)

This is the real return on Liberal investment: bad deals and job losses. Canadian taxpayers get stuck with the bill, and Liberal insiders get rich. All the while, the Prime Minister spins half-truths and tells Canadians only what they want to hear.

The Prime Minister, similar to the Wizard of Oz, is doing all this to hide the truth. In this case, he is hiding that it is Canadians who are paying the bill for all of this spending, but Canadians are noticing every time they fill up at the pump, every time they go to the checkout line and every time they look at their paycheque. Instead of ensuring that Canadians can save on food, fuel and homes, the Liberals are adding $765 billion in new debt, costing the average family $6,000 in interest costs this year alone. Under the Liberals, more money is now going toward servicing the debt than health care. It is a great time to be a banker or a bondholder, but it is not a great time to be stuck in an emergency room or waiting for surgery.

The Prime Minister would have us ignore all that and put on green-tinted glasses just like they did in the Emerald City. He keeps telling us we have never had it so good, that affordability is the best it has been in 10 years, that the House is in order, while his flying monkeys criss-cross the country repeating the same message. The Liberals say they are making life more affordable with another top-up to the GST credit, but most of the middle class cannot get it, it barely dents grocery bills that are up 33% since 2020, and it comes while the Liberals are making everything more expensive with the industrial carbon tax and bringing back the gas excise tax.

Small businesses are being squeezed just as hard. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business called this budget “mega disappointing”, and optimism among entrepreneurs and business owners is at record lows.

There is no place like home, but the Prime Minister's promise to build 500,000 homes a year did not even make it into budget 2026. It is no wonder. Housing starts are down 11% from last September and down 4% so far this year.

For all the government's talk of bringing immigration down, Canada could see more than 600,000 new permanent residents next year, the most in our history, while our hospitals, highways, schools and housing are already at the breaking point and the social fabric is stretched to the limit.

If we take our glasses off, we can see just how detached Liberal promises are from the reality Canadians are living in every aspect of their lives. With budget 2026, the Liberals say they want to make us masters of our destiny, but increasingly, more Canadians are becoming masters of none. They cannot find good-paying jobs or save for things they have worked toward, like starting a family, starting a business or retiring with dignity. How can they feel in control of their lives, let alone their destiny?

Just like Dorothy, too many Canadians feel like they have been swept up into a storm and dropped somewhere they do not recognize anymore: a Canada where hard work no longer pays off and where the promise of a better life for the next generation is slipping away. Sadly, this budget will only make things worse.

I will be voting no on budget 2026.

● (1150)

[*Translation*]

**Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague. With defence spending currently at 2% of GDP, I would like to know whether the Conservatives support our goal to raise it to 5%. I would note that, under Stephen Harper, defence spending amounted to 1% of GDP.

*The Budget*

[*English*]

**Scot Davidson:** Mr. Speaker, I was just at a Santa Claus parade in Sharon last weekend, and people were coming up and telling me how frustrated they are that there are over two million people going to food banks. Nothing has changed on the ground. Like I said, besides all the MOUs and the grand announcements saying the government is doing this and doing that, nothing has actually changed for Canadians on the ground.

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in the budget, the government is telling Quebec and all the provinces that, starting next year, it will be reducing health transfers to the provinces. The federal contribution is currently at 5%. All the provinces have asked that it be increased to 6%, but the government is reducing it to 3%, which means that Quebec and all the provinces will have trouble sustaining their public health care systems.

Does my colleague agree with me that this is a bad choice and that the federal government should provide greater support to the provinces so they can deliver the quantity and quality of services people need?

[*English*]

**Scot Davidson:** Mr. Speaker, that is what is so frustrating. I agree with my colleague. I have people in my riding who do not even have a doctor. I got emails this morning to loop back the $560 million to Brazil. I have people telling me they do not even have a doctor. We cannot even get money for the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund right here in Canada.

We have two million people going to food banks in Canada. It is outrageous. Then we have the Prime Minister stand up and give $560 million in a grand, spectacular announcement to Brazil. It is unacceptable.

**Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was back in my riding last week, like all members of Parliament were in their ridings. I am sure my colleague was as well. Do colleagues know what I heard about the budget that the Prime Minister just brought forward? Crickets. There is nothing in the budget for everyday people. Groceries are more expensive. We just saw Stats Can say inflation is 3.1%, gasoline is higher and groceries are higher.

I wonder what comments my colleague heard from his constituents. My constituents said the budget does not help them. We will be $755 billion more in debt by 2030. Debt financing is going to be one of the highest expenses in the federal budget, higher than health care. What did my colleague's constituents tell him when he was home last week?

● (1155)

**Scot Davidson:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what my constituents have been telling me. They are on the outside looking in again with these MOUs and these announcements. There is nothing in it for them. It is the same thing I said about small businesses.

I have auto workers in my riding. The Prime Minister called China, the biggest security threat that Canada faces. Colleagues should think about this. Now we see him cozying up to the dictator to chop at our auto industry in Canada. It is absolutely unacceptable.

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

Over the last week, members were back home in their ridings. I want to give a quick shout-out to all of the legions, schools and community centres that held Remembrance Day services this past week. It is very important that we remember the sacrifices of our veterans, the men and women who paid the ultimate price, as well as those who continue to serve in the armed forces today. It is important to remember them, and I was honoured to take part this past week.

I also want to give a special shout-out to Dinsmore high school. I was there on November 10 for its service. The students there and the high school did a fantastic job in putting on a great service. Many people from the community came as well. It was a terrific community event. I say, very well done to the Dinsmore high school, to all the students and the teachers who were involved in that service.

Last week I also had the honour to go to the community of Luseland. Luseland is a small town in the northern part of my riding. I was invited out there because the Luseland Credit Union was handing over a $400,000 cheque to the local community rink improvement fund. The Luseland rink is one of the oldest rinks in Saskatchewan. It is in definite need of some updates and repairs. The town has a great plan, about a $4-million plan, that it is going to be implementing to tear down the old curling rink, build new dressing rooms, add on to the sitting area, and build a new kitchen and whatnot for the rink so it will have better space for the community, the kids and the hockey program. It will be able to host games, tournaments and the senior hockey team. It will be a great addition to the community.

One thing I was asked about when I was there was the government's new initiative of increasing funding through the housing program for recreation and sports facilities. I found it fascinating that right at the time I was invited to the Luseland rink, the government came out with this program. Generally, what I fear is going to happen is that a lot of this money is going to go only to Liberal ridings and areas served by Liberal MPs. We see this quite often. In fact, members sitting in this chamber right now have said they saw a bump in the funding to their ridings after they crossed the floor.

The government has actually done that. The Liberals have admitted it. They said it up front. They said the quiet part out loud, that they only select areas where there are Liberal MPs to send the funding. I suggest the Luseland rink would be a great place for this funding to start. If the government is going to be handing out money to rinks and recreation facilities, the Luseland rink deserves to have its fair share and to get help with its project.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention that the City of Swift Current is looking to build a new aquatic centre and, hopefully, eventually, a sports facility attached to it, with soccer, a walking track and all that kind of stuff. Right now, the aquatic centre is the big ask. I know the mayor and many of the municipal organizations in Saskatchewan have been out here meeting with and lobbying the government to make sure there is reasonable and fair access to these funds for facilities across the province and the country. The Swift Current aquatic centre would be another one of the projects that I would ask the government to give serious consideration to when considering where funds from this program would go.

My point is that when the government spends money, it needs to be equally accessible to all communities, regardless of the political stripe of their member of Parliament. The reason I say this is that over the last quarter, companies released their quarterly results and things like that, and there is one particular corporation that had a massive 500% increase in its earnings. That was Brookfield. We continue to see that when the government picks where it is going to spend taxpayers' dollars, it always seems to go where there is a connection with Liberal insiders or special people connected to the government. Then we see that boat rise, but we do not see all the other boats in the sea rise. It is a little ridiculous that every time the government does something, it seems Brookfield is the only one that benefits.

● (1200)

The Prime Minister has a famous line, which is that Canada is adding jobs at twice the rate of that of the United States. Let us take a look at the numbers. In October of this year, Canada lost 4,700 jobs. Going back, over the time span of January to October, Canada lost 45,900 jobs. The United States has added 861,000 jobs. I am not allowed to say that the Prime Minister is lying. That would be an—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I have to interrupt the member. The member cannot do indirectly what he cannot do directly in the House. I invite the member to find a different way to get to the same point but not use that term or refer to that idea.

I will let the member continue.

**Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, I was just speaking out loud and trying to figure out a way to say it differently. We will say it is a myth. The Prime Minister likes to speak in myths about job creation in this country.

Let us go back even further, because the Prime Minister was the special economic adviser to the former prime minister, starting in 2020, 2021 or thereabouts. Canada, from 2019 to 2024, added zero private sector jobs. When the Liberals get up and start talking about jobs, quite often they are talking about new government jobs they have added. We heard the finance minister brag about 3.5% annualized growth, which actually happened to be from a bump in the Canada summer jobs program. It was government money that went out. Those jobs later disappeared, and the numbers cratered again.

The Liberals have a kind of false way of moving the numbers around. Actually, the annualized number has dropped down to about 1.5% or just under 2% right now, and it is on its way even further down. The result is that the economy, in the months of July, August and September, grew 0%, 0% and -0.1% respectively in that same time frame.

Let us go back to the five-year period of 2019-2024. The number of private sector jobs in Ontario per 1,000 people fell by approximately 17.8 jobs over that five-year period. Quebec lost an average of 5.5 private sector jobs during that time period. B.C. had it worse, with an average of 35.7 private sector jobs lost per 1,000 people. The United States, on average, added 7.6 private sector jobs per 1,000 working-age people, while Canada had none.

There is another piece within the article from the National Post that reads, “If private sector job creation in Canada had kept up with the United States since 2019, there would have been 554,000 more private sector jobs in 2024”. Instead, a grand total of zero were added on, by the time we go through the net adding and subtracting of jobs over that time frame.

The Fraser Institute issued a report that said that living standards for the average Canadian declined from 2020 to 2024 despite growth in the overall economy, and that the drop in GDP per person is the worst over any five-year period since the Great Depression.

I recognize, and the government will be sure to stand up and say, that COVID happened. All kinds of things have happened. The reason the Fraser Institute took a five-year sample was so it could model out what was happening for the job recovery and the economic action that were going to be done to create jobs and create momentum upwards in Canada. The Prime Minister, because he was the special adviser to the previous prime minister, was a massive failure in his role as an adviser. We know how pathetic the previous prime minister was as well.

There are two quick, little points I want to make so the Liberals do not stand up and say, “Oh, you're so negative all the time.” I will give them credit on one tiny little thing, which is that there is a small recognition of the helium industry, which is a massive industry now in Saskatchewan. It continues to grow. No pun intended, but it continues to be the one area that is rising to the occasion. The Liberals did include helium in some of their preferential tax treatment, similar to how they are treating oil and gas. That is good to see.

The industry was asking for more: to be given the critical mineral designation. Helium is already designated as a critical mineral, but it does not have the same treatment in the tax code as all the other ones, and the industry wanted that. The government added antimony to that, but did not add helium. It could have done that but did not. Also, the industry was hoping to build a helium liquefier in southwest Saskatchewan and has been working with the government to see about getting some funding for it. So far, there is nothing on that.

This budget is adding a lot to the deficit. In fact, at the start of my speech, I went to debtclock.ca and started the clock right when I started my speech. In the 10 minutes of my speech in the House, the amount of debt that has been added is $1,300,000. The government is reckless in the way it is spending and in adding $756 billion to the national debt, which is absolutely insane. The Liberals need to stop the reckless spending and at least attempt to get back to a fiscal balance in the House.

● (1205)

[*Translation*]

**Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague from Saskatchewan. I had the opportunity to sit on the Standing Committee on International Trade, and what we heard when we conducted a study on Mercosur was that people are very interested in Saskatchewan's potash to boost agricultural output.

I assume that my colleague is in favour of increased potash exports.

I would like to know what my colleague and the Conservative Party team think about the productivity mega deduction and the various enhanced tax incentives. They are intended for large companies, but also for small and medium-sized businesses.

Will they support the productivity mega deduction?

[*English*]

**Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity for the productivity mega deduction to be helpful and beneficial.

I actually just met with representatives from Yara this week. It is one of the fertilizer producers in Saskatchewan. It is a global company as well. The number one issue it has is that the carbon tax is actually its biggest barrier. The industrial carbon tax that the federal government imposes on heavy industry companies such as Yara is costing them $1.32 billion every single year. We are the only country in the world that is doing that. We are making ourselves uncompetitive.

Yes, we need to produce more, and we would love to be able to export more. It could be part of a Mercosur agreement. However, when a government continues to have these barriers in the way of producers, they are not going to be competitive. The government needs to scrap the industrial carbon tax.

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech. He is very close to his farmers, just as we are very close to ours.

There is a clause in this bill that strips farmers of their rights. Their land will be taken away to make way for the Alto project.

Can he confirm his support for farmers in Ontario and Quebec who are going to lose their livelihood after being expropriated and denied the right to challenge their expropriation?

[*English*]

**Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, I agree. The Alto project is one of the biggest boondoggles of this budget. There are many things in it that are really bad, including the expropriation of farmland. This is going to be a more than $100-billion project by the time it is all said and done. Farmers are going to be angry. People in Ontario and Quebec are going to be angry. People across Canada are very angry because they see how much money the government is going to blow through on this. There have already been bonuses paid out to executives for a project that has not even started yet. Again, that just speaks to the level of corruption by the Liberal government.

I agree with the member that the Alto project needs to be scrapped altogether, because it is a disaster waiting to happen for the Canadian taxpayers and also for the farmers and landowners along its way.

● (1210)

**Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to zero in on something I found very alarming, and I would like to hear the member's comments on it.

The Liberals are currently spending more on interest on the debt than they are on health care transfers: $60 billion in interest on the debt and $57 billion in health care transfers. I would like to hear my colleague's comments about how that is impacting his community, or his thoughts in general.

**Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question, because health care is actually one of the number one concerns for people back home. In fact, the nurses back home have gone five years without a pay increase. The government is rapidly increasing how much the deficit is, and the interest payments on that, which are going up. By 2030, the government will be spending $17 billion more on debt interest than on health care. The gap is widening. It is getting out of control. If I were to ask the union that represents nurses what they could do with $17 billion, compared to what the government is doing with $17 billion, I think it would be something from which Canadian would get a much better outcome.

[*Translation*]

**Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Don Valley North.

I am very pleased to rise today. When I rise here, in the House, my first thoughts go out to the people I represent back home, the families of Saint-Eustache, Boisbriand, Rosemère and Deux-Montagnes. I think of the workers rising early in the morning and of the parents counting every dollar. The Lower Laurentians region is a place where people work and help each other, a proudly Quebec region that is deeply francophone.

A budget is about more than just numbers. It is also about choices, and those choices must make life better for people. That is what this budget is all about. It sends a strong message that we are masters of our destiny. Being masters of our destiny means being able to decide our own future, invest here and create good jobs. It means being sovereign here in Canada.

The number one concern for families these days is the cost of living. Groceries and housing are expensive, and transportation costs place a heavy burden on household budgets. In my region, most people need a car to get to work. They need a little support right now. That is why the budget proposes a supplement to the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, which would be paid out to eligible individuals in early 2027. A single person could receive up to $339 more, and a couple with two children could receive up to $679 more. This would be on top of the 25% increase that is already in place. Does that solve everything? Of course not, but when it comes time to pay for groceries, every dollar counts. The budget also proposes to enhance the Canada workers benefit. Roughly 180,000 people could be eligible. Working should allow people to make a decent living, not just make ends meet.

The budget also includes something very interesting for families: the Canada strong pass will be back next summer in 2027. It will make it easier to visit national parks and museums, and travel by train. Admission to national museums will be free year-round for children and youth under 25. A family also includes people who care for others, for example, a woman who cares for her sick mother. These family caregivers give so much, often without making a fuss. The budget proposes making the Canada caregiver credit fully refundable. That is excellent news. This will also help people who pay little to no income tax. Approximately 585,000 family caregivers could benefit from this. For some, the assistance could amount to as much as $1,260 per year. Caring for a loved one should not lead to financial hardship. We must also continue to support home care in partnership with Quebec. Our seniors deserve to age with dignity.

Another topic that is close to my heart is women's issues. Equality is not just a principle; it is a reality that must be built. The budget proposes $8 million for women's rights organizations and nearly $15 million to support research on women's health. Women's health is no longer an afterthought. Equality also means being able to live free from violence. The government also announced $607 million to renew the agreements to prevent violence and support victims.

Governments need to make things easier. The budget proposes a single May 15 deadline for filing tax returns and paying taxes. This measure would apply to 2027 and subsequent years. The government is also launching consultations on registered retirement savings plans, or RRSPs, and introducing an “RRSP for life”. The idea is simply to eliminate the need for individuals to convert this plan at age 71, though they would still be required to make minimum withdrawals after that age. Retirement should be simpler to manage, not more complicated.

Now I want to talk about jobs in the Lower Laurentians. In Saint-Eustache, Nova Bus is contributing to society with its manufacturing expertise. Have my colleagues seen the electric buses driving around Ottawa? They come from my riding. We are very proud of that in the Lower Laurentians.

● (1215)

Businesses in Boisbriand and neighbouring towns are creating jobs every day. These employers have to deal with tariffs, competition and costs. Behind every job is a family. The budget provides support for businesses affected by trade tensions. This support will help them modernize equipment, train workers and open up new markets. The government needs to do a better job of adapting to programs and needs in the regions. The needs of our manufacturers are not the same as the needs in big cities.

One great measure that will be implemented is the national electricity strategy. A one-time rebate for heat pumps could help up to 820,000 households save a total of more than $1 billion a year. Installing heat pumps will help make the environment even greener. There is also the Churchill Falls megaproject. Once completed, it will increase our hydroelectric production capacity by 25%, which would be enough to power Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. This is certainly one of the megaprojects in our plan.

Another measure that I particularly appreciate is the productivity mega deduction. While its name may be technical, the idea behind it is simple: allow businesses to immediately deduct the full cost of new, eligible investments from their taxable income. In accounting terms, this is called depreciation. It applies to things like machinery, equipment and new technology. The measure now covers more than 65% of capital assets, compared with approximately 15% previously. This is an excellent measure that is available not only to large companies, but to SMEs as well. The measure covers eligible investments acquired on or after September 15, 2026, and is permanent. For an SME in Boisbriand modernizing its production or for a manufacturer in Saint-Eustache buying new machinery, this could be a real game-changer. It means more opportunities to invest, innovate and create new jobs in the Lower Laurentians.

I also want to talk about Canadian sovereignty and defence. The defence industrial strategy is having a major impact in the Lower Laurentians. It was launched this year to strengthen our capabilities and give Canadian companies a greater role in defence procurement. The goal of defence investment is to promote dual-use technologies, which have both commercial and defence applications. The budget proposes $2.3 billion over five years to accelerate the development and acquisition of drones and counter-drone systems. After all, Canada is bordered by three oceans, so we need to monitor our coastlines. In my riding, MHI RJ Aviation is building a long-endurance drone that would make it possible to monitor our Atlantic, Pacific and northern coastlines, as well as the entire Arctic. We know full well that “Canadian sovereignty” means keeping watch over what belongs to us.

We need to protect our jobs, create new ones and improve our know-how. At the same time, there are measures in the budget that we are going to work on with the Government of Quebec. Take homelessness, for example. Shockingly, homelessness has been an issue in Saint-Eustache and the Lower Laurentians for over 10 years, and it needs to be addressed. In our budget, we will tackle homelessness by working with the Government of Quebec and the municipalities. To do that, we also need housing.

Finally, I want to talk about the French language. Families in the Lower Laurentians speak French. We will invest in arts and culture to ensure that everyone can contribute and continue to live in French, both in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, since there are a million francophones living outside Quebec.

This is a great budget. It is the "Masters of our destiny" budget.

I look forward to answering my colleagues' questions.

● (1220)

[*English*]

**Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned Churchill Falls. I have a question specific to the onshore Labrador wind portion of that project. Could she let us know who the proponent is, what the route is and the expected start date of construction?

[*Translation*]

**Linda Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very specific question from my colleague.

She is from Newfoundland and Labrador. I am from the Lower Laurentians. I am very pleased to know that an agreement has been signed with Newfoundland and Labrador to increase the production of hydroelectricity.

We are talking about enough green electricity to power Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. I am absolutely thrilled about that.

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the subject of the French language, there is a glaring problem—or, at the very least, something sorely lacking—in this budget. What is missing is change. From the beginning, under the federal government's official languages policy, $3.7 billion has been directed exclusively toward the promotion of English, English-language education and health services in English. English-speaking organizations in Quebec continue to receive a steady stream of funding. The government keeps claiming it wants to protect French and turn the tide, yet a review of the public accounts for 2023, 2024 and 2025 shows no meaningful change. The same approach is being maintained, and that is simply unacceptable. Even the budget for legal challenges has been increased. It is likely to be used to further weaken Bill 101.

What does my colleague think?

**Linda Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, official languages are an issue that is very close to my heart.

I had the privilege of serving on the Standing Committee on Official Languages for three years. I defend the French language, but at the same time, we live in a bilingual country, so what applies to anglophones in Quebec applies to francophones outside Quebec. More than one million people receive their education and health care services outside Quebec.

This is helping to strengthen the French language in the rest of Canada.

**Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the electric buses that are manufactured in her riding. In budget 2026, more than $600 million was announced for electric vehicle chargers.

I am curious to know what impact this measure will have on the people of Rivière-des-Milles-Îles.

**Linda Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, I know that my hon. colleague is very concerned about the environment. So am I.

Adding EV chargers encourages people to drive electric vehicles across Canada, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We are adding more than 55,000 federally supported chargers for electric vehicles.

The member mentioned Nova Bus, a company I am very proud of. All the electric buses here in Ottawa and in the Montreal area are proudly built in Saint-Eustache by Nova Bus, which hopes to sell buses to the United States as well. In fact, Americans are buying some.

● (1225)

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like the member to tell us where in the budget there is a measure to encourage the electrification of heavy-duty trucks and buses.

The federal government does not have a program for that anymore. There is nothing about it in the budget, except for the money for chargers, which I did see.

There is no money for this, so where did the member see this money announced?

**Linda Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question.

Right now, the focus is on installing more electric charging stations so cars and trucks can be charged. That said, let us not forget that we are going to invest in the Churchill Falls megaproject, which will increase generating capacity in both Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. This is hydro power, green energy that produces no greenhouse gas emissions.

[*English*]

**Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the ambitious budget from the finance minister. The budget, as it says on the cover, is what it says on the tin. It puts us on the path to be masters of our destiny.

We all listened very keenly to the budget speech given by the finance minister. We have glanced at the very positive media reports on the responsible approach our government has taken to setting up investments in key areas that are important to building a stronger, more resilient and more independent Canada for all.

As I was going around my riding of Don Valley North this past week, I heard confidence in our Prime Minister's leadership and our government's direction. My electorate understands that the global trading system is being rewritten. We are at a turning point in our country's history. They know that Canadians stick together and that their government will have their backs.

The Prime Minister was right when he said that our greatest strength is something that cannot be found on a balance sheet: trust. Canada has what the world needs to feed itself, heat itself and power itself. We have the means to be masters of our own destiny. We are trusted as a reliable, stable trading partner in a world that is anything but, and so we are investing in those areas to grow our economy.

Budget 2026 has the most comprehensive revamp of business incentives in generations, to make it easier for businesses to choose Canada and so that Canadian workers and Canadian companies can grow here right at home. With the means of a strong balance sheet, budget 2026 is making life more affordable. The affordability measures in budget 2026 could lift hundreds of thousands of people out of poverty in 2027. The 50% top-up to the Canada groceries and essentials benefit supplement alone is expected to lift 120,000 people out of poverty.

As the winter season is settling in, heating will become one of the biggest household expenses. This is especially true for homes that are heated with propane, heating oil and electric baseboards, compared to modern electric heat pumps. That is why budget 2026 is investing more than $2 billion to help Canadians make the switch. Through the new national heat pump rebate program, households could receive up to $10,000 of support to install modern heat pumps. For families switching from propane, oil or electric heating, that could mean an average savings of more than $1,400 a year.

The investments we make today will define our society tomorrow, and we are supporting those who need it most. Budget 2026 is investing $2 billion to build mental health and addictions facilities to help people get early care before they reach a crisis point, helping address the challenges contributing to homelessness, instability and growing pressure on communities across Canada. We are also investing $5 billion through a new integrated supports fund to bring supportive housing together with mental health, addictions and social supports.

Modelled after Dunn House in Toronto, the social medicine housing model spearheaded by Dr. Andrew Boozary at UHN pairs housing with health care. It has helped reduce emergency visits by 52% and hospital stays by 79%. By making life more affordable and taking care of one another, we are masters of our destiny.

Next year, Canada will celebrate its 160th anniversary. Canadians will come together and celebrate our remarkable country. Our stories will be celebrated and shared. Budget 2026 supports our writers, musicians, filmmakers, journalists and artists so they can carry our stories to the four corners of our country. We are investing in the museums, parks and historic sites where Canadians explore our history. We are investing in ice rinks, recreation centres and public swimming pools that are at the heart of many communities, places where we learn to skate and have birthday parties and meet friends. We are investing to build our communities strong.

I am very proud, as a member of this government, to say well done to the Prime Minister and the finance minister for delivering an ambitious plan in budget 2026 to be masters of our destiny. With budget 2026, we are building at unprecedented speed and scale, and we are making life more affordable. We are investing to make Canada the best country in which to be young and to grow old.

● (1230)

**Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is really involved in health. I have heard about the Canadian Mental Health Association, which was really happy with some of the measures in the budget regarding housing and mental health treatment.

I was wondering if my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, could talk more about those measures in the budget.

**Maggie Chi:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has been advocating for her community and she is doing an excellent job. She makes a really good point. We are making investments in supporting the mental health of Canadians. We are making investments in supportive housing because we all know that having a roof over one's head makes the difference in terms of whether one gets connected supports, appropriate support and health care treatments. Dunn House, as I mentioned in my speech, is a great example of that, spearheaded by Dr. Boozary at the University Health Network. They have made up this model. They have come together with this model that really supports people experiencing homelessness. That has made a huge difference in the health care outcomes of folks needing help.

**Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the member opposite did not mention the overall amount of money the government is spending. Right now, we are looking at spending more on servicing the debt than we are transferring to the provinces in health care transfers.

I am wondering what her response to that is.

**Maggie Chi:** Mr. Speaker, let us look at some of the numbers. We have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. We have the second-fastest-growing economy in the G7. We are a credible trading partner at the global level. We are investing in the long-term growth of the country. This is why we are investing in major projects. We have set up an office to oversee that. We are investing in our workers and skilled trades so we can build our country strong. This is a plan that will put us on track to have a very prosperous future for young people and for seniors who are aging in place as well. In the budget, we have extended the agreements with the provinces and territories on mental health addictions and home care, so that would be supporting folks from end to end of the health care continuum.

[*Translation*]

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government is going to run another massive deficit this year, and we need to look at where that money is going. Its expenditures include subsidies for carbon capture and sequestration so that oil companies can produce more oil. The government invests an average of $10 billion a year in subsidies for fossil fuels, including oil and gas. It has decided to lift the ban on coal exports. It wants to open the door to oil and gas exploration in the Arctic and even investing $11 million in it. All of this spending serves to help the oil and gas industry, and that is not even to mention the $43 billion in taxpayers' money earmarked for a future oil sands pipeline.

Is my colleague comfortable with the idea of subsidizing oil and gas companies when the Secretary-General said at the United Nations climate change conference that we must stop funding these companies, that we must phase out oil and gas and that we must make oil and gas companies pay?

[*English*]

**Maggie Chi:** Mr. Speaker, plan A is to build Canada strong as the Prime Minister has said, and we are doing exactly that by investing in our skilled trades sector, by investing in the Major Projects Office and by investing in things that will bring prosperity to the country. We are seeing the results of that. Over 20 projects are going through the Major Projects Office, and ministers have said very clearly that we will always do this in partnership with the provinces, territories and indigenous communities. We will also make sure people are consulted properly on projects like this. We look forward to working across party lines on things like that.

● (1235)

**Carol Anstey (Long Range Mountains, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to budget 2026 and what it means for Canadian families who are struggling to make ends meet.

From groceries and heating bills to higher mortgage payments and everyday expenses, families are feeling the pressure, and after 11 years of Liberal government, many are losing hope that things will get better. Meanwhile, this Liberal budget leaves Canadians facing years of deficits and a growing interest bill without a real plan to bring costs down for Canadians. The government calls this budget “Masters of our destiny”, but with the amount of debt this Liberal government is taking on, a more appropriate title would be “mastered by debt”.

Budget 2026 would add 765 billion dollars' worth of debt over the next five years. That is $44,000 for every household in Canada. The government would also add $151 billion of new spending, yet Canadians are still struggling to afford the basics. The government's own projections show that in 2026 and 2027 alone, federal debt interest is projected to cost $60.2 billion, which means that a family of four will pay $6,000 in debt interest alone, and by 2030-31 that bill will climb to $85.5 billion, nearly $18 billion more than the federal government will transfer to provinces and territories for health care. The worst part is that these payments do not pay down the principal; they only cover the cost of carrying the debt.

Every dollar spent servicing the debt is a dollar that cannot be used to reduce taxes or improve the services that Canadians rely on, yet despite all this government borrowing, the Liberals have no plan to balance their overall budget within the next five years.

I want to speak to the importance of responsible financial management, something I have understood, coming from a business background. Whether purchasing equipment, expanding operations or making new investments, every expense must be accounted for, and every financial decision carries consequences and should be paired with a responsible plan to pay for that expense. The same principle applies to the federal government. The Prime Minister can categorize spending as capital investment, but that does not change the financial obligations that come with it. Recategorizing is not a sound financial plan.

Canadians are already living with the consequences of out-of-control Liberal spending and economic failure. According to Food Banks Canada's 2026 “HungerCount” report, food banks recorded 2.35 million visits in a single month. That is an increase of 117% since 2019, with nearly 776,000 of those individuals being children. Nearly one in five food bank clients reported employment as their main source of income. These are Canadians who are working and still cannot afford to put food on the table. Food Banks Canada also reports that since 2021, food prices have increased by 30% and housing costs have increased by 28%.

After 11 years of Liberals, Canadians are working hard and still turning to food banks, because they cannot afford to feed their families.

On that note I want to recognize the hard-working volunteers and organizations across the communities that I serve, who work tirelessly to help families in need. As The Salvation Army prepares to launch its annual Christmas kettle campaign, volunteers across Newfoundland and Labrador will once again raise funds to provide food and support to families facing financial hardship. Their generosity reflects the strength of our communities, but charitable organizations should not have to carry the burden of terrible Liberal financial decision-making.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, where inflation rose to 4.9% in October, well above the national rate of 3.1%, transportation costs add to that challenge. For communities like Anchor Point, St. George's or Doyles, fuel is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Fish harvesters depend on diesel to operate their vessels; truckers need it to deliver groceries and supplies; and farmers, construction workers and businesses across our beautiful province all depend on affordable fuel. When diesel costs rise, those expenses are passed through the supply chain, making groceries, construction materials and other necessities more expensive.

That is why we brought forward the Conservative emergency fuel relief plan in the House, with measures to lower diesel costs and strengthen Canada's domestic fuel supply. The Conservative plan would extend the federal fuel excise tax exemption until at least Canada Day 2027 and remove the GST from diesel sales. We would also permanently eliminate the federal industrial carbon tax and clean fuel regulations that add costs to producing diesel, yet the Liberals voted against our plan.

● (1240)

Housing is another major concern, especially for young Canadians. A Habitat for Humanity survey found that more than half of Canadians who do not own a home believe they never will. That was the highest proportion among the 22 countries surveyed. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation projects housing starts will decline from 247,000 in 2026 to just 216,000 in 2028. At a time when Canada needs more homes, construction is expected to move in the wrong direction. The Liberals need to reduce the cost of transportation and government spending, therefore reducing the cost of building materials and bringing down overall costs to restore affordability in construction and restore the hope of home ownership.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, we have watched our young people leave in search of better opportunities, and now we are also watching the cost of housing increase in a province where we have enjoyed some of the highest rates of home ownership in the country. We cannot allow this to slip away from us. Our young people should have the opportunity to find good-paying jobs, buy a home and raise a family in the communities where they grew up, in homes they can afford.

Making life more affordable also means growing our economy and attracting private investment that creates good-paying jobs. Canada is blessed with abundant natural resources, but development potential is being held back by years of regulatory uncertainty and unnecessary delays. Conservatives have called on the government to green-light the 500 projects awaiting federal permits, repeal Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, and establish clear, predictable approval timelines.

Just last month, Liberal MPs voted against Bill C-264, which would have repealed the west coast oil tanker ban. Strathcona Resources proposed exporting up to 250,000 barrels of Canadian crude oil daily through Prince Rupert, using existing rail infrastructure and a new marine export terminal. The company says it could reach international markets in under two years without any government subsidies, which would help Canada diversify its energy exports, reduce dependence on the United States and attract private investment.

Instead, the tanker ban remains in place, which is limiting opportunities to bring Canadian oil to new markets. The Liberals say they want to make Canada an energy superpower, yet they continue to maintain the barriers preventing Canadian energy from reaching those markets.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, we know the importance of our resource industries. Our offshore oil and gas, mining and critical minerals offer tremendous opportunities for investment and economic growth, but those opportunities will only benefit our communities if projects can be approved and built. Canada needs a regulatory system that provides clear timelines and allows projects to proceed while meeting environmental and consultation requirements.

When Canada allows businesses to invest and expand, jobs are created and our economy becomes stronger without asking taxpayers to carry the cost of more reckless government spending.

I want to go back to rising diesel costs. They are putting enormous pressure on Newfoundland and Labrador businesses. CFIB reported that 87% of small business owners across a range of industries and regions are “very concerned” with the rising costs of energy and that 96% of businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador are concerned with these energy costs. One trucking company owner told me their weekly fuel bill has increased from roughly $85,000 to as much as $155,000. At the same time, the cost of truck parts and repairs has increased by 30% to 40%. The company transports about 20 trailers of food into Newfoundland every week, including produce and meat. The owner told me, “It is unaffordable to operate and it feels like a collapse is about to happen.”

I also heard from a fish harvester who used to spend $25,000 a year on diesel, and now that cost has doubled. On one fishing trip, he earned $5,200, but the diesel cost him $6,400. He spent more on fuel than he earned from the trip. He says he does not know how much longer operators can withstand this high cost of diesel. These are people who keep our coastal communities and economy going, yet rising fuel costs are making it difficult for them to survive.

At the AGM for the Newfoundland and Labrador Snowmobile Federation, members of the executive shared that their number one cost is fuel for their equipment, the equipment that grooms our snowmobile trails and allows them to construct and repair their warm-up shacks. The more resources they use on fuel, the more limited they are to develop our trail systems and to expand the incredible work they do to preserve our rural way of life in our communities.

Finally, Canadians deserve to keep more of their hard-earned money instead of paying for the government's growing debt. They should be able to operate a business, earn a living and afford their everyday expenses without worrying about the next bill. That is what this budget should have delivered. Instead, Canadians are being asked to pay more while falling further behind.

● (1245)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fundamentals of this budget ultimately will encourage, promote and see real growth in our economy and real support for the people of Canada. It is a budget that delivers in every region of the nation, in a wide spectrum of areas.

The member made reference to the cost of gas. The Prime Minister's first initiative was to get rid of the carbon tax, which is a substantial break for consumers of gas. Then we have the excise tax suspension, which was again another relief for taxpayers who use gasoline.

It seems to me that we have a government that is addressing the wide spectrum of issues Canadians are facing while at the same time continuing to build a stronger economy that works for all Canadians.

Does the member have anything positive to say about the budget at all?

**Carol Anstey:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to know that the Liberals are finally admitting that taxes on gas and fuel increase the cost of living for everybody and contribute to the affordability challenges Canadians are facing. Why not go all the way? Why not remove the industrial carbon tax? Why not remove the clean fuel regulations? Why not put more permanent relief in place instead of half measures that get half results?

At a time when Canadians are struggling, you are not doing everything that you can do. I will continue to stand up for Canadians who are feeling the impacts of these damaging and reckless policies and continue to tell their stories.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I would remind the hon. member to address the comments through the Chair and not directly at other hon. members.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we know that Quebec has experienced a tremendous influx of asylum seekers over the past several years. That has resulted an estimated $733 million in costs. The Government of Canada has already given Quebec about $40 million in compensation, but the Government of Quebec wants to be fully compensated and is asking for the remaining amount of approximately $700 million. There is nothing in the budget about that.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

[*English*]

**Carol Anstey:** Mr. Speaker, I would say there are many things this budget does not address. It certainly does not address the pressures and the impacts everyday Canadians are feeling. It is not helping them with the affordability crisis they are in right now. I am certain this is something the member hears about as well. There are many gaps. That is exactly what I have been speaking about in my speech and what I will continue to advocate on a go-forward basis.

**Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians list the cost of living as their top issue, and many families are struggling to get by. Liberal debt and inflation will add $44,000 per family on top of the existing debt burden. Why is the government accelerating permanent residency for hundreds of thousands of people while young Canadians and families still cannot afford a home in the cities where most of these arrivals settle?

**Carol Anstey:** Mr. Speaker, I would say that there are many stresses and strains. I think about the health care system, which is certainly something I hear about a lot in my riding. We just do not have the capacity in place to be able to handle these high levels. It is reckless. It is not responsible. Many people in the communities I serve have been waiting as long as two years for a primary health care provider, so we are just going to add more stress and strain to these systems, which is going to bring more stress and strain to Canadians. That is something that our system just cannot sustain.

● (1250)

**Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague what she thinks of this. The current budget to pay the interest on the debt is $60 billion, but the health care transfers are $57 billion. She just mentioned some strains in her community. Maybe she would like to elaborate a bit, based on these figures.

**Carol Anstey:** Mr. Speaker, that really brings us present to what the government is spending and what that will cost Canadians with respect to things that impact their everyday lives, like access to primary health care, which could be expanded if there were more resources in place. That is a very important point and why Conservatives continue to bring it up.

[*Translation*]

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have taken a close look at the budget, and today I want to demonstrate that, despite the Liberals' claims, this is anything but a green budget.

Essentially, we are hearing a lot about the electrification of transportation. We support that, of course. We are also hearing about electrification more broadly, and we support that as well. However, in reality, the much-touted $50 billion that the government claims to be investing in electrification amounts to just $2.4 billion by 2030. A closer look shows that this $2.4 billion will be used to expand gas production in Canada and generate more electricity from that gas. The government has said so itself. Mega data centres are popping up everywhere and they represent an opportunity for the government to sell more gas. In fact, it is an opportunity for businesses, as private companies stand to benefit from those revenues.

The government is handing out billions of dollars in subsidies to these companies, so the electricity it keeps talking about may be anything but clean. There will also be money to help companies that use natural gas to generate electricity capture and sequester their energy. That is not all. The government also plans to invest nearly $6 billion in fuel cell development. What are fuel cells? Essentially, energy is generated using natural gas and stored in batteries or the like. Here again, the government is directly subsidizing natural gas and electricity that is hardly clean. In contrast, I would remind the House that Quebec has developed its own renewable electricity sector over the years without a penny from the federal government.

Let us not forget that the money being invested in electricity also includes funding for nuclear power. The budget actually allocates $3 billion to support nuclear exports, much of which, as we know, has been publicly funded and, I would remind the House, is causing problems, particularly with respect to waste. The government has chosen to store this waste on the banks of the Ottawa River, even though more than 100 municipalities in Quebec and the Kebaowek First Nation oppose this project. It poses a significant risk of spillage into the Ottawa River, which supplies nearly three million Quebeckers, including many in and around Montreal.

The government talks about electrification, yet its budget includes some $22 million for watering down the clean electricity regulations. This means that in addition to investing time and money in advance to develop green electricity regulations, it is spending even more to weaken its own regulations in order to produce more electricity with gas and place fewer restrictions on businesses. Worse still, the government is even going to let these businesses offset their emissions. We are not entirely sure how, but the government is going to change the regulations to place fewer demands on them.

Of course, the government will say that we still have heat pumps. Heat pumps are a good thing, but let us not lose perspective. First of all, this is a federal program funded with federal dollars, whereas Hydro-Québec already has programs. Instead, that money should be handed over to Hydro-Québec to be used as it sees fit to manage and improve energy efficiency, building performance and electrification performance. The federal government has no business saying that it is going to create a program on top of Hydro-Québec's program, that people will have two programs and that it is investing $2 billion in that.

Let us put that $2 billion into perspective. This is indeed welcome money that should go to Quebec, but let us compare that to the $43 billion the government is going to spend on a pipeline using Canadians' and Quebeckers' money. I think comparing that $2 billion to $43 billion puts into perspective the importance this government attaches to oil and gas compared to the fight against climate change.

Of course, the government will also point out that it is investing in the electrification of transportation. Yes, the electrification of transportation is the best way, both economically and environmentally, to move away from oil, especially in Quebec, where we import nearly 13 billion dollars' worth of oil and send it elsewhere, much of it to Alberta.



● (1255)

However, let us look at what it is proposing for the electrification of transportation, specifically roughly $587 million for charging stations. Of these charging stations, 16% will go to Quebec. Quebec will get only 16% of these charging stations, even though about 50% of Canada's electric vehicles have been sold there. Why? It is because we in Quebec have already made an effort to electrify our transportation. We have already installed charging stations across our nation. We need to keep doing that, but this government is not recognizing the efforts we have already made.

It says it wants to electrify transportation, but in reality, aside from adding charging stations, that is not what the government is doing. It recently repealed the zero-emissions vehicle mandate. That mandate required manufacturers to produce and sell more electric vehicles. It gave people access to more vehicles, including cheaper, smaller ones that consume less electricity and cost less. Now, the government has decided to completely eliminate this zero-emissions mandate. It is going to install charging stations, but people are struggling to find vehicles, especially affordable ones. Why is that? It is because Canadian automakers are pretty much the worst in the world when it comes to electrification. In terms of electric vehicle production, they are so far behind Europe and China that they are putting up barriers and blocking electrification. The automakers asked the government to remove these barriers because they were impeding their growth. Obviously, they are just about the worst on the planet.

Canada's vehicle fleet is the worst in the world in terms of size and efficiency. To change that, we need to put pressure on manufacturers, but the government is doing exactly the opposite. On the one hand, it says it wants to electrify transportation, but on the other, it is scrapping its zero-emissions mandate.

It gets worse. There were also regulations on greenhouse gas emissions standards for light-duty vehicles that forced manufacturers to develop more fuel-efficient vehicles. What did the government do? It said it was going to freeze those standards. This means that Canadian manufacturers and their lobby have once again managed to get the government to make concessions, which means that no additional effort is being required from manufacturers until 2030. They will not be required to improve the fuel efficiency of their vehicles until 2030. This means that, once again, it will cost taxpayers and Quebeckers more, since they will have to fill up at the pump with vehicles that use more gas. They will have no other choice, because the government has backed down on the issue of EVs.

Worse still, the government is blocking the entry of European EVs into Canada and Quebec. In Europe, there are small and inexpensive EVs, but the government is blocking them for safety and other reasons, even though these vehicles can be driven in Europe, Mexico and other places. Why do we not have access to these vehicles? The government should answer that question, but it is clear that the budget has nothing to say on this matter.

I talked about the $43 billion in public funds, if not more, for a pipeline. Public funds are being used because the companies involved, those poor little oil companies, do not want to invest in it themselves. Who are the principal owners of Canada's oil and gas companies? Americans, for the most part. American shareholders are the ones who will benefit from this subsidy. We are talking about an investment of at least $43 billion in public money.

In its budget, the government confirmed that it intends to scale back the industrial carbon tax. Apparently a carbon price of 25¢ per barrel of oil is too much for these corporations. This is what the government is calling a green budget: a mega deduction for liquefied natural gas projects to further accelerate the production and export of natural gas.

There is no money for adaptation measures, for example. We are paying the cost of climate change, but there is no money to help the provinces or municipalities. There is no more money for public transit. In fact, the government cut $5 billion in the last budget. However, there is money for oil and gas exploration in the Arctic. It is taking advantage of the melting ice pack and climate change to say that it is going to extract even more fossil fuels. It is indecent.

In closing, I want to say that the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development was very clear: Canada will not meet the Paris Agreement targets. The government claims that its budget is going to help, but that is not true. The government has been criticized on the world stage by two former ministers, who have accused it of saying the opposite of the truth.

● (1300)

I will say it very clearly. It is obvious that this government is engaging in greenwashing with this budget, as it has been doing since it came to power.

**Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member for Repentigny, mentioned our subsidies for electric cars or charging stations for electric cars.

Could my colleague tell me whether the residents of his riding of Repentigny would be in favour of or against additional charging stations for electric cars?

**Patrick Bonin:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the people of Repentigny, like Quebeckers across the province, support the electrification of transportation.

The problem is that, beyond the charging stations that have already been widely installed in Quebec, the province will not receive its fair share of the new charging infrastructure. According to the budget, only 16% of the new charging stations will be installed in Quebec, compared with 40% in Ontario and nearly 30% in British Columbia. Charging infrastructure is not the only issue. Access to vehicles is another issue as well. The government has decided to bow to pressure from Ontario's automotive lobby, which opposes regulations to increase the availability of electric vehicles. As a result, consumers have to go looking for these vehicles. There are fewer of them, and there are fewer small vehicles.

That is the government's approach to electrification of transportation. It talks a good game, but the reality on the ground tells a very different story.

[*English*]

**Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the interest on the debt is quite concerning. The Parliamentary Budget Officer spoke about it, warning parliamentarians about the debt bomb.

Will the hon. member be able to elaborate on how important it is to pay attention to the debt that Canadians are going to pay for some time down the road?

[*Translation*]

**Patrick Bonin:** Mr. Speaker, we are obviously concerned about the size of the deficit.

These are the government's choices. Now, the government is trying to convince us that the money invested in assets, for example, does not count toward the deficit, when all the accounting rules say otherwise.

Obviously, this is a matter of budget decisions. This government decided to continue to provide billions of dollars in subsidies to promote the expansion of oil and gas in Canada, particularly though a pipeline that will cost $43 billion. That money could have been used to increase services and to offset the nearly $14 billion in federal budget cuts to health care. Quebeckers are going to have to pay an extra $14 billion because the federal government has once again decided to make cuts to health care.

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Repentigny for his excellent speech. We know that he is very knowledgeable about climate change. He just got back from COP31 in Turkey.

This budget is anti-environment, and Canada did not come across very well in Turkey.

Can he explain why?

**Patrick Bonin:** Mr. Speaker, clearly, the Minister of the Environment must be wearing rose-coloured glasses if she believes that her government is a player, and even a world leader, in the fight against climate change.

In fact, I recently returned from the United Nations conference where Canada won another fossil award. A fossil award is a joke prize given to the country that caused the most harm in the global fight against climate change. The Prime Minister personally took second place in Newsweek magazine's list of worst climate heretics. Moreover, our government attended the United Nations conference in a bid to sell more gas to Europe. In fact, the Minister of the Environment went to that conference to sell gas.

That sums up this government's track record: It put the pedal to the metal to develop and fund the oil and gas industry, and fast-track its projects. That record is also evident internationally, and people around the world are starting to realize that this government has given up on the fight against climate change.

● (1305)

**Hon. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong.

I am honoured to rise in the House to debate our 2026 budget, “Masters of our destiny”. It is an ambitious plan that meets the moment.

[*English*]

The world has most definitively changed, and Canadians know it. They see the war on Europe's frontier in its fifth year now, the trade war with the United States, the technology race, the conflicts in the Middle East and the growing uncertainty around the world. Through it all, they still have rent or a mortgage to pay, groceries to buy and, of course, families to take care of.

I think about all of the families that live in Côte-des-Neiges, the Mile End, the Plateau, and Outremont, who sent me here to represent them. That is why, in my speech today, I would like to give some clear examples of how the 2026 budget will make a real difference on the ground, in my community and in communities around the country.

Housing is a good place to start. It is the most fundamental. Our most recent budget puts $45 billion on the table for housing and homelessness. That includes $13 billion for non-market housing, specifically. We know that is where the need is.

[*Translation*]

In Outremont, the UTILE Hutchison project shows what can be achieved by building student housing near the Université de Montréal. I am also thinking of Brique par brique, an affordable housing non-profit that has existed for about 10 years now and has new projects on the horizon in Outremont.

Behind all these projects are people working to keep our neighbourhoods accessible and affordable. The additional investments in Build Canada Homes will help organizations across the country move their projects forward. Each project must be assessed individually, of course, but I know that in my community, there is no shortage of ideas and talent. More importantly, there is a genuine desire to be part of the solution.

Just a few days ago, I met with a group of architects and entrepreneurs who founded a non-profit organization called COMMUN as part of a volunteer effort. Their goal is to contribute to their community by building intergenerational non-market housing. There will now be more public funding to support initiatives like this where people help one another.

In Plateau Mont-Royal, there is Plein Milieu, which takes the time to build relationships of trust with people who are experiencing homelessness and to help them transition into a much more stable situation. Our plan to end homelessness within 10 years includes over $6.5 billion to renew the Reaching Home program and the veteran homelessness program. In co-operation with Quebec and local partners, these investments could provide more support for the work being done by organizations like Plein Milieu.

The new $5-billion integrated supports fund will bring together housing, health care and social services. I am thinking about Chaînon and how it provides a safe place and support for women. An eligible project that combines housing and support could benefit from this fund. The budget also proposes an additional $8 million for the women's program. This could help an organization like Chaînon undertake initiatives to eliminate the barriers faced by women in vulnerable situations. These organizations know their community. They know what people need. That is why, as a federal government, we are doing our part to support organizations like this across the country.

We are also doing our part to help put food on the table. In Côte-des-Neiges, MultiCaf serves more than 300 lunches every day. At the Monastère community service centre in Plateau Mont-Royal, Resto Plateau is welcoming more and more people and is looking to expand its facilities. We are fortunate to be able to count on these organizations. They do an absolutely extraordinary job of ensuring that our neighbours have access to nutritious, affordable meals. However, to meet the demand, they need equipment, space and suitable kitchens.

Our budget proposes $124 million over three years to renew the local food infrastructure fund, which supports both food purchasing and community food infrastructure. This money could help organizations like MultiCaf and Resto Plateau upgrade their refrigeration facilities, modernize their kitchens or increase their storage capacity. These are tangible improvements that will help them reach more people.

● (1310)

At the same time, we are directly helping families pay for groceries. That is why the budget proposes the Canada groceries and essentials benefit supplement for more than 12 million vulnerable Canadians. A family of four could receive up to $680 more, bringing the maximum support to almost $2,600 this year. Our goal is simple: to help Canadians pay for essentials and to support the organizations they turn to when they need a helping hand.

We also need to do more for Canadians who are caring for a loved one. The Centre de bénévolat SARPAD in Outremont and Côte-des Neiges is very familiar with this reality. The organization Les Accordailles is too, given the work it is doing in Plateau Mont-Royal to support seniors and help them feel less isolated. By making the Canada caregiver credit fully refundable, we will enable caregivers to receive up to $1,260 per year, even if their income is too low to pay taxes. For someone who receives support from SARPAD, this could help cover mounting expenses. This is also a way of acknowledging work that is truly essential but that often goes unnoticed.

Local businesses also bring our neighbourhoods to life, and they, too, are feeling the pressure. Take the Duc de Lorraine in Côte-des-Neiges, or Guillaume, a bakery on Saint-Laurent Boulevard. If they decide to modernize their kitchen equipment, the productivity mega deduction could allow them to write off the cost of their eligible purchases immediately, rather than spreading it out over several years. This will make it easier for them to decide to invest, and that investment is made right here, in a business that serves our community.

For a tech start-up, the challenge can be taking an invention from the lab to the market. That is the case for companies such as AYE3D, on Saint-Viateur in Mile End, which has developed FRE3-DOM, a screen that allows users to view three-dimensional images without special glasses. Our government's budget includes $930 million to expand the SR&ED tax incentive program to include certain commercialization expenses. A company could receive support for eligible expenses associated with bringing its products to market. We want discoveries made in Montreal and across Canada to become products that are sold around the world.

Our cultural sector also deserves to grow right here at home.

[*English*]

Anyone who has experienced POP Montréal knows what a festival can bring to a neighbourhood: music, discovery and a reason to come together. The budget provides an additional $15 million for the Canada arts presentation fund, to support programming by festivals and music events like the one POP Montréal puts on every year. We know that small festivals give Montreal so much of its character. We want them to keep bringing our neighbourhoods to life, and we want to give them the means to do it.

[*Translation*]

We are also providing an additional $20 million to publishers through the Canada book fund. This support could help our local publishers, such as La Pastèque in Mile End, reach more readers at home and abroad. One of the most promising measures in the budget is our proposed new Canada creative credit. This innovative measure will allow artists to keep more of what they earn. So many musicians, writers and artists live in our neighbourhoods. We want to make it possible for them to earn a living from their work. After all, they make Montreal what it is.

[*English*]

There is much more in this budget that I would like to go over, but seeing how I am short on time, I will end by saying that the measures we need in order to control what we can control and build our country are included in budget 2026. I look forward to discussing the budget and debating it in this House with my colleagues.

● (1315)

[*Translation*]

**Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member has said a lot of nice things about the Liberal budget, but the government is adding $765 billion to the debt and paying more in interest on the debt now than it spends on health transfers. Does that mean anything?

Does the fact that spending is completely out of control mean nothing?

**Hon. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question, but I would still like to make a few corrections.

We are talking about interest rates that are at an all-time low here in Canada. We are not spending huge amounts on interest costs at the moment compared to other governments, including Conservative governments. I think that my colleague would agree with me.

We also have the lowest net debt in the G7 and a fiscal position that remains quite healthy. I think that now is the time to use the government's purchasing power and spending power to stimulate the economy and continue to support Canadians.

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned some good budget measures, but even though she is a Quebec member, she said nothing about the government's ongoing intention to cut $14 billion in health spending, in Quebec and in the provinces, over the next five years, despite the premiers of every province unanimously requesting an increase in health transfers.

As she knows, Quebec's health care system is teetering. How does she explain her party's position that health transfers should be reduced?

**Hon. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Speaker, we are investing in health care. Never before has a federal government invested in mental health. The budget makes historic investments in mental health. I believe it is over $4 billion. There is also funding to tackle addictions, as well as a new program to help the provinces and territories with health infrastructure. We know our hospitals and clinics need some love, and we are here to support the provinces and territories. We are also here to help Canadians with health care, within our jurisdiction.

We will continue to do so.

**Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Outremont for her excellent speech. I know Outremont is home to a lot of artists. I am thinking specifically of Mile End. Some incredible bands have come out of there, like Arcade Fire and many others.

I would be curious to know what impact the Canada creative credit will have on the residents of Outremont.

**Hon. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Speaker, yes, Arcade Fire comes from Mile End, but there are also a lot of up-and-coming artists and musicians there that are still unknown and that we would like to get to know better. It is an innovative place.

For the first time, the federal government is introducing a new tax credit for artists that will allow them to keep more money in their pockets, make a living from their craft, and continue to create, because we want our artists to continue to shine in Montreal and across the country.

[*English*]

**Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has convinced Canadians that one measure of success is how much government assistance it gives out. I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary this: Should the government not be measuring its success by how many Canadians come off government assistance?

**Hon. Rachel Bendayan:** Mr. Speaker, it is Canadians who will measure the government's success at any given time. A number of by-elections are coming up. Let us see what Canadians decide there.

We will continue to be there for the most vulnerable Canadians, and no, I will not engage in a debate of ideas about whether or not we should support vulnerable Canadians. On this side of the House, our government will continue to support those who are in need in our country.

● (1320)

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to budget 2026.

The first thing I would like to speak about is the opening of the budget. I am always very interested to see the financial metrics and how Canada is performing on those. I am really pleased to see that on any of the metrics we would want to talk about, we are outperforming the G7. Whether it is growth, foreign investment, wage growth, diversification of trade, deficit to GDP or debt to GDP, on all these things we are showing incredible financial resilience. This is further evidence that our government's plan to build Canada strong and control the things we can control in the midst of the turmoil that is happening in the world is working. Budget 2026 would continue on that path, and there are many things in this budget that are excellent.

I will start by talking about affordability measures, because we know that Canadians are struggling, there is an affordability crisis and the government needs to assist Canadians. There is $22 billion of affordability measures in this budget, and one of the most important parts is affordability housing. This is the number one priority in Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong. I was super happy in the last two weeks to be making announcements. At 471 Kathleen Avenue, there will be a 50-unit, deeply affordable housing build. There was also money announced for Petrolia to put together the infrastructure to support more affordable housing.

I think this is a priority for Canadians, and I am glad the government is continuing to increase the rate at which we are producing the affordable housing that Canadians need. It is having an impact on the market. We know that mortgage rates have dropped 20% and that rent is down 9%. This saves a Canadian $2,000 a year. It is significant.

The government has taken measures to cut the fuel tax and extend it into next year. Fuel costs and grocery costs are top of mind for Canadians. That is why the government also announced in this budget that we would increase the groceries and essentials benefit by 50%. This is a real help to families. That is $2,570 for a family of four. These are substantial things.



I was pleased as well that the government extended the child care agreements with provinces. Affordable child care is one of the key factors in making sure people can go to work. I know that $10-a-day day care is not available everywhere. We need more of that, and I am pleased that the people taking advantage of it are saving $11,255 a year. Again, that is very substantial.

There was a recognition in this budget that caregivers are becoming increasingly important, whether it is child care or caring for elders. I was pleased that the caregiver benefit has been made fully tax deductible. That recognizes that we are going to need increasing benefits for people who are having to care for family members and are thus not able to work. There are EI changes to help people who are out of work. That is another recognition on the part of the government that we need to help.

I am particularly pleased with the government's plan to end homelessness within 10 years by providing not just affordable housing but also the wraparound supports, the mental health supports and the addiction recovery supports that people need to get back to a good life. I think this is an ambitious goal, but I am very happy to see it. I was on the board of a homeless shelter in Sarnia, so I can say that the government's initiative in the budget would be well received. I know that communities across the country are struggling with homelessness, and there are many solutions. Indwell is a solution that I have visited and seen in various cities, and it is coming to my riding. It provides wraparound services and support that people need. Solutions such as this are what we need to help Canadians.

In addition to that, there are measures in the budget to help small businesses. The productivity mega deduction would make for essentially a 6% effective tax rate for those investing in businesses. While many businesses are struggling, some businesses are taking the opportunity to expand. This would be a huge incentive for them.

● (1325)

I know the government has come with wraparound supports to address the impacts of the tariff war. The rapid tariff relief initiative has been very successful, as have the loans from the BDC. There is support from the government for the steel industry, the automotive industry and the forestry industry. We need to weather the storm, and I think our government has shown that it understands that and is there for Canadians.

Then, there is making Canada competitive and getting investment to build our nation-building projects. I was super impressed that the Prime Minister was able to get so many investors to come in on one day and pledge $500 billion of investment for our 27 nation-building projects. That is a hugely impressive global reach. When it comes to our nation-building projects, I think they are covering all the right elements. We know that we are going to need increased electricity demand, so we have a national electricity strategy and projects such as Churchill Falls, Darlington nuclear and the transmission project in B.C. All these things are going to provide affordable energy, which Canadians are needing.

We also have the critical mineral strategy. This is a real opportunity for Canada. We are very rich in critical minerals. The creation of the mines and the processing of all these things will create very good jobs, and the world wants what Canada has. That is why we are deepening our relationship with our European partners and signing trade deals around the world. I am a fan of trade deals. I think we need to diversify our trade, and I think we have a lot of resources.

I would be remiss to not talk about oil and gas, because I am from Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong. We are the heart of the petrochemical industry, so I am really pleased that the government is continuing to support things such as LNG, pipelines and all these things we have been calling on for years.

I also like the rapid pace of the one project, one decision, one year framework. The bureaucracy has killed us and prevented us from building things in this country for years. We need to streamline it, and I am really happy to see that.

In terms of a strong and united Canada, Canadians have come together to stand up against the unjustified and illegal tariff war from the U.S. Further to that, we saw national pride with the FIFA tournament, and of course everybody is getting behind lovely heritage and festival events. I am pleased to see the government include a celebration of Canada's 160th and funding for special events.

In my riding, we have the International Plowing Match, which is coming from September 21 to 25, 2027. If members have not been to an International Plowing Match, I assure them it is something they absolutely must see. I look forward to having many members of the House come visit Sarnia-Lambton for that.

One of the things that are a challenge in rural areas is local journalism and support for it. I was very pleased that budget 2026 recognized that and would provide help there. In addition, I was glad to have the Bright's Grove Library expansion specifically mentioned. This is something for which I have been advocating for some time. It is a great project, and I am glad to see it in the budget.

I would like to talk a little about the tax efficiency measures. As an engineer, I am all about efficiency. Some of the things I saw in budget 2026 that I thought were beneficial are the flat-rate claims for selected tax deductions and credits, which would make processing faster, and auto tax filing. We get a lot of people coming in to the office who do not receive government benefits because they have not filed their taxes. This would help them receive those.

I want to say that this is the first budget in 11 years that I will be voting for.

**Roman Baber (North York, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a Sarnia Observer article from August 4, 2026, says, "A decision to cross the floor and join the Liberals is paying off when it comes to community investment, says Sarnia-Lambton...MP."

I would like to ask the MP this: Bearing in mind that last month, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario announced an additional $4 million for Sarnia businesses, were there any discussions between her and the Prime Minister's Office or the Prime Minister about investments in Sarnia before April 8, 2026, which is the day she crossed the floor, yes or no?

● (1330)

**Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, I have been advocating for Sarnia—Lambton for 11 years since I was elected. I continue to do the same thing that I have done before, and I am really happy to see support for things in the riding that are super important.

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague, for whom I have great respect. She chaired the all-party border caucus back when she was a member of the Conservative Party.

I wonder if she worked hard to ensure that the budget included support for struggling businesses that are in dire financial straits. These are businesses that are dealing with cross-border sales of both Canadian and American goods and are in serious trouble. She understands their situation.

Was she able to have some influence now that she has a seat at the decision-making table?

**Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely, the government is listening to me. I have raised issues related to the border, tariffs, the realities facing rural communities and so on.

I am very proud to see that budget 2026 contains measures on immigration, which is a priority for rural regions, as well as initiatives to support local journalism and improve connectivity, which are also important.

That is great.

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague clearly pointed out a variety of issues that are going to advance different parts and different areas of Canada, in particular in the area of Sarnia, which she represents and talks about all the time.

Are there any specific areas in the Sarnia region she feels are going to advance the folks she represents?

**Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if people noticed, but in the budget they are consolidating the bridge corporation. There is $192 million there for bridge modernization. In terms of improving the traffic, Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong has the Blue Water Bridge, which has the most economic traffic across the country. Modernization and making it more efficient is always a good thing.

**Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member cited some affordability crisis issues. I have some quotes that she had shared with Canadians before she crossed the floor. Carney was—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** We do not use the proper names of members.

**Ned Kuruc:** Mr. Speaker, I thought that I could in the quotes but I cannot.

She said the Prime Minister "has been part of the disastrous mess" of inflation. She gave the Prime Minister's 2025 budget a D rating. She also said it had more bureaucracy and less prosperity. She was very critical of foreign aid and not putting Canadians first.

We see in the budget that foreign aid will be robust. Yesterday, we had an announcement that Canada will give $500 million to a Brazilian rainforest. Does she support that?

**Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, what I would say is that everything I have said for 10 years is on the public record. I started my conversation with the Prime Minister, when I crossed the floor, by saying that I have said awful things about him and his government for 10 years, and I cannot really fix that. He was super gracious. He said that the past does not matter, that we are at a critical moment for our country, that we need people with my global experience, that I am a seasoned parliamentarian, that I am an engineer and that I need to come and help build Canada strong. That is what I am doing.

**Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about the federal budget on behalf of the great people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

Since this is my first time rising in House to speak after the Ontario municipal election, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all the candidates who put their names forward across Ontario, particularly in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. Congratulations to the newly elected and returned mayors, deputy mayors and councillors. I wish them all the best in the upcoming term, and I look forward to exploring how we can work together to best serve our shared constituents. I would also like to thank those councillors who decided not to seek re-election for their service and dedication to our community.

I would also like to touch upon a tragic incident that occurred in my community this past week. On Sunday, November 8, our community experienced a major loss when a fire caused significant damage to Joyce Kope House, the emergency shelter and transition home for women in downtown Barrie. Due to incredible levels of support shown by our community, the organization is pausing clothing donations, but is still earnestly looking for non-perishable food items and personal hygiene products. Donations can be dropped off at the Barrie Chamber of Commerce on Commerce



Park Drive and the Barrie Native Friendship Centre on Bayfield Street from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. I thank all the residents who have contributed and shown their compassion to some of the most vulnerable members of our community during these challenging times.

I will now turn to the specifics of the 2026 federal budget and the impact it will have on my community. Residents of my community and Canadians coast to coast to coast are struggling. They are struggling to afford their rent, mortgage and grocery bills, and they are struggling with the lawlessness that they continue to see in our streets.

The Prime Minister promised to spend less and lower the debt-to-GDP ratio. Instead, the projected deficit for this year is over $62 billion, and this budget estimates that the Liberal government will add a record-breaking $765 billion of debt over the next five years, $44,000 for every household in Canada. The fastest-growing item in the budget is debt interest. To put this plainly, a family of four will pay almost $6,000 in federal government debt interest costs this year alone; $6,000 per household gone, just in interest on what the Liberal government has borrowed.

This is money that could have been spent on defence, health transfers, old age security and other social programs, being wasted on interest. By 2031, the amount rises to $8,181 per family as the federal government will be spending $17 billion more on debt interest than on health care transfers to provinces and territories. These unsustainable deficits drive up costs, weaken our economy and leave Canadian families paying the bill.

I will go on to discuss issues that are impacting my community directly.

Days after the release of the Liberal government's budget, Statistics Canada reported a loss of more than 50,000 private sector jobs in October. The employment rate fell for a third consecutive month to 60.5%, and unemployment rose for a second consecutive month to 6.7%. It is also getting harder to find work in Canada. Just 18.9% of unemployed Canadians found a job in October, well below the 2017-19 average of 24.6%. Nearly one in four unemployed Canadians has been searching for 27 weeks or more, compared with 17.2% before the pandemic.

This crisis is disproportionately impacting young people in my riding and across Canada, with youth unemployment jumping nearly a full percentage point to 13.7%. A new report from the C.D. Howe Institute found that in early 2026, 30% of unemployed university graduates aged 20 to 24 had been searching for employment for six months or more. That is a record high.

I regularly speak to young people who have handed out hundreds of job applications and cannot get a call back. These are young people in my community who have university or college degrees or are currently in school and are completely unable to find a job. Even jobs such as food service that have traditionally been viewed as stepping stones at the start of a career path are few and far between for our young people. Canadian youth are desperate for jobs. They are living at home with their parents for longer, and many are abandoning the dream of buying a home and starting a family.

● (1335)

Against this backdrop, it is difficult to understand why the Liberal government has chosen to increase permanent immigration to its highest levels ever, about 35% higher than the previous all-time record set in 2024. These unsustainable increases to our immigration levels will only make it harder for Canadians, particularly young Canadians, to find work. These increases will make renters pay more. They will send more Canadians to the food bank. They will increase hospital wait times and they will stifle wage growth.

The Liberal government has also made promise after promise regarding food affordability. The Prime Minister even stated that Canadians should judge him by the cost at the grocery store, yet everywhere Canadians go, from the grocery aisle to the restaurant table, food prices have risen more than twice as fast as all goods. Food bank usage is at record highs, with some 2.35 million Canadians visiting a food bank each and every month, up 117% since 2019. In August, the Barrie Food Bank recorded 7,683 visits, up 2% from the same period last year. Those visits included 2,583 children and 395 seniors, with 280 people turning to the food bank for the very first time ever.

Barrie Christmas Cheer, an organization that provides food and toys to those in need over the holiday season, launched its donation campaign two months early this year to get a start on fundraising after it had to close applications ahead of schedule last year because of overwhelming demand.

Residents with full-time jobs, seniors and young people should not have to rely on food banks to make ends meet.

Residents in my community are also struggling with the high cost of rent. The median asking rent for a one-bedroom unit in Barrie reached $1,980 in September, up 13% from the same time last year. Two-bedroom units became more expensive, with a median asking price of $2,130 and an annual increase of 6.5%. A recent Rentals.ca survey found 68% of respondents had difficulty finding a rental that fit both their needs and budget, while nearly 30% were not confident they could find an affordable place in the next three months.

The situation is no better for those looking to own a home. More than half of Canadian non-homeowners now believe they will never own a home. At 56%, Canada has the highest share among 22 countries surveyed by Habitat for Humanity.

A local realtor recently shared his observations on the Liberal government's budget measures, including the extension of the foreign homebuyers ban until 2029 and the introduction of an exemption for new-build homes. He stated, “Instead of developers being forced to discount prices to what local salaries can actually afford, this policy essentially bails them out [and] hands them a lifeline of overseas cash, which could put an artificial floor under prices or worse, drive them even higher... It feels like Ottawa is choosing to protect developer balance sheets over letting the market naturally correct to real Canadian incomes.”

Finally, I will spend some time discussing the lawlessness that the Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies have unleashed in our streets, which is deeply affecting members of my community and all Canadians. Our public spaces are in shambles. Across Canada, there is open drug use in our public transit and public libraries. There is drug dealing happening on every corner and every street downtown. Children are unable to play in their neighbourhoods because of discarded drug paraphernalia littered in playgrounds and at schools. This is not a minor issue we can brush off.

This year in my community, Barrie Mayor Alex Nuttall put forward a motion proposing a zero-tolerance approach to enforcing drug laws, including illegal mushroom shops. This comes after the City of Barrie declared a state of emergency to address the encampments that were overwhelming our public spaces and posing a significant risk to the community, our first responders and the individuals living in these encampments. Enough is enough.

At the federal level, we have tools at our disposal to bring back order and safety in our streets. Unfortunately, over and over again, the Liberals refused to listen to constructive Conservative proposals that would restore public safety. I will name just a few private members' bills that the Liberals have voted against in this parliamentary session: Bill C-242, Bill C-243, Bill C-220, Bill C-232 and Bill C-246.

To conclude, Conservatives are deeply concerned by this budget. We know the Liberal government's endless spending will drive up inflation and interest rates today and taxes tomorrow. We are the only party fighting to cut wasteful spending so that Canadians can afford fuel, food and homes. The bottom line is that Canadians are concerned about affordability, their grocery bills, their mortgage payments, their businesses and their employment. Canadians have held up their end of the bargain. They work hard, follow the rules and love their country. This should earn them an affordable life.

Conservatives have an optimistic vision for the future, where Canadians are rewarded for their work, can start a business, build a home, develop resources and manufacture goods. We will continue to put forward constructive proposals to bring down the cost of living and restore affordability.

We call on the Prime Minister to work with us to support a positive, hopeful and affordable future for all Canadians.

● (1340)

**Eric St-Pierre (Honoré-Mercier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, budget 2026 launches the most ambitious tax simplification in a generation.

Will the Conservative Party of Canada support tax simplification?

● (1345)

**Doug Shipley:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention a family from Oro-Medonte as I stand here today, that of Liam Keane, from the Canadian Armed Forces. His family is from Oro-Medonte. He was critically injured in the CFB Wainwright tragedy, and I have not had a chance until today to stand and acknowledge the suffering that family is going through. He is currently in an Edmonton hospital, facing critical injuries. My thoughts are with the family. I have spoken with them. They are getting good support from the Canadian Armed Forces, and I am thankful for that. I have reached out to them on many occasions. I thank Liam for his service. Hopefully he will pull through. I know he has a long road ahead of him still.

[*Translation*]

**Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the deficit is enormous. Next year, the debt alone will exceed health transfers. The government has refused to commit to increasing them. It is scheduled to reduce the health transfer escalator in 2028.

Meanwhile, the Liberal government blithely continues to subsidize the oil companies, which do not even need subsidies because they are already making huge profits.

Would my colleague agree that, one, we should stop subsidizing oil companies and, two, we should allocate that money to health transfers?

[*English*]

**Doug Shipley:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention the transfers to the provinces. Just last week, last Friday morning, I had the opportunity to go to the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre for an elected officials' breakfast that it has every year. Getting the update there was a little heartbreaking and alarming, quite frankly. Our local hospital, which does great work and has great employees, ran a $7-million deficit last year. It was helped out with it by the provincial government, but it does not know where it is going to get the money this year. It has started to have to make some cuts, which is unfortunate, but its representatives were saying that with the growth going on in our region, which is exponential, it is tough to run the hospital, and it is tough to keep staffing. Many years ago, I was on physician recruitment, and I know it is tough. Once there is a doctor in an area, we want to keep them. Right now, we are having to lose some of them because of cutbacks, and that is always a hurt to the community in our area.

*The Budget*

**Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk by the Liberals about generational investments, and what I hear from young people in particular is the serious concern about where all the money they are spending is going, because young people are not actually seeing it on the ground. Their housing is not cheaper, their gas is not cheaper, their groceries are not cheaper and the major projects are not anywhere near them. They are not seeing anything real or tangible coming from all this rapid and radical expenditure of money in their name and the debt that they are having to take on.

I wonder if my colleague could provide some insight. Perhaps he knows where all of this money is being spent by the Liberals, and does he really think it is going to help young Canadians get ahead?

**Doug Shipley:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the youth. Coincidentally, I have two sons, young men, who are 21 years old and 25 years old. One is finishing up university and one has been out for a couple years now. I am very, very aware of what they are going through, and I talk to their friends daily. As they are starting out on their own, they are actually starting to realize how costs are affecting them.

I was recently talking to one of my son's friends, who is now starting to go to the grocery store to buy groceries, and they were just astounded at the price of beef. Protein is becoming a luxury. A lot of them are starting to get their paycheques too, and they are realizing how much of their paycheques are being lost to taxes over and over. They are just coming out of university, and my sons and their friends are now starting to see the true struggles, so I am glad that my colleague brought that to our attention. I could speak on that, because it is tough to see. The thought of buying a house now for that age group is getting out of grasp. A starting home in Barrie is around $700,000 or $800,000 now, which is just out of hand.

● (1350)

**James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk about the budget that was tabled two weeks ago in this chamber.

What we have here is a budget that is using what the Liberals love to use: creative accounting. They are splitting the budget up into three different envelopes. There is the operating budget, the capital budget and the Crown corporations, but when we add it all together, it is $765 billion of new debt over the next five years. I will repeat that. There is $765 billion of new debt that is burdened onto the taxpayers of Canada, which works out to $44,000 for every household in Canada, and that is just on the new debt over the next five years.

The interest charges on all of this debt, which is now over $1.5 trillion and going higher, are the fastest-growing budget item in the entire federal budget. It is growing faster than health care transfers. It is actually $17 billion more this year than health care transfers. It is more than we spend on national defence. It is more than we spend on transfers to seniors and families. The interest alone is costing Canadians $6,000 for a family of four per year. This year, that $6,000 of taxes will go to just servicing our national debt. This has to stop, because it just keeps going up. By the end of this budget forecast, which takes us to 2030-31, the debt interest charge is going to be over $8,100 per family.

As Conservatives, we have been calling on the government to cut the wasteful spending and keep the election promises that the Prime Minister ran on just over a year ago to get the debt down according to GDP. The Liberals are using creative accounting to fudge the numbers on what the GDP number really is. They actually applied the money in the Canada pension plan against the national debt. That is not the way it works, because the $866 billion in the CPP fund is Canadians' money. It is there to protect Canadians' retirement. It is contributions between Canadians and employers, not government money, and the government should never use it as part of its accounting.

As I said, the government is using all sorts of sneaky tricks. There are the three different credit cards it is running: the operating budget, the capital budget, and now getting more and more into Crown corporations, including the new Defence Investment Agency, which we are debating at committee right now. All of those Crown corporations are a way to hide more debt that the government continues to take on. The former PBO, former governors of the Bank of Canada and leading economists across this country have all called this out as bad accounting practices. We can pretty much summarize it as accounting malpractice, which is what the Prime Minister and the finance minister are doing with our tax dollars.

One thing I did read in great detail was chapter 5, on national defence. I have to say that the Liberals, for some time now, have been using creative accounting, lots of smoke and mirrors, on defence spending, which they have now transferred to how they are doing the overall bookkeeping of our nation and the operations of the Government of Canada. However, we know that the actual expenditures in this budget would not create any new opportunities. Everything that is in there has already been announced and re-announced. There have been very few contracts signed to buy the equipment that the Liberals are saying they are going to buy.

To highlight what they have done with creative accounting, there is the Canadian Coast Guard, which used to be under Fisheries and Oceans as it has no defence role. We had the deputy commissioner of the coast guard in the defence committee just yesterday, who said that they do not have a role as an organization within National Defence to make sure that we can defend our country.

When the Liberals first started doing creative accounting, they took about $47 million back in 2017-18, which was for things along the lines of border security, and started moving it in and out of the Canadian Coast Guard. They upped that number to $759 million. Well, this budget has the Canadian Coast Guard expenditures at $2.4 billion, and all as national defence. We are talking about icebreaking vessels, research vessels and science vessels, which have nothing to do with actual defence. If we look at all the creative accounting, there is absolutely nothing there that increases our defence capabilities, our kinetic energy, in a military conflict.

● (1355)

To add insult to injury, the government also moved Transport Canada's aviation fleet. Its aviation services are there to track illegal fishing and any illegal migrations in the Great Lakes and across our coastlines. The reality is that it also does not provide any defensive capabilities, but now that budget is being absorbed to get our defence spending up to 2%, which is demanded by NATO.

NATO did change the rule to allow national defence expenses to be counted as defence spending. That is why we are seeing things happen with pensions, civilian pensions, veteran pensions, the Coast Guard and Transport Canada. When reading this budget, the only new spending in chapter 5 is for Canadian border services, the RCMP and CSIS. They are not defence organizations, but they now count. I assume they will soon be absorbed in as national defence spending, even though they do not actually increase our defence capabilities as a nation.

We have seen creative accounting, more money for consultants and bigger bureaucracies within the department, including the Defence Investment Agency, a new bureaucracy to do what was already being done. There is also a lack of political will to actually invest in the kit that our troops need to defend Canada and work alongside our allies.

To add insult to the injury of the fact that there are not any new investments in this budget other than a paper shuffle and more smoke and mirrors, we are actually seeing a 10% budget cut. This year, that budget cut is hitting the Canadian Armed Forces right in the pocketbook. That is $2.9 billion of operational spending that is being reduced. Even Justin Trudeau did not do that. He reduced defence spending by 2.7% over three years, at about $900 million a year, but the Liberals under this Prime Minister are reducing it by 2.9%, and it is really targeted at our reserve force.

The first thing the reservists were told for Remembrance Day was that they were not allowed paid leave to attend Remembrance Day services. If they went, and if they had to travel to rural areas, it was out of their own pockets. Reserve units are cancelling training. Class B reservists, who are full-time reservists, working in our armouries and working alongside our troops on different bases, are actually being laid off.

We have members in uniform in the primary reserves who are applying for employment insurance as we speak. That, again, is ridiculous. The Liberals talk about wanting to improve retention and recruitment, but who wants to join when they are going to get laid off if they become a reservist? That does not make any sense. It is undermining morale, and it is undermining people's confidence in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Armouries have been telling their members that they are not going to be doing any new training between now and the end of the fiscal year, which is March 31. They are also being told that they are going to be parading less, and that there is going to be less on roll call. If a reserve unit decides it is going to take on any extra training, we have been told that it is going to pull back 20%. The Liberals are actually going to cut the new budget that they were asked for, that has not been previously allocated and cut by 10%. They are going to cut that by 27%. How do we maintain operational readiness when the Liberals are doing this?

It is not just the reserves. I just saw a post on Reddit about our cadets. The cadets across this country, the army, air force and sea cadets, have been told that all their activities have been paused until the end of the year. They should not expect any training opportunities between now and March 31. They will not be given any new uniforms. They will not be able to take on any new members, because their budgets are frozen. They will not be able to do anything.

In conclusion, we have the Liberals making more cuts, our military is less capable, and the Liberals are undermining morale. It makes Canada less safe every time the Liberals attack our armed forces.

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# STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*English*]

## LIFE-SAVING TRAINING

**Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in July 2022, while running in Stanley Park in Vancouver, I collapsed after suffering a cardiac arrest. A nurse visiting from Yellowknife immediately began performing CPR. Three other bystanders joined in, taking turns for more than 20 minutes until an automated defibrillator, commonly known as an AED, was found. My heart was shocked twice, and I was rushed to hospital, where I was discharged one week later. I am here today because those individuals knew what to do. Their actions gave me another chance at life and showed me just how important CPR training and access to AEDs can be.

This Friday, alongside my colleagues MPs Ned Kuruc and Marie-Hélène Gaudreau, I am proud to sponsor CPR and AED training on Parliament Hill, delivered by the Heart and Stroke Foundation. I encourage all members of Parliament and their staff to take part. When a cardiac arrest happens, every second matters. Knowing what to do could mean the difference between life and death.

**The Speaker:** I would just remind members that we do not use proper names in the House.



The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

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## AIRPORT SECURITY

**Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, imagine someone heading off on a family vacation only to find themselves arrested abroad for drug trafficking, all because someone switched the tag on their suitcase. CTV's *W5* investigation has exposed this disturbing reality. Innocent Canadians have been detained, been imprisoned and had their lives turned upside down because criminals exploited weaknesses in our airport baggage system.

This hits close to home. Many London travellers connect through Toronto Pearson on their way to destinations around the world, placing their trust in an airport that has been at the centre of the criminal schemes exposed by *W5*'s investigation. The Liberal government has announced security changes, but announcements alone will not restore the trust shattered by what *W5* uncovered. Canadians deserve real protections, not just promises.

As a member of the transport committee, I believe Parliament should be examining these failures, hearing from those affected and restoring confidence in our travel system. Canadians deserve to travel without fearing that their next vacation could cost them their freedom.

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## RECOGNITION OF CIVIC LEADERSHIP

**Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour four extraordinary leaders, Lillian Vineberg, Barbara Seal, Abe Gonshor and David Sternthal, who have been named the inaugural recipients of the Order of Hampstead, the town's highest civic honour.

They are dear friends and mentors with whom I had the privilege of serving for seven years on the Hampstead town council when I was in my twenties. Each shaped my approach to public service. Lillian taught me to always do my homework and how to disagree without being disagreeable. Barbara exemplified warmth and compassion toward every resident. Abe showed me how to relish every moment and to bring humour to even the toughest of debates. David taught me how to question sharply yet respectfully and to negotiate effectively.

Their example continues to guide me in this chamber, and outside of it, every day. On behalf of the people in Mount Royal, I want to thank them for making Hampstead, and Canada, a better place.

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## MANITOBA AG DAYS

**Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Ag Days is turning 50. From January 19 to 21, 2027, we will welcome farmers from across Canada and beyond to the Keystone Centre in Brandon. The theme is 50 years of innovation and tradition.

For five decades, Manitoba Ag Days has brought together farmers, ag innovators, equipment manufacturers, industry experts and businesses from across Canada and beyond. Since 2013, the Manitoba Ag Days gives back fund has invested more than $600,000 in agricultural education, scholarships and community grants. To mark the 50th anniversary, the fund will award a record $131,000 in grants and scholarships, its largest-ever single-year investment in the future of Canadian agriculture.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating Manitoba Ag Days on this remarkable anniversary, and I would like to welcome all Canadians to Brandon this January to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Manitoba Ag Days.

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● (1405)

## CANADIAN CADET PROGRAM

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for thousands of young Canadians, cadets is where they find their confidence, discover their talents, learn discipline and leadership, and make friendships that last a lifetime. A shy young person finds their voice. A child who struggles to fit in finds a place to belong.

Cadets is one of the greatest youth programs, an incredible asset to our communities and a valuable pathway into our armed forces. However, as of this moment, these young Canadians are worried that their programs, like band, drill team, flag party, photography and the yearbook, could all disappear. The Prime Minister is planning half a billion in national defence spending cuts, which threatens their programs, while at the same time committing half a billion to the Brazilian rainforest.

Will the Prime Minister put Canadian kids first, protect the programs that are shaping our future leaders, and redirect the Brazilian rainforest commitment toward opportunities for young Canadians right here at home?

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[*Translation*]

## WORLD DIABETES DAY

**Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, November 14 was World Diabetes Day. Every year, I rise in the House to mark this day and to celebrate my son Charles, who has had type 1 diabetes for nine years now. I am so proud of his resilience.

I am also proud of the contribution that Canada is making to diabetes research. Our government is funding work in partnership with the Stem Cell Network and Breakthrough T1D, an organization that I had the pleasure of working with as the co-chair of the diabetes caucus. Our research teams are advancing regenerative medicine, and I am confident that their work will lead to new breakthroughs for Canadians across the country.

I want to express my great admiration for the courage, discipline and perseverance that my son Charles and all those living with diabetes demonstrate every day.

[*English*]

## FIRST NATIONS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

**Wade Grant (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in this chamber to recognize the tremendous success of the First Nations Financial Management Board, better known as the FMB. In order to advance major projects and increase trade, first nations need the capacity to consider their free, prior and informed consent and, if they choose, to become strong economic partners in Canada. That is why the FMB is helping to do just that. A great example is the Haisla Nation, which owns the world's first indigenous-majority LNG project, Cedar LNG, 650 kilometres northwest of my riding.

The FMB is supporting nations in ending third-party management and having the capacity to manage their own community services as they devolve from reliance on the government. The work the FMB advances provides systemic and transformational change in Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples.

I am happy to invite members to join me tonight at a reception in the Wellington Building, where we can learn more about the great work the FMB does.

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[*Translation*]

## CATHERINE MORIN

**Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when each second counts, courage and clear thinking can make the difference between life and death. This is exactly what director of fire services Catherine Morin demonstrated.

On January 9, while on her way to work, she stopped at the scene of an accident. A woman, trapped in her vehicle, was in cardiopulmonary arrest. Without any hesitation, Ms. Morin began resuscitation procedures with help from another passerby. Thanks to their intervention, the victim regained consciousness before emergency services arrived.

In recognition of her extraordinary response, Ms. Morin was awarded the new Bellechasse RCM involvement token honouring outstanding action by fire safety services in the area. Congratulations to Ms. Morin. Her actions made a genuine difference and helped save a life.

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## LOCAL PRODUCT

**Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you about the exceptional work of a business in my region: La Microlaiterie Riverin du Lac.

At the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto, the largest indoor agri-food exhibition in the world, this business won first place for one of its products, its famous black garlic butter. This remarkable achievement is a testament to this local business's expertise, passion and hard work. It is fantastic that a product made entirely in our region claimed the highest spot on the podium. This award puts our region on the map and proves once again that our businesses are second to none.

I would like to warmly congratulate Sylvain Gauthier and Chantale Riverin of La Microlaiterie Riverin du Lac on this outstanding achievement. I wish them all the best for the future. As the holiday season approaches, I encourage everyone to discover and support our agri-food businesses. Congratulations to La Microlaiterie Riverin du Lac.

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● (1410)

[*English*]

## PARKS AND RECREATION

**Maggie Chi (Don Valley North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise to welcome parks and recreation leaders from across Canada to Parliament Hill today. They are here for the Forward Together Summit, hosted by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. I want to take this occasion to commend the CPRA for bringing together the sector's leadership to advance a shared vision: a future where recreation and parks are recognized as foundational public infrastructure, like roads, schools and libraries, accessible and welcoming to all.

This past weekend in my riding of Don Valley North, I had the pleasure of visiting the Cummer Park Community Centre and meeting the fine parks and recreation staff looking after the local rink, swimming pool and multipurpose spaces. Facilities like these are at the heart of many of our communities. They help people of all ages stay active and build a sense of belonging.

I invite all members to join me in thanking these leaders and in welcoming them to Ottawa.

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## THE BUDGET

**Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after the budget was introduced, Conservatives sounded the alarm that Canada's debt would increase by $765 billion over the next five years. Today the PBO confirmed what Conservatives understood. Net new borrowing over the next five years will be $764.7 billion, $92.3 billion more than in the spring economic update. The fastest-growing item is not health care, infrastructure, tax relief or other key priorities. Instead, the PBO confirmed, the fastest-growing item is debt interest, projected to cost 26% more than the Canada health transfer and 31% more than the GST revenues by 2030-31.

Budget 2026 is titled “Masters of our destiny”, but Canada's economic destiny is increasingly uncertain. Instead, Canadians are mastered by debt.



## ONLINE SAFETY

**Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this morning I hosted the Brain Canada Foundation parliamentary briefing titled “The Developing Brain in a Digital World”, which was a great success. I thank all the panellists.

Social media and artificial intelligence are becoming an increasingly larger part of young people's lives. As these technologies grow, we must make sure they are used safely. Canada's safe social media act is an important step forward, creating safe online spaces for all Canadians. These discussions highlight the importance of how innovative technologies are transforming all sectors.

Yesterday, I was proud to introduce a motion at the health committee to study the impact of AI on the health care system. As we explore its potential, we must also consider how to use this technology safely and with responsibility.

I thank Brain Canada for its leadership in advancing brain research. By working together, we can continue building a healthier future for all Canadians.

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## THE ECONOMY

**Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, seniors, workers and families in B.C. cannot keep up with the cost of living. Statistics Canada has reported that inflation remains high while the cost of gas and groceries is rising even faster. Groceries are 31% higher than in 2020, and gas prices are 30% higher than in 2025. Food banks are seeing record levels of demand.

Instead of using our Conservative plan to reduce costs, budget 2026 adds $765 billion to new debt. As a result, more than 10% of every tax dollar will go toward debt servicing costs instead of health care or support for seniors. We cannot continue to borrow and spend uncontrollably. We can secure a more affordable life by reducing the costs created here in Ottawa.

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[*Translation*]

## ORDRE NATIONAL DU MÉRITE AGRICOLE

**Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—Papineau—Des Collines, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to acknowledge 10 agricultural businesses in my riding, Argenteuil—Papineau—Des Collines, that were recognized at the 2026 Ordre national du mérite agricole ceremony.

In the Laurentians, I would like to congratulate the Aux champs qui chantent cooperative farm and La ferme la Roquette cooperative, both located in Brownsburg-Chatham.

In the Outaouais region, I would like to congratulate Chapeau Melon farm, the Gagnon farm, the Lavergne pig farm, the Agricola cooperative farm, Croque-Pomme orchard, Double Attitude orchard, Sabrina Bouwman, and Domaine des Météores. I would also like to give a special mention to Croque-Pomme orchard for receiving an agri-tourism award.

Behind these successes are passionate men and women who work tirelessly, innovate, and contribute to the vitality of our regions.

Congratulations to all 10 of these businesses. We are so proud of them.

* * *

● (1415)

[*English*]

### THE ECONOMY

**Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, across Oshawa, families are making difficult choices in order to afford groceries, fill their gas tanks and keep a roof over their heads. While Canadians are being forced to spend less, the government has set aside billions for consultants and committed almost $600 million to an international rainforest fund in Brazil. The Liberals are so out of touch with reality that they continue to prioritize spending abroad while families are struggling here at home.

The Prime Minister promised fiscal responsibility, but his budget is projected to add a staggering $765 billion in debt over the next five years. That is $44,000 for every Canadian household. Families cannot borrow their way out of financial hardship, so why does the government believe it can? Canadians deserve a government that respects their hard-earned tax dollars, cuts wasteful spending and makes life affordable again. Oshawa families deserve relief, our seniors deserve security, and our young people deserve a future they can afford.

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### NATIONAL CHILD DAY

**Hon. Jenna Sudds (Kanata, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I am excited to welcome 41 UNICEF Canada youth advocates to Parliament. They are joining us today to mark National Child Day.

Thirty-five years ago, Canada committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. That commitment remains clear. Every child deserves dignity and respect, as well as access to health care, education and protection. Youth are more than the leaders of tomorrow. They are active citizens of today, and it is crucial that their voices are heard in the decisions that shape their lives. I invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing the tenacity, the leadership and the passion of young people.

I wish members a happy National Child Day.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

### HOUSING

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot find a job, a home or a doctor. The Prime Minister is making things worse with a plan to increase the permanent immigration threshold to a record 650,000 people. That is 50% higher than the record set under Justin Trudeau. It is not fair to newcomers, nor is it fair to Canadians who are already here.

Today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer revealed that the Prime Minister has officially abandoned his promise to double housing construction.

When will the Prime Minister stop adding more people than homes?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the Leader of the Opposition's attention to the historic investments in housing in our latest budget. We are investing $44 billion over the next 10 years to dramatically increase the housing supply, and that includes social housing.

Not surprisingly, he has a hard time understanding how important this type of housing is. It genuinely helps people. He once described affordable housing and social housing as “Soviet-style” housing. This is completely incomprehensible given the challenges Canadians are facing.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot find homes, jobs or health care, and mass Liberal immigration is making it worse. The Prime Minister's plan to bring in a record 650,000 permanent residents next year, which is 50% more than Trudeau's highest number, happens just as the Parliamentary Budget Officer reveals that the Prime Minister has officially abandoned his promise to double homebuilding. That is not fair to people here or to newcomers.

Will the Prime Minister stop adding people faster than homes?

● (1420)

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, budget 2026 is an unprecedented housing budget. We are focused on affordable housing first and foremost. We are focused on making sure the market provides the housing that Canadians need right now. We have put important pieces on the table, whether that is GST relief or development charge and red tape reductions. We are taking action on housing, in particular for non-market housing and ending homelessness within 10 years.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is simultaneously blowing the budget on his failed housing expenditures while delivering fewer homes built. Just today, we learned that homebuilding is down 3% year over year, not doubled as he promised.

Meanwhile, he is increasing immigration to record-smashing levels of 650,000 people. It is clearly not in the interest of Canada to do this, but it is in the interest of the corporate power brokers who will be able to pay lower wages to incoming low-wage workers and charge higher rent.

Why is the Prime Minister putting corporate profits ahead of the Canadian people?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the criticism from the opposition member is hardly credible in this case. He only built six units of housing as housing minister. We will take no advice from that member.

When we look at the opportunity in front of Canada right now, it is building affordable housing. We have had four decades of not building enough affordable housing. This government is turning that around. This government is focused on non-market housing, solving homelessness and making sure we are supporting the market and the builders to build the housing Canadians need.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's damning report today, housing starts are down, funding is up and the government is falling behind its promise to double homebuilding. It also seems to have stepped away from its earlier commitment to build 500,000 new homes per year, yet the government plans a record-smashing 650,000 new permanent residents. That is 50% higher than the highest level under Justin Trudeau.

Who benefits from this? Billionaires and Liberal-linked developers trying to fill overpriced, vacant condo units do. Who pays the price? Canadians do, with higher rent and home ownership.

Why will he not stand up for the Canadian people?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will tell the Leader of the Opposition who benefits. Canadians are the ones who benefit when we invest in infrastructure and when we invest in housing. We have made generational investments in housing. The minister has been building across the nation. Just in the last budget, budget 2026, we put an additional $45 billion to our effort to build more homes, more affordable homes, across the country. We continue to build the country because every day is a good day to fight for Canadians.

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## FINANCE

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, wow, his defence is that, well, they failed. They failed really expensively, spending $45 billion. We already knew that. The PBO said it today. There is $331 billion in new measures, of which 61% is day-to-day operating spending rather than capital investment. There is more spending, not more investment, and all to deliver the worst growth in the last decade outside of COVID.

Costs are up; growth is down. How could they spend so much to achieve so little?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, maybe the Leader of the Opposition does not know this, but Canadians understand the difference between an expense and a capital investment. That is what we are doing in this country. We have made record investment to build the infrastructure, build the housing and invest in productivity and innovation.

They can laugh as much as they want, but Canadians know that competent countries invest in themselves.

On this side of the house, we understand. We have the fiscal discipline. We have the fiscal strength. We are going to build the strongest economy in the G7.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is true that Canadians understand the difference between capital and operations. The problem is that the finance minister does not.

[*Translation*]

The Parliamentary Budget Officer revealed today that the Prime Minister has announced $331 billion in new spending, 61% of which is for government operations, not for investments. All this to generate a meagre 1% in economic growth, the worst growth outside of the COVID-19 pandemic.

How could he spend so much to achieve so little?

● (1425)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Quebeckers and Canadians across the country understand what we are doing. We have a generational plan to build infrastructure, to build housing, to invest in productivity and innovation, and to defend our sovereignty, our economic sovereignty and our cultural sovereignty.

Confident countries invest. People at home know this. We have the fiscal capacity, we have the discipline, and we are going to build the strongest economy in the G7.

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## THE ECONOMY

**Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 is a step in the wrong direction.

The CSN, the FTQ and the entire labour movement say that this bill is an attack on the right to strike. The Assembly of First Nations and many other indigenous representatives say that it violates their rights. Greenpeace and environmentalists say that this bill will destroy the environment. The Legislative Committee on Bill C-39 has heard from hundreds of witnesses. It sat until midnight last night to examine the amendments they have proposed, and that process is ongoing, but the Liberals voted down all of the substantive amendments. They even refused to accept 80 briefs.

After steamrolling indigenous rights, workers' rights and the environment, are the Liberals now going to steamroll the rights of civil society?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 seeks to enhance opportunities for the government, major developers, projects and, yes, workers to build a stronger country. This bill does not undermine the right to strike. There is a framework for that. Yes, this bill puts in place a better process for consulting indigenous communities before projects are planned and does not in any way undermine Canada's very high environmental standards.

**Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, even the Liberals can see that Bill C-39 is a bad idea. We already knew that the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country was against it. We knew that the female members of the Liberal Party, represented by the National Women's Liberal Commission, were against it. Now, the Liberal member for Mississauga—Erin Mills is sponsoring a petition in the House against Bill C-39. This petition has been signed by 4,300 people to date. They are calling on the government to scrap the measures that allow environmental assessments to be bypassed and nature to be bulldozed.

If the Liberals refuse to listen to civil society, will they at least listen to other Liberals?

**Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are listening to Canadians across the country who are telling us that they want to see us building a stronger future with environmental standards in place. We are keeping them in place.

At the same time, we are changing the process so that we can have stronger electricity grids, something that is very important for Quebec, for example, and that is going to help us electrify our economy and get to net zero.

**Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what Bill C-39 does is terrible. The Liberals are imposing historic environmental rollbacks without accepting a single amendment that would make a difference. Yesterday, they got rid of environmental impact assessments for oil and gas projects. The Liberal member for Trois-Rivières even said she was enthusiastically voting in favour of it.

Do they realize that *Appetite for Destruction* is a great name for an album but a very bad basis for public policy?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that member claims he supports reducing greenhouse gases, but he is standing in the way of the largest greenhouse gas reducing project in Quebec, namely, the high-speed train, which will dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the air and road transportation sectors.

Why is that member insisting on blocking a project that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Quebec?

* * *

[*English*]

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there was a recent news story about a 28-year-old man named Reza Mahmoudian, who is out of work and sent out more than 100 job applications. He did not get a single callback. He says he wants to use his skills in the construction industry, but he is still looking for a contractor who is eager to teach him. Canada's economy is shedding jobs, but lobbyists are pushing for higher immigration so they do not have to train people like Reza or pay them market wages.

When will the minister set immigration levels for Reza, instead of for corporate lobbyists who do not want to train him or pay him a fair market wage?

● (1430)

**Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the immigration levels plan reflects a consultation that has been carried out not just with employers but with leaders across the country. That is with municipal governments, and we are further engaging provincial governments as well. The numbers the Conservatives have cited here, such as the number cited earlier by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, for example, are projected numbers for 2027. We will see what the actual number is. Regardless, the key point on this, and this is what unravels the Conservative argument, I am afraid, is that 70% of the positions will be made up of individuals already in Canada.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, do members know who the Prime Minister did not consult with? He did not consult with the newcomer who comes to Canada, who now knows it means being an indentured worker at a coffee shop, or it means handing their life savings over to a scam college while sleeping 10 deep in a basement suite. Being a newcomer to Canada under the Prime Minister means being used as a tool for corporate lobbyists to drive down wages. We have to get emotional about this. We have to make sure that immigration levels support workers.

When will the immigration minister stop treating workers like profit units and reduce levels so that workers can get trained and paid a fair wage?

**Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our obligation always is to Canadians and Canadian workers. That is why the government has put forward a skills training program that will see 100,000 young Canadians trained in the skilled trades in the next five years. We need to build this country up. We need young, talented energy to make that happen.

Conservatives talk about immigration. There is a one-time measure in this budget that would see, among others, temporary residents or non-permanent residents, Ukrainians and Hong Kongers, offered a pathway to permanent residence. A number of Conservative MPs are on record calling for exactly that outcome, but they do not want that now all of a sudden.

**Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government forgets there is a human cost to its decisions. Prashant was 44 and the father of three kids, aged 14, 10 and three. He came to an Edmonton ER with chest pain he described as a 15 out of 10. The ER was so busy that they gave him Tylenol and told him to wait. Eight hours later, he stood up, put his hand on his chest and died. This is not an isolated case. Our hospitals cannot keep up, but the Prime Minister just announced that he plans to add another 650,000 permanent resident admissions next year. This is by far the highest in Canadian history.

How many of these newcomers will suffer like Prashant in overcrowded emergency rooms?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are building Canada strong, and we are doing that with incredible talent, both here in Canada and with newcomers who have come to Canada to offer their talent—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The minister may continue.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Mr. Speaker, speaking from both sides of their mouth, as we hear today, and demonizing immigration as a result of the way that they are doing politics, is not exactly the way that we build Canada strong. In fact, what we are doing on our side of the House is making sure that people have the skills, the talent and the opportunity to participate in the project of our lifetime, which is to build up our fine country.

[*Translation*]

**Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister claims he wants to stabilize immigration at 380,000 permanent residents in 2027. However, in reality, the additional 282,000 people brought in through special measures brings the actual total to 662,000. Economist Pierre Fortin described this approach as truly twisted, saying that it is confusing and misleading for the public.

Did the Prime Minister cover up a massive increase in immigration because he knew Quebeckers would be against it?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I may have been only three years old when the Canada-Quebec accord was signed in 1991, but I am very familiar with the details of it. I assume my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles is also familiar with it.

Quebec has full authority over economic immigration. It is up to Quebec to set the thresholds. I would note, however, that this one-time initiative for up to 200,000 people mainly and almost exclusively applies to people who are already in Canada.

I invite the member to visit the regions of Quebec, as I have done, and listen to what they have to say about the labour they urgently need in order to build a strong Quebec.

**Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact that these thresholds had to be buried in the budget speaks volumes. It is clear that this approach is not working.

Quebec will be penalized because the level of immigration the Liberals are planning simply is not sustainable. As Quebec's deputy premier pointed out, this hidden increase has neither been explained nor justified.

We expect greater transparency from the federal government.

Can my colleague, the Quebec lieutenant, explain how Quebec is supposed to cope with such an unwarranted increase in immigration?

● (1435)

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would once again invite my colleague to read the Canada-Quebec accord.

Quebec controls its economic immigration. Quebec sets its own thresholds. That is not changing. It will be up to Quebec to decide whether it wishes to take advantage of this one-time measure to grant permanent residence to individuals who are already in Canada.

What I cannot understand is how the Conservatives can use this rhetoric while also writing to the government to request more temporary foreign workers, even as some of their own colleagues are calling for that program to be abolished.

Quebec will need 80,000 construction workers over the next five years to build Quebec.

We are well aware of those labour needs, and I am confident that the Government of Quebec is aware of them as well.

* * *

[*English*]

## THE BUDGET

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer went looking for the numbers in this budget and could not find them: a $62-billion cut with no programs, an $8-billion savings tied to nothing and $135 billion that they called capital, which is not capital at all.

The numbers she could find are even worse. The government will spend more on interest on the debt than on health care for every single Canadian.

Instead of hiding what the debt is costing Canadians in mortgages and higher prices, will the minister table the real numbers?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader is losing staff at a quicker rate than he actually built houses as housing minister.

Budget 2026 is twofold. On one side, we are going to focus on affordability for Canadians, end homelessness and provide a one-time top-up for the groceries and essentials benefit. On the other side, yes, we are going to invest in Canadians. The productivity mega deduction will supercharge investment in capital across this country.

The party opposite is not taken seriously. We are here to build Canada strong.

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is the Parliamentary Budget Officer they hired who is sounding the alarm bells. The government promised to double homebuilding, and housing starts are down. That promise vanished out of the budget. The $500 billion that they boasted about from their investment summit is not tied to a single real project. Those are her words, and they hired her. This is a government that traffics in announcements and not results.

Why does it take the Parliamentary Budget Officer to tell Canadians what the government will not?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member wishing it so does not make it true.

Let us look at the economic fundamentals. We have the best net debt to GDP in the G7, the strongest fiscal position in the G7, and wages outpacing inflation. Our economy is the second-fastest-growing economy in the G7.

They are not serious about the economy. Their leader continues with the rhetoric and the empty parking lot press conferences. On this side, we are serious about building a strong economy and a strong Canada for everybody from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

## JUSTICE

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have the numbers: The Liberals spent nearly $3.5 million challenging Quebec's Bill 21 before the Supreme Court. They spent $3.5 million in public funds to attack the secular nature of the state, Quebec's right to invoke the notwithstanding clause and the sovereignty of our National Assembly.

It is bad enough that the federal government is holding Quebec's democracy hostage in this way, but is there no limit to using Quebeckers' money against Quebeckers themselves?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, at no point could the Supreme Court of Canada have considered the interpretation of the Constitution and its underlying principles without the participation of the Government of Canada. We have an obligation to defend the charter, defend the Constitution and protect the right of Canadians to live their lives with a great deal of freedom anywhere in our country.

**Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, protecting the Constitution and the charter also means protecting the notwithstanding clause. Every penny that Quebeckers invested in fighting Bill 21 was a penny too much. We are talking about $3.5 million used to attack the secularism of our nation and the notwithstanding clause. This just proves that Ottawa will stop at nothing to prevent Quebec from passing laws that it opposes. It will take drastic measures against Quebeckers, paid for out of their own pockets.

Will the Liberals ever understand that the Quebec National Assembly does not need to beg permission to legislate in areas under its jurisdiction?

● (1440)

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleague to read the factum submitted by the Attorney General which specifically addresses the use of the notwithstanding clause with respect to the Constitution of Canada. That is what we are discussing.

A lot of rhetoric seems to be coming from the Bloc Québécois side. It might help if the Bloc would examine the factum submitted, since it discusses this issue. As the Minister of Justice mentioned, it is not unusual for the Government of Canada to intervene when constitutional issues like these come before the Supreme Court.

[*English*]

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister announced that he is pursuing his so-called strategic partnership with Beijing. He seeks to trade American dependence for Chinese dominance. This is his Faustian bargain—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** There is too much noise there. I do not know where it was coming from exactly, but the hon. member may continue.

**Jacob Mantle:** From the top, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** No, just continue.

**Jacob Mantle:** Mr. Speaker, this is the Prime Minister's Faustian bargain: temporary relief today and Chinese dominance tomorrow, when it should be Canadian independence always. Conservatives will not stand idly by while the Liberals permit Beijing to undermine Canadian workers through predatory imports of steel, aluminum, electric vehicles and more.

The Prime Minister must commit to no more market access that threatens Canadian workers and our sovereignty. Will he do that?

**Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have good news for Canadian farmers and harvesters. Through the hard work of the Prime Minister, Canada has expanded our trade arrangement with China through 2028, with new tariff relief on about $400 million in Canadian exports, from frozen pork and Greenland halibut to Pacific spot prawn, geoduck and sea cucumber. That builds on the two-year extension for canola meal, peas, lobster and crab announced earlier this month. We will continue to work hard to make sure that our farmers are able to grow good food and share it with the rest of the world.

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian values are not for sale, and not long ago the Prime Minister agreed. He said that Beijing was Canada's greatest security threat. At Davos he said Canada must be principled and defend fundamental values: human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Beijing shares none of these values.

The question is which Prime Minister Canadians should believe: the one who professes a belief and commitment to these values or the one who turns his back on them through his actions.

**Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, due to the work that we are doing to help our farmers and harvesters, this is what the Premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe, had to say in a social media post: “More good trade news today for Saskatchewan's strong and steady economy.” Their minister says, “That helps so much in them being able to plan their crop rotations into next year,” because it's good for our farmers. We hear the same thing from the Canadian Pork Council, which said that this is a welcome announcement of tariff relief on most frozen Canadian pork cuts exported to China, because it reflects sustained engagement and strong—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

**Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is in Beijing right now, bragging about his strategic partnership with the CCP, a partnership that allows 50,000—

**The Speaker:** I just want to remind the member that we cannot allude to a member's being absent from the House.

I understand what the member was trying to say, and she may continue.

**Stephanie Kusie:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is in Beijing right now bragging about his strategic—

**The Speaker:** The member gets one more chance, one more try. We do not have to discuss the whereabouts of the Prime Minister.

The hon. member.

**Stephanie Kusie:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is bragging about his strategic partnership with the CCP, a partnership that allows 50,000 EVs onto our streets, putting Canadian auto jobs and national security at risk. Today, we learned he has weakened our steel and aluminum sector even more by reducing tariffs on these products from China. Canadian auto workers are concerned that foreign-made EVs are going to put them out of work.

How can the Liberals continue forward with their plan to flood our market, putting more workers and their families at risk?

● (1445)

**Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's visit has delivered real results for Canadian farmers, seafood harvesters and exporters. China is the world's second-largest economy, and I really struggle to stand here and talk down our canola farmers, our fishers and our beef farmers. They are calling us out, telling us it is a really good deal that we have continued with our two-year extension. We are going to continue to work on open markets around the world for our harvesters and our seafood and beef.

**Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in January, the Prime Minister spoke of the values and the strength of the middle powers in Davos. Chief among those values are human rights and freedoms. From the regime in Beijing to Qatar, Turkey and the U.A.E., the Prime Minister has made the deliberate choice to deepen relationships with countries that do not share our fundamental values and freedoms. Trade matters, but so do Canadian values and Canadian sovereignty.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians that he will not compromise on human rights and Canadian sovereignty in exchange for a strategic relationship with Beijing?

**Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are making trade deals all around the world for the benefit of all Canadians. We are doing everything possible. Our Prime Minister is leading the way. We are acknowledging all different industries and sectors. We are being supported by them. We are not standing behind them; they are standing beside us. They are supporting us every step of the way. I spent a week in Beijing and Shanghai, and I can tell the House that the industries and stakeholders that were there on that trade mission were very grateful for everything we are doing on this side of the House.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in Davos, the Liberal Prime Minister delivered lofty speeches about democracy and human rights, but in China, he appears to have left those lofty principles in his suitcase. He is opening up our market to 50,000 Chinese vehicles, while auto workers are all afraid of losing their livelihoods. It is all well and good to want to please Beijing, but families in Windsor, Brampton and Oshawa, and subcontractors in Quebec, need to work.

Why are Canadian workers' jobs taking a back seat to the frequent flyer's new friendship with Beijing?

**Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are negotiating an agreement with China to import 50,000 Chinese vehicles. Let me repeat that: 50,000 Chinese vehicles.

Is that what is going to disrupt the Canadian industry? Come on. We also set the condition that, if there is Chinese direct investment here, it must meet four fundamental conditions, specifically it must be majority Canadian-owned, local supply chains must be respected and workers must be treated fairly.

That is our position.

* * *

[*English*]

## THE ECONOMY

**Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I talk with constituents about affordability, we talk about groceries, about energy and about housing. Earlier this year, millions of Canadian families received the groceries and essentials benefit to help with everyday costs. The foreign buyers ban has also been successful in helping to protect the housing supply in Canada.

Can the Minister of Housing please update the House on budget 2026's proposed renewal of both the groceries and essentials benefit and the foreign buyers ban?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing the perspectives of his well-represented constituents in Carleton. We know that affordability is top of mind for Canadians, and that is why we want to boost the groceries and essentials benefit for 2027, providing direct help to 12 million Canadians.

The foreign buyers ban is an important tool in our arsenal of measures to improve housing affordability. We are proposing to extend the ban for two years to protect our housing stock in Canada for Canadians. We look forward to being there for Canadians—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Brampton West.

* * *

## AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Amarjeet Gill (Brampton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister called the Stellantis sale a "betrayal", yet his own officials said in those meetings that the Liberals gave Stellantis hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars, with no job guarantees and no accountability. The Brampton plant was built by Canadian workers. Now, thousands of Brampton workers are without paycheques, and families are paying the price for this Liberal failure.

Will the Prime Minister explain why Canadian taxpayers paid millions of dollars while Stellantis walked away and thousands of Canadian workers lost their jobs?

● (1450)

**Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that our friends from the other side are still full of energy to talk about Stellantis. We have been talking with the company for over a year—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The member may continue, unless he is interrupted again by loud noise, and then he might have to start from the top.

**Carlos Leitão:** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with those who work with us. As for those who do not work with us, we will not work with them. As for those who believe in Canada, who invest in Canada, we will work with them. From those who do not, we will get our money back.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they certainly worked. They worked behind the scenes to draft a press release that announced the sale of the Stellantis plant. Last night, I learned not only that but also that they actually worked to select the date when the press release would go out. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister pretended to be outraged and called the sale a "betrayal". The actual betrayal was pretending to be against the sale while actively and secretly, behind the scenes, working to facilitate the sale.

I would like to give the Prime Minister an opportunity to stand up and apologize for deliberately gaslighting Canadians and Stellantis workers.

**The Speaker:** We have to be careful about accusations of knowingly misleading, and that came pretty close. I would be careful about that in the future.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to have discussions with Stellantis. So far, the answers we have gotten from it are not acceptable, and we want to get the jobs back. If we do not get the jobs back, we will get the money back.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, members will notice that they did not deny they were involved in drafting the press release or selecting the date on which the press release would be released, which is the real problem here. It is the dishonesty and the deceit. One cannot claim to be against the sale of the Stellantis plant while secretly actually facilitating the sale, which is exactly what has happened. This was a deliberate choice by them, and they have misled Canadians and Stellantis workers.

Will the minister responsible please rise now and apologize and take responsibility for deliberately misleading those workers?

**The Speaker:** The member threw that in at the end, when he knew I could not take his question away. I would warn against this in future.

**An hon. member:** Let them deny it.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** We do not want to dig a bigger hole here.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our expectations and our objectives have been clear since the start. We have been very clear since the start. We have not changed our position. We want the jobs back. If we do not get the jobs back, we will get our money back.

**Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in June 2025, the Minister of Industry said that additional armoured vehicles would be needed in Canada and that this would help an ailing auto sector. Then, the minister herself, her officials, the Prime Minister's Office, four Liberal MPs, including the defence minister met with Roshel.

Will the Minister of Industry please tell the House on what date she became aware of the Stellantis-Roshel transaction?

**Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been fighting for the auto sector and the auto workers in Brampton for over a year.

We have been very clear that they have commitments, and if they are not honouring their commitments, then we will get our money back. That fight continues, and we know that when we fight well, we can succeed, as we know from the results with Stelco just recently.

● (1455)

**Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the minister said repeatedly she would sue Stellantis, but did not, the House lost confidence in her. When the minister said, and told stakeholders, that they would not allow Chinese electric vehicles into Canada, but then days later reversed her position, stakeholders lost confidence in the minister. Now Canadians are losing confidence in the minister because of the lack of transparency around the Stellantis-Roshel transaction.



Does the Prime Minister still maintain confidence in his industry minister?

**Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Brampton plant, the conversations have been with Stellantis about its commitments not only to the Brampton workers but to every member of the House. Their commitments to the Brampton workers and their community have not been honoured to this date. That is why we are continuing to fight for them.

We are also working, at the same time, to defend and lift up the Canadian auto sector everywhere, in the face of tariffs, which we do not hear enough about from the other side of the House, including in the member's own riding, with a major $861-million investment in Honda, retaining 4,000 jobs and 400,000 vehicles manufactured a year.

* * *

## EMPLOYMENT

**Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Stanpac is an exemplary business in our community of Niagara West, employing over 550 people and generously contributing to many charities.

Since the summer, the 50% tariffs are costing over a half a million dollars a week. This is an unsustainable amount for a business in operation for over seven decades. In December, Stanpac will start moving equipment to the U.S., and 350 jobs are at risk just before Christmas.

The Prime Minister found $560 million for forests in Brazil. Will he help save 350 jobs in Canada, yes or no?

**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, our colleague's question is a very important one. It is a scenario that is obviously of great concern to the government.

We have said from the beginning that Canadian workers and businesses that are facing pressures from the unjustified and illegal tariffs will be supported by the Government of Canada. We are working with provinces across the country that also want to participate. I know that my colleague is concerned about those jobs, and so is the Government of Canada. We are going to do everything necessary to support those workers and those businesses.

**Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Stanpac's co-president said, "We're in real trouble here." The family-owned company has burned through its cash reserves, protecting its workers since August, while the government has done nothing. Three hundred and fifty jobs are on the line right now, before Christmas. These are real families with bills, with children to feed.

The Prime Minister just gave $8 million to China this morning and $8 million more for gender-just rice in Vietnam. Will he help save the jobs of 350 families in Niagara, yes or no?

**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, all across the country, our government has stood up with workers, businesses and our provincial partners to support jobs in this country that are being threatened by a series of tariff measures.

We are obviously engaged in discussions with the United States to be in a position to relieve this tariff pressure, but we are not going to wait for a possible agreement with the United States to stand up and defend workers, and to do the right thing and support those jobs. That is exactly what our government has been doing from the beginning.

* * *

[*Translation*]

## FORESTRY INDUSTRY

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has completely abandoned the forestry industry: 320 jobs have been lost at the Saint-Michel sawmill and 365 jobs are at risk at the Outardes sawmill.

While our workers are losing their jobs, the Liberals are announcing $560 million for the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Yes, my colleagues heard that right: We are giving more than half a billion dollars to the Amazon while sawmills in Quebec are closing. It makes no sense.

Could the Liberals be any more out of touch?

**Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me be clear because the Conservatives are ignoring the facts.

When we talk about progress on forests, it is not just about Brazil. It is something we are doing with Norway, France, Germany and Luxembourg. It will protect one billion hectares of tropical forest in more than 70 countries.

We are doing this to help. It is very important.

● (1500)

**Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the facts, then.

Over the past few months, more than 1,000 jobs have been lost in the forestry sector in Quebec. Over the past 10 years, the Liberal government has added 86,300 federal employees. Despite that, it is spending $19 billion a year on external consultants. Those are the facts. Now it is announcing that it is giving $560 million for the Amazon rainforest in Brazil.

It makes no sense.

Can the Liberal government leave the Amazonian sloth alone and focus on the hardworking people in Quebec's forestry industry?

[*English*]

**Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we are actually doing is producing the first national forestry strategy in the history of this country. It is a strategy that was endorsed by the Quebec chair of the transformation task force. We are putting $6.5 billion into transforming the forestry sector, while all they do is complain and put down the forestry sector.

* * *

[*Translation*]

## HOUSING

**Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in my riding, Brome—Missisquoi, and in communities across the country, too many people lack access to safe and stable housing. Homelessness remains a major humanitarian challenge affecting communities in every region of Canada. Budget 2026 makes a historic commitment to put Canada on a path to ending homelessness over the next decade.

Can the Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant explain to the House how our government plans to achieve this ambitious goal?

**Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Brome—Missisquoi, not only for his question, but also for his leadership on environmental issues, economic development and social justice.

His question goes to the heart of this issue. In a country like Canada, we cannot turn a blind eye to the homelessness we see in our cities and regions. Homelessness is not someone else's problem. It is a challenge that concerns us all.

That is why I am proud that budget 2026 includes a historic investment of $44 billion over the next 10 years in social, transitional and affordable housing.

Perhaps most importantly, the budget reflects our clear and unequivocal political will and commitment to ending homelessness in Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Alto is being sold as a national transportation project, but the reality is that it will only serve a few major urban centres. The rest of Canada will still pay the billions of dollars in taxes required to build it and subsidize it, and they will not even have a realistic opportunity to use it. There is no business case for high-speed rail or for this to be a viable project.

Why should Canadians pay for a Liberal vanity project that only serves Liberal voter hubs and makes no economic sense?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Alto will serve 40% of Canada's population. It will serve Québec City, Trois-Rivières, Laval and Montreal. It will serve Ottawa. It will serve Peterborough, perhaps Kingston. It will serve Toronto and also Windsor.

We will be building this transformational project that will serve as the spine for mobility and change the way we live, work and play in this country. It will create jobs. It will add to our GDP. Alto is the way of the future and it is electric.

**John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals plan to fast-track their multi-billion dollar-boondoggle, Alto high-speed rail, and destroy prime farmland in Ontario and Quebec.

I met with dozens of farmers and business owners yesterday who are sick and tired of being railroaded by the Liberals. One of them even said, "I am more angry at my own government than Donald Trump. Donald Trump is not trying to take away my home." The Liberals will waste $150 billion destroying the very family farms that put food on our tables.

Can the minister tell me exactly how many farms will be destroyed by Alto, and what the impact will be on food production and grocery prices?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we intend to deal with all landowners, including the agriculture community, in an equitable way, in a transparent way, and in a way that fully compensates them and more for the potential loss of a 60-metre corridor for a linear project through their property.

We will deal extremely fairly and with great sensitivity with the entire farming community. That is the commitment of the government.

● (1505)

**John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is what the farmers have received so far. They are being completely ignored by their own Liberal MPs, harassed by drones and living in fear that they are going to lose generational farms, businesses and their homes. I asked them yesterday what their biggest fear is from this. Their biggest fear is not having any answers to the questions they have asked. In fact, Alto will not even meet with local officials or farmers unless they sign a non-disclosure agreement.

If Alto is such a great idea, why are the Liberals blocking studies at agriculture and transport? Why the secrecy? This is their own project. What are the Liberals trying to hide?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, we will deal with farmers and the agriculture community with great sensitivity. Any land within a 60-metre-wide linear corridor will be compensated at more than market value. We will deal incredibly fairly.

When we are done building this project, the entire country will benefit from transformational, electric, high-speed rail capabilities that will increase our economy, create jobs and make life better for Canadians.

* * *

## THE BUDGET

**Braedon Clark (Sackville—Bedford—Preston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past few months, I have heard from families in Sackville—Bedford—Preston and across Nova Scotia about how events beyond our borders are impacting the cost of living for families across our province. In this uncertain world, Nova Scotians know their government is stepping up to support them with real targeted supports at the pump, the grocery store and in their daily lives.

Could the Secretary of State for Children and Youth outline how budget 2026 will support families across Nova Scotia?

**Hon. Anna Gainey (Secretary of State (Children and Youth), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Sackville—Bedford—Preston for his advocacy.

Our plan gives Canadians a boost today and a bridge to tomorrow. Families in Nova Scotia will benefit from an increase to the groceries and essentials benefit, and the renewal of the Canada strong pass. We will be making investments in housing and in a national heat pump rebate program, just to name a few. This is real, targeted support for Nova Scotians.

Our government will always be there to support families in Atlantic Canada and across the country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is time to put the brakes on the Alto high-speed rail project. According to a study conducted by Vision Transport in co-operation with the Union des producteurs agricoles, or UPA, high-frequency trains would cost a fraction of the price of high-speed trains. The project proposed by the UPA would add only 42 minutes between Montreal and Toronto but would cost one-quarter of the price. Alto executives arrogantly dismissed the study's findings.

When will the Liberal government listen to our farmers and consider more rational solutions for the transportation systems of tomorrow?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we intend to continue listening carefully to the agricultural community, including the UPA in Quebec. We will be very sensitive to their concerns. Once a 60-metre corridor is chosen, affected individuals will be compensated for the full value of their property and more.

We believe that the study my colleague mentioned is flawed. In reality, the costs would be almost as high as for high-speed rail, without any of the advantages or economic spinoffs of high-speed rail. We will stick with the Alto project.

* * *

[*English*]

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Quebecor's bid to take over Telus raises serious concerns about competition, affordability and the future of Canada's telecommunications infrastructure. This takeover would further concentrate market power, leaving Canadians with fewer choices, higher phone bills and job losses. Canadians need more competition, lower prices and stronger public interest protections, not further corporate consolidation that puts affordability and our digital infrastructure at risk.

Will the government stand up for Canadians and block this takeover today?

**Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is apparently out there a proposal to perhaps buy a company. There is no deal on the table. If, indeed, there is a serious proposal and that project is going to be analyzed, there is a regulatory process. We will follow the regulatory process to the letter. If it is in the national interest, it will go. The regulatory process is independent and will be followed.

* * *

● (1510)

### HOUSING

**Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the Liberals promised to reduce chronic homelessness by 50%. In 2020, they promised to eliminate it altogether. Now, in 2026, the Liberals say they will end homelessness in 10 years. When the housing minister was the mayor of Vancouver, he made the same promise. Instead, it grew under his watch.

The Parliamentary Budget Office report today confirmed that the government is not even on track to meet its commitment to double housing starts. With that kind of track record, why should anyone believe it will deliver on its promise to end homelessness?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her concern on homelessness. I think every member of this House has a responsibility to help deliver.

This budget proposes unprecedented investment in solving homelessness with supportive and transitional housing in particular: $15 billion is focused on that solution. That has never been implemented before at this scale in our country. We have to do this in partnership with our provinces, cities, local communities, indigenous partners and builders all at the table to get this done together.

Having unanimous support in this House for a budget that has unprecedented support to solving this problem will take us—

**The Speaker:** That concludes question period for today.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING SAFEGUARDS ACT

The House resumed from November 16 consideration of the motion that Bill C-41, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying) and to make related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:11 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the second reading stage of Bill C-41.

Call in the members.

*Before the Clerk announced the result of the vote:*

● (1540)

**Andrew Lawton:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I could not help but notice that the member for Beaches—East York was not in his seat when the vote was called, but he did vote.

**Tanveer Shahnawaz:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's concern, but I went to the washroom and came back to vote.

**The Speaker:** I know the member is newly elected. However, members must stay in their seats the whole time the vote is taking place, unless, of course, they vote electronically.

**Tanveer Shahnawaz:** Mr. Speaker, I was here for the start of the vote.

**The Speaker:** The member must remain in his seat for the entirety of the vote. Unfortunately, the member's vote will not count.

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow the brand new member's vote to stand.

**The Speaker:** Do hon. members agree that the member's vote should stand?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

*(Division No. 193)*

## YEAS

Members

Acan
Albas
Alty
Arnold
Baber
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Begum
Bendayan
Bittle
Blanchette-Joncas
Borrelli
Brunelle-Duceppe
Carr
Chagger
Champoux
Chartrand
Chenette
Chong
Clark
Cormier
Dabrusin
Danko
Davies (Niagara South)
Deltell
DeRidder
Deschênes-Thériault
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Epp
Fancy
Fergus
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fuhr
Gainey
Gasparro
Gazan
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gobeil
Gould
Grant
Groleau
Gull-Masty
Hanley
Harrison
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Idlout
Jeneroux
Joseph
Kelloway
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lantsman
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lattanzio
Lavack
Al Soud
Ali
Anandasangaree
Auguste
Bains
Bardeesy
Battiste
Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Berthold
Blanchet
Bonin
Brière
Caley
Casey
Champagne
Chang
Chatel
Chi
Church
Connors
Coteau
Dandurand
Davidson
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Deschênes
Desrochers
Dhillon
Dowdall
Duguid
Earle
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fry
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodridge
Gourde
Greaves
Guay
Hajdu
Hardy
Hepfner
Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
Jaczek
Johns
Kayabaga
Kelly
Kmiec
Kram
Lake
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Larouche
Lauzon
Lavoie
LeBlanc
Leitão
Lightbound
Long
Ma
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Maloney
May
McKelvie
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Calgary Centre)
McPherson
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrison
Myles
Nater
Nguyen
Normandin
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Paul-Hus
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Sawatzky
Schmale
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Solomon
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Thériault
Tochor
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Villeneuve
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi– — 225
Lefebvre
Lemire
Lobb
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Martin
Mazier
McKenzie
McKnight
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Melillo
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nathan
Noormohamed
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Petitpas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rochefort
Ruff
Saini
Sari
Schiefke
Seeback
Shahnawaz
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sodhi
Sousa
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Thompson
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Vien
Watchorn
Yip
Zerucelli

## NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Anstey
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bexte
Block
Bragdon
Calkins
Chambers
Cody
Dalton
Dawson
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Genuis
Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Windsor West)
Guglielmin
Hallan
Hoback
Jackson
Jivani
Allison
Bailey
Barlow
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Bezan
Bonk
Brassard
Caputo
Cobena
Cooper
Dancho
Diotte
Falk (Provencher)
Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Gunn
Ho
Holman
Jansen
Khanna

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|---|---|
| Kibble | Kirkland |
| Konanz | Kronis |
| Kuruc | Kusie |
| Lawrence | Lawton |
| Leslie | Lewis (Essex) |
| Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk) | Lloyd |
| Mahal | Majumdar |
| Mantle | McCauley |
| Menegakis | Moore |
| Morin | Motz |
| Muys | Patzer |
| Poilievre | Redekopp |
| Reid | Rempel Garner |
| Reynolds | Roberts |
| Rood | Ross |
| Rowe | Scheer |
| Small | Steinley |
| Stevenson | Strahl |
| Stubbs | Thomas |
| Tolmie | Uppal |
| Van Popta | Viersen |
| Vis | Warkentin |
| Waugh | Williamson |
| Zimmer– — 89 | |

PAIRED

Members

| | |
|---|---|
| Anand | Au |
| Blois | Carney |
| Duncan | Gallant |
| Généreux | Godin |
| Joly | Lalonde |
| McGuinty | Perron |
| Plamondon | Royer– — 14 |

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

## PRIVILEGE

REQUIREMENT OF ROYAL RECOMMENDATION FOR BILL C-261—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I would like to have your attention. I have two rulings to deliver.

In my statement of April 16, 2026, on the management of Private Members' Business, I expressed concern that Bill C-261, an act to amend the Old Age Security Act with regard to the amount of the full pension, appeared to infringe on the Crown's financial prerogative. At the time, I encouraged members who wished to make arguments about whether or not the bill requires a royal recommendation to do so. No formal arguments were submitted to the Chair.

However, the sponsor of the bill, the member for Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent, in her initial intervention during debate at second reading on June 3, 2026, stated that she recognized the bill requires a royal recommendation and urged the government to provide it. The member for King—Vaughan, as well as the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, also acknowledged the bill's need for a royal recommendation.

● (1545)

[*English*]

In their interventions, the members each noted similarities between Bill C-261 and Bill C-319 from the 44th Parliament, which the Chair, on May 11, 2023, ruled required a royal recommendation. Bill C-261, like Bill C-319 before it, seeks to increase the full pension for all pensioners aged 65 or older, which would raise public spending beyond what the Old Age Security Act presently authorizes. Bill C-261 also seeks to increase the earnings exemption used to calculate the guaranteed income supplement, which would increase the amount of the benefit payable. This has the effect of authorizing increased expenditures of public revenue on the program.

[*Translation*]

As a result, in the Chair's view, the bill infringes on the financial prerogative of the Crown.

The House can proceed to vote on the bill at second reading, but a royal recommendation must be provided before it can proceed to a final vote in the House at the third reading stage. If no such royal recommendation is provided, or unless the bill is amended in the meantime in a manner that removes the need for a royal recommendation, the Chair will decline to put the question at third reading, and the Chair will order the bill removed from the Order Paper.

I thank all members for their attention.

[*English*]

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN MEMBERS' PARLIAMENTARY WORK—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on October 20 by the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler regarding freedom of speech in members' parliamentary work.

In raising his question of privilege, the member asserted that an investigation by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario of the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River offends members' freedom of speech. He cited a press report that the investigation was launched following a complaint about the member's supplementary opinion attached to the first report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, which was presented to the House on June 17. He also said that the member could be subject to professional disciplinary proceedings because of that supplementary opinion.

The member argued that freedom of speech extends to supplementary opinions that are appended to committee reports. In his view, the protection arising from this freedom can be invoked not only in proceedings before the courts but also in those before other outside bodies, such as professional bodies. He further stated that the health professions procedural code requires the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River to co-operate with the investigation and that the potential for professional sanctions based on his supplementary opinion could put him under improper pressure and compromise his ability to freely represent his constituents.

[*Translation*]

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons responded, with reference to article 9 of the English Bill of Rights of 1689, that the opinions members express in parliamentary committee work, including those of the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, are protected from outside interference by parliamentary privilege. He said that the Speaker is the guardian of the rights and privileges of the House and its members and that the Speaker has the power to defend these rights in any place outside Parliament. Consequently, while he recognized the importance of the issue, the parliamentary secretary did not think it necessary to treat the matter as a question of privilege, as he did not believe that a motion of the House was required for the Speaker to act.

[*English*]

Let me begin by noting that it is correct to say that freedom of speech is fundamental to the proper conduct of parliamentary business. This privilege is at the core of the absolute parliamentary privileges entrenched in and protected by the Constitution Act, 1867, and the Parliament of Canada Act. It is one of the oldest and best established parliamentary privileges, dating back at least to the English Bill of Rights of 1689.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, fourth edition, offers the following explanation in section 3.52:

> Freedom of speech is the cornerstone of the rights and parliamentary privileges accorded to members. It is both the least questioned and the most fundamental right of the member of Parliament on the floor of the House and in committees. It has been described as:
>
> > … a fundamental right without which...[members] would be hampered in the performance of their duties. It permits them to speak in the House without inhibition, to refer to any matter or express any opinion as they see fit, and to say what they feel needs to be said in the furtherance of the national interest and the aspirations of their constituents.

● (1550)

[*Translation*]

Article 9 of the English Bill of Rights of 1689 declares that "the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament". This protection therefore prevents parliamentary proceedings from being called into question before a court or other body outside Parliament.

Parliamentary privilege protects more than just members' speeches: It extends to all parliamentary proceedings, both in the House and at committee. Accordingly, all documents published under the House's authority, including committee reports and their appendices, are protected by parliamentary privilege, and the observations made in the context of this work cannot be used in legal proceedings against the person who made them or to impeach their credibility in court.

Legal precedents also confirm that the protection offered by parliamentary privilege applies beyond the courts, administrative tribunals and commissions of inquiry.

The critical issue the Chair must decide is whether an investigation by a professional body based on proceedings in Parliament can impede a member in performing their duties—in this case, the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

The Chair shares the concerns of the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler. Members should not fear professional disciplinary measures will be imposed because of the ideas they express during parliamentary proceedings. Members must have complete confidence that they enjoy freedom of speech in our work, and such investigations could have a chilling effect on members of professional bodies. I find that unacceptable.

[*English*]

That said, it is not uncommon for members' statements and parliamentary proceedings to be raised before the courts or other bodies. Normally, those entities readily acknowledge the existence of parliamentary privilege, and no action from the House is necessary.

As the guardian of the rights and privileges of the House and its members, the Chair would like to assure the House that these responsibilities are taken very seriously. I asked the law clerk and parliamentary counsel to write to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to remind it that members' freedom of speech is constitutionally protected. The Chair expects the college to recognize that these privileges and protections apply in this case and to act accordingly, without the need for any further action by the House.

As a result, the Chair believes it would be premature to conclude that the actions of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario constitute a prima facie case of privilege. If future events reveal that our communication with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario was in vain and that the privileges of the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, and in turn those of the House, may in fact be infringed or the threat becomes clear, the Chair may return to this matter.

I thank members for their attention.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 15 minutes.

* * *

[*English*]

## THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

**Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North. It is always an honour to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Mississauga East—Cooksville to speak about the future of our country and, more importantly, the future of the families, workers, seniors, young people and small business owners who call our community home.

*The Budget*

I rise today in support of budget 2026, "Masters of our destiny". This is a budget about building a stronger, more independent, more affordable Canada. However, before I speak about billions of dollars in investments, economic growth or fiscal policy, I want to speak about something that is much more personal. I want to speak about the people that I represent. For the people of Mississauga East—Cooksville, this budget is not simply a collection of numbers that we will talk about; it is about their lives, and it is about their families, jobs and futures.

When I am speaking with residents at community events, visiting small businesses, meeting seniors or talking to families at their doorsteps, I hear many of the same concerns. Parents are worried about the price of groceries; seniors are worried about whether their pensions will stretch far enough; young people are wondering whether they will be able to afford a home; small business owners are dealing with higher costs, global competition and uncertainty over trade with the United States; and families caring for aging parents or relatives with disabilities are asking for more support. These are not abstract economic questions; they are the everyday realities of the people we were elected to serve, and they are precisely why budget 2026 matters.

I came to Canada as an immigrant from Portugal. My family came here because Canada represented an opportunity. It was a country where if someone worked hard, believed in themselves and contributed to their community, they could build a better future. I was fortunate enough to represent Canada as an Olympic athlete, and today I have the extraordinary privilege of representing Canadians in this House.

I have seen first-hand what this country makes possible. Mississauga East—Cooksville reflects that Canadian story. Our riding is home to families whose roots reach across the globe from Portugal to Poland, Ukraine, Philippines, India, Pakistan, the Caribbean, Africa and many other parts of the world. We have people of different faiths, cultures and traditions, but we share something fundamental. We want our children to succeed. We want our parents and grandparents to live with dignity. We want safe neighbourhoods, good jobs, affordable homes and an economy that rewards hard work. That is the Canada I believe in, and that is the Canada that this budget is building.

The first issue is affordability. I know that Canadians are still feeling the pressure of higher prices. I hear it in conversations with seniors on fixed incomes. I hear it from parents who are doing everything they can to provide for their children. I hear it from workers who are earning a paycheque, but still find themselves struggling at the end of the month. We cannot tell these families that economic growth alone will solve their problems tomorrow; we have to look at what is happening today.

That is why budget 2026 introduces another one-time supplement to the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. The measure will provide a 50% increase in the benefit this 2026 benefit year, and it will come in early 2027. More than 12 million Canadians are expected to benefit. For many families, that is meaningful assistance with groceries, food and other essential expenses.

We know that a benefit payment alone will not solve food inflation. We also have to address the underlying cost of food, and that is why our government is moving forward with a national food security strategy, investing in Canadian food production, processing and competition. We need more food produced and processed right here in Canada. We need stronger supply chains, and we need more competition so that Canadian families have more choice in the grocery store.

This budget also strengthens support for lower-income workers through the build Canada workers benefit. This is about making sure that people who get up every morning, work so hard and contribute to our economy can keep more of what they earn. Work should provide dignity, opportunity and the ability to build a decent life. This principle must remain at the core and centre of our economic policy.

● (1555)

One of the greatest challenges facing our communities is housing. In Mississauga East—Cooksville, many young people who grew up in our neighbourhoods want to remain close to their families. They want to begin their careers, get married, raise children and build their lives in the community they know and love, but too many feel that home ownership is slipping beyond their reach. At the same time, renters are worried about affordability, and some of our most vulnerable residents face housing insecurity and homelessness.

Budget 2026 proposes approximately $44.7 billion over 11 years to support housing and homelessness measures. Our goal is to significantly increase the construction of non-market housing supply and get Canada on a path to eradicating and ending homelessness over the next decade.

Housing is about more than simply putting a roof over someone's head. I have taken a particular interest in what is called the Dunn House model, in Toronto, which demonstrates the importance of connecting supportive housing with health care and community services. It recognizes something very important. People experiencing homelessness often need more than housing alone. They may need mental health services, addiction treatment, primary health care and ongoing community support.

I believe we should explore how that kind of integrative model can be expanded into Mississauga, working with our local health organizations, such as the Trillium Health Partners. A stronger Canada should be measured not only by how many homes we build, and yes, we are building homes, but also by how many people we help to regain stability, security and hope.

For young families looking to buy their first home, our government is supporting measures to reduce GST on qualifying new homes. It is also working with provinces and municipalities to reduce unnecessary costs and accelerate construction. Canada needs more homes of every kind: affordable rentals, supportive housing, homes for seniors and homes that young families can actually afford.

One of the greatest privileges of representing Mississauga East—Cooksville is spending time with our seniors. Many immigrants who came to this country decades ago worked in construction and in factories, built businesses, raised families and helped create the communities we enjoy today. They contributed to Canada's prosperity. In their retirement years, they deserve security and dignity.

Many Canadians are quietly caring for their aging parents, a spouse with a serious illness or a family member living with a disability. These caregivers often make enormous personal and financial sacrifices. That is why, under budget 2026, eligible caregivers could receive up to $1,260 annually. That is nearly 600,000 caregivers, and 180,000 of them were providing that care and receiving nothing prior to this budget. It will be a tremendous benefit for them. This is the kind of practical measure that can make a difference in people's lives.

I want to return to where I began, with the families of Mississauga East—Cooksville; the seniors who helped build our country; the workers who get up every morning to work hard for our country and for their families; the parents who want their children to have a better life; the small business owners who take risks, create jobs and contribute to our communities; and the young people who want to believe that opportunities available to previous generations will also be available to them.

When my family came to Canada, we believed in the promise of this country that with hard work, determination and opportunity, a better future was always possible. I still believe in that promise, but maintaining that promise requires action, and that is coming through budget 2026. It requires us to build more homes, create better jobs and support our seniors. Our responsibility, all of us here in this House, whatever our partisan stripe, is to leave Canada stronger, more prosperous and more united than we found it. That is the future I want for my children and for every Canadian family, and that is why I am so proud to support budget 2026.

● (1600)

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech.

He concluded by saying that we are doing this for our children's future and that we have responsibilities. I tend to agree with him.

Does he understand that we in the Bloc Québécois have serious concerns about using public funds to subsidize one of the industries that contributes the most to climate change, namely the oil and gas industry?

With our children's future and our responsibilities in mind, I have a simple question for my colleague: Is it right to take public money, taxes paid by Quebeckers and Canadians, and invest it in an industry that will disrupt the climate, which will be harmful to our children's future?

[*English*]

**Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to speak about young people and to talk about the vision for Canada, the same covenant that was given to my parents in terms of the opportunity to succeed here in this country.

The member talks about some of the different sectors we have in our country. We need businesses to succeed, and that is why we have put in the mega deduction. It is a productivity deduction, to make a company more efficient and more green. They can invest in equipment, advanced manufacturing and all of these opportunities to be able to create jobs and do it in a sustainable and green way.

● (1605)

**Vince Gasparro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is great to be here, and it was great to listen to the hon. member specifically. He and I have known each other for quite a while. He has spent a great deal of time talking about the people of his riding but also his family, and there is a connection to Eglinton—Lawrence. His mother lives in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence.

He talked about caregivers and the caregiver tax credit. Maybe the hon. member would like to talk about how the caregiver tax credit could help his mother and people like his mother in his riding and in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence and caregivers across the country.

**Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, my mom gets the hon. member's newsletters just about every month. What she loves is the crossword. I always ask her for some of the answers to help her out. She loves those crosswords.

Caregivers are unsung heroes right across our country. We know them. They are individuals from our families. They are in the neighbourhoods. They do work on behalf of seniors who need that extra support. For the most part, most are doing this all for free. They do not get any benefit. They are not getting any support. Through the budget, now 600,000 caregivers across our country, with 180,000 who never got any financial support to help with their costs, will be getting up to $1,260 to help with those caregiving supports they provide in our communities that are so essential. I know our country would not be as strong without those supports.

**Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am just reading a headline on CTV News right now. It says the government is going to spend $331.6 billion more in this budget. I also remember that when the budget was presented, there was supposed to be $60 billion worth of savings. I am just wondering how one can spend $331.6 billion more and then save $60 billion. Could the member square that circle for me?

**Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to talk about how paramount fiscal responsibility is to this government. That is why this government has taken an approach whereby we are going to, by 2027-28, balance the operating costs of government so revenues will be able to take care of those operating costs.

I will also say to the member that we are investing in Canada. We believe in Canada. That is why we are investing in housing, in infrastructure, in energy, in public infrastructure, things that make our country better. This is what families, businesses and workers are asking for. This is what will make Canada strong.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is quite the pleasure to rise and speak to the budget this year. I want to frame it between the last federal election and where we are today. For me, it is all about ways we can build strength in our economy and build a better, healthier and stronger society. Virtually from day one after the last federal election, there was a great deal of concern about the direction Canada was going in, given the Trump tariffs and trade. During the election, we talked about how we needed to build one Canadian economy.

Shortly after that election, we brought forward legislation to deal with just that, a one Canada economy. We demonstrated, by working with different stakeholders, in particular our leaders, indigenous leaders, provinces and territories, how, as we work together, we can actually build that one Canada economy. The federal government brought in legislation, and we did our part from a federal perspective, in anticipation that we will see more and more barriers taken down through strong provincial leadership. We know that is ultimately what Canadians want to see.

Shortly thereafter, we started to talk a great deal about major projects, virtually from coast to coast to coast. We can talk about LNG in British Columbia, the MOU and the pipeline discussion taking place in Alberta, copper mines in Saskatchewan, mining in Manitoba and the potential of the Churchill port, which is something the premier talks a great deal about nowadays along with the federal government. We can talk about nuclear energy in Ontario, the port of Montreal or the many different energy projects being talked about for Atlantic Canada, not to mention what is happening in the north in mining and military investment. With all of these major projects, close to half a trillion dollars, in every region of our country, we are seeing the benefits.

The Prime Minister leads a number of ministers who have been doing a lot of travelling, and that is a good thing. We have had a couple of dozen trade agreements and security agreements in the last 18 months. It is absolutely incredible to see the number of trade and security agreements. We have passed legislation: Northern Ireland, England, Indonesia.

I am very proud of how, as a government, we moved so quickly on a trade agreement with the Philippines. In fact, I believe it was just last July 3 when we had a discussion, and I was grateful to be a part of that discussion, with President Marcos and the Prime Minister of Canada sitting down in Vancouver and saying they wanted to achieve a trade agreement. In just these last few days, we have achieved that trade agreement.

Later this year, we are hoping to see another trade agreement, with India. All of that is so critically important. It is how we expand trade opportunities beyond Canada-U.S.A. trade. It is not to take anything away from the trade we do with the United States. It is about our sovereignty and ensuring that we have more opportunities that go beyond the Canada-U.S.A. border, and we have seen incredible movement on that front.

● (1610)

We had the Prime Minister talk a great deal about investment, not only in terms of public dollars coming from different levels of government, but also private dollars. Members can take a look at what was taking place in September, where we had the Prime Minister host the world in regard to investing in Canada. The response that we got was absolutely unheard of in historical amounts of dollars. We are talking about half a trillion dollars that companies and individuals in many sectors of society are now looking at Canada in terms of investing. That is unheard of, not to mention the billions of dollars that were acquired and committed even prior to that. Then we can take a look at the whole bigger picture fitting into the budget.

That brings me to the Canada productivity mega deduction. That is a significant aspect of the budget. It is a continuation of everything that I have been talking about already in my comments. It is about building a stronger and healthier Canadian economy that works for all Canadians. That deduction will provide businesses, small, medium and large alike, with the opportunity to write off capital and other types of equipment. That is going to, ultimately, increase productivity and create jobs.

I had the opportunity to provide comment and detail on that just last Friday, when I was at the Fort Garry fire truck manufacturing plant that has been in existence in Winnipeg now for over 100 years, since 1919. The best fire trucks in the world are manufactured in the northwest end of Winnipeg. Whether it is used by well-established companies like Fort Garry fire truck or those newer companies that are popping up throughout our nation, that particular deduction is going to allow a company to ultimately write off certain things that would enable the expansion of production. When we see that, what we are really talking about is not only a question of modernization, but also expansion. By doing that, what we are talking about is jobs. Every initiative I have mentioned so far contributes to a stronger, healthier economy and building more jobs.

On the other side, because it was raised earlier today, there is the issue of homelessness. The day after the budget was presented in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister was in Winnipeg to talk about that issue. It is a multi-billion-dollar commitment over a number of years. What was really quite impressive was the fact that when we were there making the announcement, we had the Prime Minister centre-front with the Premier of Manitoba and the Mayor of Winnipeg, demonstrating the will and desire of all levels of government to take on that issue, including indigenous leaders. This government made a powerful statement the day after the budget, working in collaboration, because there is no way any level of government is going to be able to do that on its own. It is going to take collaboration.

Through the strong leadership of our Prime Minister, working with the provinces that are willing, like Manitoba, and Winnipeg, and indigenous communities, we are making a difference. I am very proud of the fact that Winnipeg is actually leading the way, I would suggest to colleagues, in dealing with the issue of homelessness, because it goes far beyond just not having a home. It deals with issues of mental health, addictions and so many other things.

● (1615)

**Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this Liberal costly budget is adding $765 billion in spending to the national debt. If Canadians thought Justin Trudeau knew how to throw money around, the current Prime Minister looks like he is from a different dimension. Debt interest charges are the fastest-growing budget item, more than health care.

Why is the Liberal government accelerating residency for hundreds of thousands of people while young Canadians and families still cannot afford a home in cities where most of these arrivals settle?

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I find it somewhat distasteful the manner in which the Conservative Party of Canada is dealing with the issue of immigration. I would like to emphasize the misleading information, whether from the Conservative Leader or other Conservative members, in an attempt to give the false impression that the government is going to be bringing 600,000-plus immigrants into Canada. That is just not true. They had better wake up and realize the damage that is caused when they make assertions of that nature. I would suggest they need to be more honest when trying to portray the reality of the situation. If they were, racism and so many other issues would not be at the boiling point they are at in certain areas of our nation. At the end of the day, immigrants have built this nation working with Canadians.

● (1620)

**Roman Baber:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe it is against the Standing Orders to accuse other members of dishonesty. I would kindly ask the member, and I say this as an immigrant to Canada, who spoke of racism, to please withdraw the allegation of dishonesty.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, for those who would have been offended, I withdraw the remark.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, one of the things that sets Canada apart from the United States is our health care legislation. Since the Prime Minister took office, however, health care has not been a priority, even though it is the top priority for Quebeckers.

My colleague talked about homelessness. Homelessness is a complex phenomenon that involves multiple types of interventions from social services and health services. Why is the government giving with one hand but taking away with the other? The health transfer escalator is currently set to come back down to 3%, yet system costs are between 5% and 6% per year. In the wake of the pandemic, why has only $46 billion in new money been invested over 10 years?

My colleague will likely reply with some big numbers, but at the end of the day, this government is only paying 21¢ of every dollar spent on health care. How does the government expect us to shift from curing to preventing? That will require people working in mental health, people who can provide predictability in the health care system.

Why is this government not injecting sustainable funding? It simply injects funds on a piecemeal basis, on an ad hoc basis.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I believe the good news is that the federal government continues to support the health care transfers that are absolutely necessary. That funding formula is something that has been well-established over a number of years.

Where I would correct the member is when he tries to give an impression that the current Prime Minister and the government are not supporting health care. I made reference to him coming to Winnipeg the day after the budget. There was a commitment of just under $200 million. The premier stood up to say how great that $200 million was because it was going to assist in making sure we get a hospital of sorts to deal with the issue of addictions, and so much more. In addition to that, we are investing literally billions over the next few years in capital infrastructure. I am hoping that the Seven Oaks hospital's emergency services is going to be a major beneficiary. I believe it will be. We will see $1.75 million going towards it. We have not given up on health care at all.

**Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, two weeks ago, I visited Estrie Aide in my riding for a special event called “orphaned socks”. I saw people choosing hats, gloves, boots, warm clothes and socks, of course, to get prepared for winter. It is hard to accept that in a country like Canada people will sleep outside this winter.

I would like to hear from my colleague how the measures announced in the budget will make sure that Stéphane, for example, will have a roof over his head.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate how close the member is to her community. There are many different benefits. A good example would be the groceries and essentials benefit program, which is there to put money in Canadians' pockets. We continue to see that increased.

**Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am going to split my time with the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

Members of Parliament spend a lot of time on the road, and sometimes there is a spare moment here and there at an airport or in an Uber or when grabbing dinner. When that happens, like most people, most normal people, I find myself mindlessly scrolling through Instagram, because members of Parliament are normal people too. There is this guy who came across my feed. His name is Dave Ramsey. He keeps coming up on my feed.

Members might have heard of him or might have seen him. He is a radio host who gives financial advice to random people who call in to his show. The calls normally go something like this. The person says they live paycheque to paycheque and have a boatload of debt, but they just got a big inheritance from this rich uncle of theirs who died. Dave nods along, because he sees where this is going. Then the caller says they are thinking they should buy a Ferrari.

This makes for good entertainment, because we see the look on Dave's face at the utter foolishness of this person who wants to blow their inheritance on a fancy car, when obviously they should be using it to pay down their debt. I think I should call in to the show next time and tell them about this place called Canada, a state of successive Liberal budgets that over and over again blow the inheritance on a fancy car.

The government just did that. It just came into a bunch of money, $158 billion more than expected this spring. The inheritance came from a rich uncle named higher oil prices and higher inflation. The Liberals just told us here in this budget they tabled in the House less than two weeks ago that they are going to spend 96% of that entire windfall. This means 96¢ of every single dollar will go towards buying a new bright red Ferrari complete with all of the bells and whistles instead of doing the responsible thing Dave would tell us to do, which is pay down some of that debt. Had they banked that windfall, the deficits over the next five years would have been cut roughly in half, from about $289 billion to about $137 billion. These are still eye-popping numbers. Instead, they came down by just $7 billion.

I will tell the House why this matters. The Prime Minister likes to present himself as a careful steward of the public purse. I think that is why Canadians elected him. He is a former central banker, a numbers man, but the numbers in the budget tell a very different story. This is not a budget of a fiscal conservative, despite what he wants us to think. This is his second budget, and he cannot blame a minority Parliament anymore. He has the majority. He has a free hand and he can use it to borrow and spend more, which is exactly what he did. All of those who are watching this from Bay Street who thought maybe he was a fiscal conservative, maybe he was a responsible manager of the purse, are seeing right through this. The deficit this year is $62.3 billion with no return to balance anywhere even in a plan, not next year and not even by the end of the decade.

Even that number flatters the government. More and more spending is being moved off the main books into Crown corporations and into funds. This includes a $25-billion sovereign wealth fund funded entirely by borrowed money. It is like a family telling the bank that the budget is balanced while starting a secret renovation on a credit card that is from another bank. This is what is going on in Canada and that is why Ottawa will borrow $765 billion in new cash over the next five years. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that today. Net debt will rise from $1.45 trillion this year to $1.92 trillion by 2031.

This is important because debt is not free. Until we pay it back, we pay interest on it. Last year, that interest bill was $53.5 billion and by 2031, it will be $85.5 billion, an increase of 60%. Let me put that in human terms. By the end of this plan, Ottawa will spend more than $5,000 a year for every household in Canada on interest, and that total is going up to $8,000 a year by 2031. That is a couple of months' worth of rent. That is a new furnace. That is a whole year of RESP contributions for a family.

● (1625)

It could have paid for hospitals, it could have paid for schools, and it could have paid for equipment for the armed forces, but it did not. It just pays for interest. It is the fastest-growing line item in the budget. Instead, it goes to bondholders and buys nothing.

Here is a fact that every Canadian should know about when they look at this budget. Starting this year, Ottawa will spend more on interest than it sends to the provinces in the Canada health transfer. That means that a Canadian family spends more on the interest on the debt than the government spends on providing health care for Canadians across the country.

Today, about 10¢ of every federal revenue dollar goes to interest. By 2031, the same date I have been talking about, it will be almost 14¢. Interest on the debt is the fastest-growing line item within the budget. It is growing faster than health care, faster than transfers to the provinces for anything else and faster than any program that the government puts forward. It is not health care, it is not seniors and it is not defence. These are not my numbers. That is what I want everyone to know. These are the numbers right from the Liberal budget that was presented in this House.

People will probably remember the name David Dodge. I am sure the Prime Minister does. He is a former Governor of the Bank of Canada, just like the Prime Minister. He warned us that once debt servicing, which is the money that we pay down on the debt, passes 10¢ on the dollar, the debt becomes unsustainable, and borrowing gets too expensive. The Prime Minister is now taking us to 14¢ on the dollar. That is 40% past the benchmark that his predecessor at the Bank talked about.

We know the budget is a statement of priorities. We get that. We just do not see that Canadians were prioritized in this budget. It shows Canadians what the Canadian government values when choices get hard. The government's priorities seem to be very clear in this budget: more spending, more borrowing and more debt for Canadians. Canadians are living with very different priorities. Grocery bills are higher. Rent is still climbing in most cities in this country. Families are reviewing their mortgages and are facing bigger payments, while interest rates continue to climb.

Canadians, every day in their homes, are doing exactly what the government will not. They are making hard choices and living within their means. All we are asking is for the government to do the same thing. When families are stretched thin, the last thing they need is a government adding billions more in borrowing, which puts more pressure on prices, on interest rates and eventually on mortgage renewals. The government's main answer on affordability is a modest grocery rebate. That is a drop in the bucket next to a paycheque that stopped covering those essentials a long time ago.

Here is the bottom line: If Canadians are trying to make ends meet in this country, if they are trying to fill their tanks to get to work, if they are trying to save a little to get ahead or take a small vacation once every year or once every couple of years, this budget is not for them. It is for the government. There is nothing in here for Canadians.

Canadians' tax dollars go to interest instead of to the services that they rely on. Maybe that does not mean anything to them today, but it will certainly mean something to them tomorrow, the day after and for a generation into the future, when our grandchildren and our children will pay for these decisions that they had no say in.

I started with Dave Ramsey, the guy whose videos I had been scrolling through, and I will end with him. When a caller asks about the Ferrari, Dave does not laugh for long. He knows that the car loses value the minute it leaves the lot. While debt and interest keep growing, his advice never changes. He says to use the windfall to get out of debt and get one's house in order in case something happens.

This is not an ideology. It is the responsible thing for governments to do. Canadian families do it at their kitchen tables every day. The government got an inheritance. It got a windfall, and it spent the whole pie. If the Prime Minister called that show, Dave would tell him the exact same thing: Do not buy the car. Pay down the debt. Do it for future generations.

For those reasons, I am voting against this budget, and I hope members opposite will too.

● (1630)

**Vince Gasparro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened intently to my hon. colleague. She knows I have a great deal of respect for her.

This budget and this government spend a great deal of time talking about investment, like investment in infrastructure and investment in productive assets that create long-term, good-paying jobs. We can look at Churchill Falls, where 23,000 jobs are being created because of the Government of Canada's $10 billion in financing for that project. It is the largest renewable energy project in North American history.

Does my hon. colleague agree that there is a fundamental difference between spending and investing?

● (1635)

**Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, of course we agree. Every Canadian agrees. It is just that the government does not understand the difference, and just today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, whom they themselves hired, talked about $135 billion that the government called capital investment but is not capital at all. The government is fudging the numbers, so I invite my hon. colleague to at least table numbers that are accurate and that the Parliamentary Budget Officer can actually discern.

[*Translation*]

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I really loved my colleague's last answer. She is absolutely right. There is a significant difference between what the Liberals call an investment and what is, in reality, spending. She is correct on that point, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said as much. Once again, her response was both accurate and on point.

There is another issue on which I suspect my colleague and I may agree, because her leader has spoken about it repeatedly. He calls it corporate welfare. The government continues to provide subsidies to industries that do not need the money. I am referring to the oil and gas industry. We are talking about an industry that is posting record profits, that is one of the few sectors largely unaffected by tariffs, that is 60% American-owned and that sells 90% of its products to the United States. However, it is the economic sector that receives the most support from this government, financed by the tax dollars of Canadians and Quebeckers.

Would my colleague not agree that these subsidies should be scrapped and the money should be returned to Quebeckers and Canadians?

[*English*]

**Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, I love the sound of the Bloc Québécois finally agreeing that corporate welfare in this country needs to come to an end, but there is a bigger problem here. When the government has all the cash, when private capital is not put to work here and when companies do not see an investment climate that they can invest in, the government ends up with all of the money. The problem is that industries rely on those handouts before the government ever criticizes or speaks out against an industry. The government House leader stood here and talked about $500 billion coming into an investment summit. Today, this Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Liberals' own budget say that none of that is attached to a single project. The problem with getting investment is that we have to have a project or we have to have an item that the investment can go to, and none of that is clear. This is all smoke and mirrors, and soon Canadians will realize that.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member could give a rationale and justification. When we talk about finances, Canada actually has the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio of the entire G7. We are also one of only two G7 countries that have a AAA credit rating. As the members try to promote fear that there is no fiscal capacity, the reality is that, of the G7 countries, Canada is doing relatively well.

**Melissa Lantsman:** Madam Speaker, surely the member opposite is not suggesting that the pensions of Canadian workers belong to him to pay down that debt, because that is exactly what that equation counts for. The CPP belongs to Canadian workers and not the finance minister, and if that were not in the equation, this story would be very different.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** 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 Winnipeg Centre, Labour; the hon. member for Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, The Economy; the hon. member for Yellowhead, Parks Canada.

[*English*]

**Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, the federal Liberal government dropped a $600-billion federal budget. In fact, it was the largest budget in Canadian history. It is an extraordinary amount of money. It is difficult to even wrap one's head around the magnitude of $600 billion. It is also an extraordinary amount of debt for this year and the years to come.

I am the official opposition health critic for Canada, so I was looking at it through a health care lens. Everybody knows that our health care system is facing significant issues. In fact, there is quite a large deterioration in the quality of care that many Canadians are experiencing in this country, so I was eager to see the budget and this unprecedented level of spending. I assumed there would be commitments to work with provinces to modernize our health care system and an acknowledgement of what Canadians are facing: dying waiting for care, having their well-being severely compromised while waiting for care, and the lack of access to hospital beds, doctors and care homes. We can go on and on about all the problems in health care, yet none of them were acknowledged, and certainly they are not a priority of the federal government.

My hon. colleague from Thornhill mentioned this quite well: The budget document is a reflection of the values and the priorities of any given government on any given day, so it is fair to say, from my read of the budget, that ensuring that Canadians have quality access to timely, efficient and effective health care is not a priority at all. Working with the provinces, working with health authorities or working with education institutes are not a priority on health care for the Liberal government. I was quite disappointed to see that.

However, the Liberals are making a lot of promises. They are promising that there will be jobs, investment and opportunity for this generation and many to come, and that this budget will be the solution to dealing with the tariff issues we are facing and the changing geopolitical international scene we are experiencing. I feel we have heard a lot of these promises before.

In 2015, Canada had one of the richest middle classes in the world. We were doing very well. Then, the Liberal government came in, with Justin Trudeau's leadership, and it spent half a trillion dollars of debt, which was more debt than all the other governments that came before it, combined.

The Liberals doubled the national debt in that time. In every single budget, they promised that this was going to deliver prosperity. I believe “real change for the middle class” was one of their campaign slogans. However, 10 years after inheriting the richest middle class in the world, we saw quite the opposite from what they were promising for a decade. In fact, the price of the average home and the price of the average rental doubled in the 10 years they were governed under Justin Trudeau. We have over two million people going to food banks now. Despite all that so-called investment in the Canadian economy, our productivity has flatlined over the last decade. That really impacts the quality of life for everyday people, which is predicted to decline in the coming years.

I feel that we have heard this story before, but I will say that I do wish them the best of luck. I hope they succeed and that their promises and the commitments in this budget do bear fruit.

Again, the challenges we are facing in health care were nowhere acknowledged, let alone addressed, in this budget. We are spending a lot on health care. Canada spends about $433 billion annually on health care. That is roughly $10,000 per man, woman and child in Canada. It is the 13th-highest spending per capita in the developed world, according to the OECD, which is an international think tank that compares peer nations on how they are doing economically on health care and education.

We are the 13th-highest spender, spending $10,000 per person annually, so I think it is fair to ask what Canadians are getting for that money. If we look at the OECD, we are ranking fairly poorly on major indicators in health care.

For example, on MRIs, CTs and PET scanners, the major diagnostic machinery in this country, we rank 28th out of 31 OECD countries. We have 26 of those diagnostic imaging scanners per million people. The average is 51 per million. We are at almost half of the average in the developed world for these diagnostic imaging machines. If it is taking someone a year to get an MRI, that is why.

We rank 31st out of 37 for practising doctors per 1,000 people. On hospital beds per 1,000 people, we rank 29th out of 38. This is why we have hallway medicine, for example. This is why people cannot get a general practitioner. This is why people are struggling for six months to get a specialist referral. We do not have the doctors, we do not have the beds, and we do not have the MRI and CT machines, and it is having real impacts.

Let us say that someone feels that something is off. Maybe they feel a lump, and something is going on. Their general practitioner refers them to a specialist. Then, that specialist figures out what is going on, and they get a treatment plan and a surgery.

● (1640)

The average time from the first referral to the surgical procedure or treatment is over 30 weeks. That is seven months from when a person realizes something is wrong to when they can actually get help for it. That is the average, so some people are experiencing much worse wait times than that. It is so bad, in fact, that about 23,000 people on wait-lists are estimated to have died last year, according to SecondStreet.org. Since 2018, the cumulative death count for people on wait-lists was 133,000.

We do not know why they passed away. It may not have been because they were waiting. They may have just passed away, and that happens, but I think it is fair to say that what we have all seen or heard from our community or our family and from what we read in the news or the data we are seeing is that many of those deaths may have been preventable if people had had timely and efficient access to high-quality medical care.

The stakes are quite high in Canada. Forty per cent of Canadians, two out of five, will get cancer during their life. Let us say that if there were 20 people in this room right now, eight of us would get cancer in our life. It could be me, God forbid. Everyone knows someone who has had cancer. It is one of the top killers in this country. For example, one in eight women will get breast cancer. I do not know anyone who has not been touched by this disease.

If we talk to the top breast cancer experts in Canada, we learn that the benchmark for the first mammogram is seven weeks. Do members want to know how many jurisdictions in Canada are meeting the benchmark for the number one cancer for women? It is zero. Zero Canadian jurisdictions, zero health authorities and zero provinces are meeting the benchmark for the initial mammogram to diagnose breast cancer in Canada, and it is the most common cancer.



I recently met a young woman whose name is Crystal. She has two young daughters. She waited so long to get treatment that her breast cancer progressed from stage 2 to stage 3. As many people know, if a person gets beyond stage 2 in breast cancer, it is a real fight. It is the fight of their life. Now Crystal is in remission, thank God, but she will be on $4,000-per-week medication for the foreseeable future, and her life expectancy is predicted to be shorter because her cancer got so serious.

Crystal started an advocacy group called Too Young to Wait, to raise the alarm and advocate for young women to get screened, which is all great, but we need access to mammograms. We need the technicians to do those mammograms. We need the radiologists to read them. We need to have GPs to refer us. We need hospital beds when we get sick. We need treatment rooms. We need surgery. We are just not getting those things, relative to peer nations, despite spending more than they are in many cases.

It is not just cancer. It is also visits to the ER. Members may have seen the very alarming headline I read a few weeks ago. A young woman died from a broken ankle. The surgery to fix her broken ankle right after the accident was delayed, and she got a blood clot from her broken ankle and died. There was a father of three, right before Christmas last year, who had serious chest pain. He waited in an ER for eight hours and died in the ER before he was able to get care. An emergency room doctor who was reported about in Toronto CityNews is raising the alarm on the issue in the ER. He is saying that the number of patients is “insane, out-of-control, explosive, never seen before, [and] record-breaking.” This is in our country's biggest city. He is an ER doctor. He works at three hospitals.

It is time to break the glass. We are in an emergency situation in our health care system, and it is only going to get worse unless something serious changes. The federal government, the Liberals, has committed to bringing in 380,000 new permanent residents every single year, which is the population of a small city. To my knowledge, no consultation was done with provincial health authorities to determine whether we can withstand that level of influx of people.

In addition, the largest demographic in history, the baby boomers, is aging into health care. This means that our population is a little lopsided. When the Canada Health Act came in during the 1980s, a then modern health care system was initiated, and there were seven working people for every one retiree. Now there are three working people for every retiree. We pay some of the highest taxes in the world, and we have some of the highest health care expenses. Is money the only option to fix this? Maybe we need more money. That is probably part of the solution, but I do not think it is the only one.

What I do know is that nothing is being offered despite the largest budget in history. There is no new initiative for health care. There is no commitment to modernize it. There is nothing saying that we are going to work with provinces to get to the bottom of this and fix it or that we are going to look at other countries to see what they are doing with their universal health care systems that we are not. It is not a priority of the government to support provinces to ensure that Canadians are not dying in ERs or dying waiting for surgical care. This is not something the Liberals are taking seriously, which was the biggest disappointment for me in this budget, and it is the top reason that I will be voting against it.

● (1645)

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if that is the reason the member is voting against the budget, she needs to revisit her position. I cannot believe just how inaccurate the member was on so many accounts.

We can talk about emergency services. Victoria General Hospital in Manitoba is getting a new emergency room. It is in today's NDP throne speech in Manitoba. There is going to be more emergency work done in the province of Manitoba. CancerCare Manitoba is getting an infusion of capital for its new facility. I do not know where the member is getting her numbers about the mammograms she talked about. They are so out of whack.

There would be an overall 5% increase to health care transfers, plus $5 billion over three years for capital investment from Ottawa. The member needs to read the section in the budget on health care, see what the Government of Canada plans to do and then maybe reconsider the way she votes on the budget.

● (1650)

**Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, I recommend that the member meet with Breast Cancer Canada, the foremost advocacy group in the country for fighting breast cancer, which is the number one cancer facing women. There was testimony at the health committee that not one single jurisdiction in the entire country is meeting the seven-week benchmark, which is still a long time, by the way, for the initial diagnosis. I have personal experience with this. I can attest that the wait times in Manitoba are absolutely dismal for that initial diagnostic test. I have talked to thousands of Canadians and organizations over the last number of months in this role. I can confidently tell the member that no place in Canada is meeting the benchmarks for the best care possible, not in this country let alone in the world.

What the parliamentary secretary is saying is wholly inaccurate, based on the experts whose job it is to advocate for saving lives in Canada. I would ask him to take a look at the ER at HSC and at the first nations men who have passed away waiting for care. I can go on all day about the failures in Manitoba and in every province of this country. He says that the budget would fix these problems, but this is blatantly untrue.

[*Translation*]

**Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, health is not a priority for this Prime Minister. He has not even bothered to give his Minister of Health a mandate letter. I have never seen anything like this in the 11 years that I have been here.

What is worse, in order to care for people, in order to have a health care system, we need diagnoses. There is no health care without diagnoses, and to have diagnoses, we need equipment. That takes money. To move from curative care to preventive care, we need early screening and assessments.

Right now, the government is giving with one hand and taking away with the other. The government is still giving subsidies to oil companies, which do not need the money, and, at the same time, it is cutting health transfers from 6% to 3%. That is billions of dollars that the government is planning to take away from the provinces, which are responsible for providing people with health care and which must do so in extremely challenging situations, particularly when it comes to homelessness.

The government is boasting about allocating money to homelessness for 10 years, but it is also reducing the provinces' capacity to take care of people.

What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

**Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for bringing up diagnostic imaging. The Conservatives spearheaded a study at the Standing Committee on Health, of which I am vice-chair, to study the very serious problems we have with diagnostic wait times. The member makes excellent points.

Just for some context, the state of Pennsylvania in the United States has more MRI machines than all of Canada has. In addition to that, the average MRI machine in Canada is wholly outdated. They have to be updated every 10 years. Most of our infrastructure is far older than that. We are facing very serious problems, and these are very expensive machines. When we designed the health care system in the 1950s and 1960s, and then the Health Act in the 1980s, people were not living as long, and medical advancements had not even brought in MRIs yet. They did not become widespread until the early 2000s.

The foundation that built part of the national identity of our Canadian health care system needs to be modernized to meet the modern challenges and offer top-tier, scientifically advanced medical care that Canadians are not receiving in an efficient way. We need to be looking at that, and unfortunately this budget would not do that.

**Vince Gasparro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Burnaby Central.

It is a great honour to rise in the House in support of the current government's second budget. This budget comes at a critical time. Our country is facing four major crises.

The first crisis is the trade war with the United States and the uncertainty that comes with it for Canadian workers and businesses. That uncertainty is a drag on economic growth and, subsequently, on job growth as well. The second is Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, which is impacting supply chains and has raised commodity prices globally. The third is the conflict in the Middle East and the closure or restriction of tanker movement in the Strait of Hormuz, which has impacted global energy markets by raising prices and straining supply chains. The fourth is the rising of long-term bond yields that have raised borrowing costs for consumers, basically anyone looking to get a mortgage or an auto loan. It has also put pressure on government and corporate balance sheets, and of course has impacted household budgets as well.

All these challenges are contributing to increased inflation and issues around affordability. Budget 2026 provides a road map for the short term, the medium term and the long term.

In the short term, we have to make sure we protect Canadians from these immediate economic pressures by supporting them with significant affordability measures. I will name just a few. The first is the Canada groceries and essentials benefit and our 50% top-up, which would support 12 million Canadians. The average family of four would receive up to $2,570 over a year. To put that in perspective, 35,524 people in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence rely on the groceries and essentials benefit.

The second measure is the build Canada workers benefit. This would be significant income support that would help retrain workers affected by the trade uncertainty that I spoke about earlier. It would provide individuals with up to almost $1,900 and provide a family of four with up to $3,200. The third affordability measure is around fuel affordability and the temporary elimination of the federal fuel excise tax, which has helped ease pressure at the pumps by lowering gas and diesel prices.

For the medium term, there is the diversification of our trade relationships and strengthening Canada's economy. As I spoke about earlier, the trade war with the United States has reinforced the importance of diversifying Canada's trade relationships. This is to ensure that businesses can access global markets more easily and to create good-paying jobs here at home. We plan on doubling non-U.S. exports by 2035 and are ahead of schedule in that regard. Budget 2026 would commit $6.6 billion to trade diversification and infrastructure strategies to help support industry and people as our economy transitions into a new world order, an order that Canada is helping create.

It also means that we would continue to deepen relationships with reliable trading partners around the world. As a trading nation, we believe in free trade and international co-operation. That belief is grounded in the ideas that open markets create opportunities for Canadian businesses and workers, that reliable trading relationships help strengthen our domestic economic security, and that Canadian businesses that expand and compete globally, access new markets and build supply chains with trusted partners create good-paying jobs here at home.

● (1655)

This transition will require the attracting of capital in order for Canada to continue to be competitive, attracting foreign direct investment, for example. The Prime Minister's Investment Summit attracted nearly $500 billion in new investment. This is absolutely critical for us to make sure that we improve on productivity.

The productivity mega deduction does encourage investment in machinery and equipment, and technology more broadly. This deduction will lower the marginal effective tax rate to 6.4%, making it the most attractive in the G7. This $36-billion tax cut is the largest corporate tax cut in decades, second only to one by my former boss, Prime Minister Paul Martin, then finance minister Paul Martin, who brought in the largest tax cut in Canadian history, which led to one of the longest periods of economic growth in our nation's history. This budget is a throwback to the 1990s liberalism under Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin.

In the long term, we are building a more resilient and productive Canada. We are investing in major projects. I cited an example earlier, when I talked about the Government of Canada's financing of the Churchill Falls project, the largest investment in renewable energy in North American history. It will create 23,000 jobs and produce enough clean power to power and heat all the homes in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal combined. That is just one example of the infrastructure we are trying to build in this great country.

These investments will also lead to greater energy security. More than $50 billion is being allocated through the national electricity strategy, $6.5 billion through the nuclear energy strategy, and continued investment in critical minerals and domestic energy infrastructure. On housing, there is $44.7 billion to help build the homes Canadians need with a goal to ultimately end homelessness in 10 years.

The objective of this budget is a more productive economy, a more diversified economy, less vulnerability to external shocks, and more opportunities for Canadian workers and businesses. This is also a fiscally responsible budget. Canada's 10-year government bond yields remain among the lowest in the G7. Canada has experienced the smallest increase in 10-year government bond yields among G7 countries since the end of 2025. We are on pace to balance our operating budget a year earlier. We are maintaining fiscal discipline, giving Canadians the flexibility they so desperately need.

In closing, the global economic environment has changed, and Canada is changing with it. Even though we cannot control every international crisis, we can control how prepared we are to respond. We can provide support for Canadians in the short term, we can make our economy more productive in the medium term and we can build out our infrastructure in the long term.

We need to be able to stand on our own two feet as a country again. Budget 2026 is a blueprint for how we achieve that goal.

● (1700)

**Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC):** Madam Speaker, food bank use has doubled since 2019, with over 2.1 million visits per month, taxes are going up, 71% of people are renters and 31% of people are newcomers. When work pays less and housing, food and essentials costs go up more, how can the Liberal government justify putting further strain on a limited supply of housing and jobs by driving up the cost of living and telling Canadians that everything is going to be okay?

**Vince Gasparro:** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member chose to talk about tax cuts. This is the government that reduced taxes for 22 million Canadians. This is the government that is proposing to bring in the largest corporate tax cuts in Canadian history, which would help drive growth and help drive jobs in exactly the industries that we need. It is a little surprising to hear members of the Conservative Party not supporting this growth agenda that would ease the tax burden on Canadians and the businesses that they work for and that they own.

[*Translation*]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, if this budget were truly intended to take care of people who have been in real need for a long time and who are grappling with inflation and rising grocery prices, it would take care of seniors. That was a request that the Bloc Québécois made.

My colleague from Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent introduced Bill C-261. We are again raising the issue of increasing OAS for people aged 65 to 74. This budget does not include such a measure, even though it was one of the demands made by the Bloc Québécois.

How can my colleague be okay with letting seniors down?

● (1705)

[*English*]

**Vince Gasparro:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I have worked on some projects together, when it came to the Intentional Community Consortium, so I want to thank her for that.

When it comes to battling inflation and helping those most vulnerable, we have a plan in our budget to help with that by increasing the groceries benefit and by adding support for caregivers. There is significant support in this budget for those who need help most.

I am proud to stand up, vote in favour of this budget and speak in favour of this budget, not only for my community, but for the member's as well.

**Pauline Rochefort (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech focuses on the economy, and certainly that is theme number one of our budget. There are three themes on the economy: growing our economy, affordability and sovereignty. I was wondering if my colleague might comment on the third theme, the sovereign aspects, which are essential.

**Vince Gasparro:** Madam Speaker, everything that we are talking about in this budget is about strengthening Canada's sovereignty: making our infrastructure resilient and ready to position the country for the 21st century, and ensuring that our workers are as well trained as they can be in the jobs that are going to be relevant in the 21st century. The fact is, and I spent a bit of time talking about this, that we need to continue to diversify our trade relationships so Canadian businesses and Canadian workers can have opportunities outside and away from the United States.

[*Translation*]

**Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague talked about the importance of investing in our infrastructure.

If we want to build, we need workers. That is why we invested $6 billion in team Canada strong, particularly to train and recruit more Red Seal skilled trades workers. The $5,000 completion bonus is already available.

Why are these measures so important at this time?

[*English*]

**Vince Gasparro:** Madam Speaker, the fact is that when our government talks about building Canada strong, it is really about our people. Our people are strong, which means our country is strong. We are making sure that they are well trained and making sure there is a path such that workers are able to work right across the country. We are making sure they are well trained and making sure that they have access to the resources they need—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** We have to leave it at that.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Burnaby Central.

**Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my parents came to Canada hoping for a better future for their children. They worked hard and made sacrifices, often putting their family's needs ahead of their own. They believed in Canada. They believed that if their child worked hard, got a good education and made the most of every opportunity, he could build a better life here in Canada. I was their child.

When I speak to people in Burnaby Central, I am reminded that many families are still hoping for the same thing that my parents hoped for, a fair chance to build a good life here in Canada. I meet parents who work long hours but still worry about their grocery bills and rent. I meet seniors who have spent their lives contributing to our economy but now have to think carefully about every dollar they spend. I also meet newcomers who have come to Canada with big hopes, ready to work, contribute and make this country their home. People want a decent job, a home they can afford and a brighter future for their children.

Canada is facing real challenges. The cost of living remains high. Businesses are dealing with uncertainty and new technologies are changing the way we work. We cannot ignore the challenges. We have to respond to them. Budget 2026 does that by providing support to Canadians today while investing in jobs, businesses and industries that will help build a stronger economy for tomorrow.

Let me start with affordability. This is probably the issue I hear about every day in Burnaby Central. I welcome the additional support through the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. Early next year, an eligible family of four will receive an additional support of up to $679, while eligible single Canadians will receive up to $339. We know that one payment will not solve the cost of living challenges facing many Canadian families. However, when groceries are expensive and every dollar counts, this additional support matters.

Cancer changes a family's life forever. I know that because I lost my mom to cervical cancer. I saw first-hand the pain and uncertainty that a serious illness can bring, not just to the patient but to the entire family. That experience has stayed with me. This is why I welcome the $1.2-billion investment in mental health, addictions, and home and community care. I also welcome the removal of GST and HST on qualifying massage therapy services and certain cancer treatment devices. The budget also commits more than $18 million over six years to indigenous priorities, including health care and support for families.

By making the Canada caregiver credit fully refundable, we are providing meaningful support to those caring for their loved ones. When someone is fighting for their life, their family is fighting alongside them.

I am particularly pleased that the budget puts Canada on a pathway to end homelessness within 10 years. This is an ambitious goal and it will take real co-operation between the federal government, provinces and territories, cities, indigenous partners and community organizations. Everyone deserves a safe place to sleep and a safe place to call home.

Making life more affordable is important but we also need to make sure that Canadians have good jobs and opportunities to get ahead.

I am particularly proud of the role Burnaby Central plays in building Canada's future workplace. In the heart of Burnaby Central, we have BCIT, a cornerstone of Canada's technical education system. Every day, students there are training to be nurses, engineers, health care professionals, welders, technicians and skilled tradespeople. These are the people who will build our homes, maintain our infrastructure and keep our economy strong. This is why I welcome the productivity mega deduction in the budget.

It would allow businesses to deduct the full cost of most new capital investments. In practical terms, this means that businesses will have a stronger incentive to invest in new equipment and hire more Canadians. It would help reduce the marginal effective tax rate on new business investment from 13% to 6%. This is an important step in making Canadian businesses more competitive.

Economic progress must also go hand in hand with protecting our environment. In B.C., our forests, mountains and rivers are a big part of who we are. They also support jobs, local businesses, indigenous communities and entire industries.

● (1710)

I welcome the investment in ocean conservation, marine protection and the restoration of wild Pacific salmon. We have a responsibility to protect these resources, not just for ourselves, but for the generations that come after us.

There is another part of what makes Canada so special that I want to talk about, which is our commitment to equality and inclusion. As an openly gay Asian member of the House, I know how important it is to live in a country where people can be themselves without fear. Burnaby Central is one of the most diverse communities in Canada. People from different backgrounds, cultures and walks of life call Burnaby home.

I welcome the renewed investment in gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence and the support of 2SLGBTQI+ communities. This investment matters. It supports organizations doing important work on the ground, helping protect women and girls, and ensuring that people from marginalized communities are not left behind. Inclusion should not just be something we talk about. It should be reflected in the way people are treated and in the support they receive.

That brings me to immigration. Immigration has helped build the Canada we know today. I see its contribution in Burnaby every single day. In our hospitals, newcomers work as doctors, nurses and health care professionals. In our communities, they open businesses, create jobs and contribute to our economy. Many of these people came to Canada with the same hope my parents had. That is why I welcome the government's new time-limited measure to help up to 200,000 temporary residents already in Canada transition to permanent residence.

I am very grateful for the commitment to finalize the remaining applications under the Hong Kong pathway by the end of 2027. This is particularly important to Burnaby Central. I have spoken with many Hong Kong families in Burnaby Central and across Canada who have been waiting years for a decision. They have found jobs. Their children are attending Canadian schools. They have become part of the Canadian mosaic, but for many of them, uncertainty about their immigration status makes it difficult for them to plan their future. I know how much this commitment means to those families. I look forward to seeing it delivered in 2027. On behalf of those families, I thank the government for this measure.

I also want to recognize first responders and the families who stand behind them. Every day, police officers, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders put themselves on the line to keep Canada safe. Sometimes they have to make the ultimate sacrifice. When that happens, their families are left to deal with a loss that no financial support can ever replace. I welcome the budget's commitment to increase the payment under the memorial grant for first responders, index the amount to inflation and provide greater support to families who have lost loved ones in the line of duty. I personally sponsored a petition calling for increased funding for this program, and I am pleased to see the commitment in budget 2026. These families deserve our recognition and meaningful support. I thank the government for taking this important step.

Let me return to where I started. My parents came to Canada hoping that their child would have the opportunities they never had. I think about them often and about the people I represent. There is the BCIT student who is working toward a better career. There are the seniors who want to enjoy retirement without worrying about their next bill. There are the environmentalists who want to protect our biodiversity and safeguard our planet for future generations. There are the newcomers who have worked so hard to make Canada home. That is what Canada gave my family and what we must continue to offer every generation.

Budget 2026 is an important step in that direction. It provides support to Canadians who need it today, creates opportunities for tomorrow and invests in the kind of country we want to build. I want the next generations growing up in Burnaby Central and across Canada to have the same opportunities and the same confidence in this country that my parents had when they chose to make Canada our home. This is why I am proud to support budget 2026.

● (1715)

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I find it quite curious that, in the budget the member's government has put forward, there is a sentence that says, “Canada’s automotive sector is...gaining momentum.”

Canada's auto sector, under the Liberal government, has gone from producing two million vehicles a year to 1.2 million vehicles a year. We have now lost two of our auto production plants in Ontario, the Stellantis plant in Brampton and the BrightDrop plant.

Can the member stand up today to explain just what the heck they meant when they said Canada's auto sector is gaining momentum?

**Wade Chang:** Madam Speaker, I think the budget is about addressing the challenges Canadians face today while preparing our country for the future. We are providing support for families, investing in affordable housing, helping businesses expand and creating good jobs and opportunities for Canadians. Of course, no budget can solve every problem overnight—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Can we allow the hon. member to answer the question? There will not be another question given to that side.

The hon. member for Burnaby Central.

**Wade Chang:** Madam Speaker, of course, no budget can solve every problem overnight. What matters now is making sure that this commitment translates into real improvements in people's lives. Ultimately, we want Canadians to have a fair chance at building a good life, and I believe budget 2026 is an important step in that direction.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

**Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague had very little to say during his long speech about the minister's definition of an investment.

He is hiding his deficits by taking tax expenditures and all sorts of other things and calling them investments, but we know that the CRA would not accept a definition like that. In the private sector, it would almost amount to a crime. A CPA would be expelled from their professional association if they used a definition like that. The Liberals claimed CSIS spies as an investment. They say that it was to better protect the public from terrorism and evolving threats.

I would like to know where on the balance sheet they intend to enter the spies and how many years it will take to write them off.

[*English*]

**Wade Chang:** Madam Speaker, I think we need to look at government spending differently. There is a difference between spending in day-to-day operations and investing in Canada's future.

[*Translation*]

**Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about the productivity mega deduction. My riding is home to a lot of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Can my colleague explain how that deduction could also help SMEs?

[*English*]

**Wade Chang:** Madam Speaker, in Burnaby Central, we have companies, such as Svante Technologies, that will be protecting our environment by inventing carbon capture technologies. I believe this measure will benefit the company very much by reducing the tax rate from 13% to 6%.

[*Translation*]

**Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, the government has decided to make some very substantial investments, notably by reviving the *Heritage Minutes*, which came to an end in the wake of the sponsorship scandal.

I would like to ask my colleague whether he is excited about the prospect of getting to learn Canadian history again through 30-second TV ads funded by taxpayers, especially when the government has yet to reinstate the digital services tax or the streaming levy. Is he excited that taxpayers will be footing the bill for TV commercials telling us about our history?

[*English*]

**Wade Chang:** Madam Speaker, I have no idea how to respond to the member's question.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I asked the member a question because the budget from the Liberal government, which is dated November 5, 2026, says, at page 66, "Canada's automotive sector is also gaining momentum." This is incredulous. Who wrote this document? Did anyone on that side actually take the time to read their budget?

The automotive sector in Canada is not gaining momentum, unless we are in a place where the Liberals do not know what the word "momentum" means. If we are talking about backward momentum, then I think it is an accurate statement. The Liberals are trying to suggest to Canadians in the budget that the Canadian auto sector has momentum at this particular time. I do not even know how to describe this. I would call it gaslighting, except it would give gaslighting a bad name.

The Canadian auto sector does not have momentum under the Liberal government. In 2015, the Canadian auto sector produced over two million vehicles a year. Guess how many vehicles it is producing now, after 11 years of the utterly incompetent Liberal government. It is producing 1.2 million vehicles a year. That is a 46% decline. Members can guess what these Liberals call it. They call it "momentum", like the exact opposite kind of momentum that we want. This is typical of the way these Liberals behave. Finding the truth and giving the truth on issues is something that there is great difficulty in doing on the other side of the aisle.

Let us talk about what was happening around November 25 when the Liberals put out this document that they call a budget. At the time, there was a memorandum of understanding to sell the Brampton assembly plant. At the time that they wrote this document, the BrightDrop factory had stopped producing vehicles. We have eight auto assembly plants in Ontario. Two of them have closed under the Liberals, but they wrote in this budget that the auto sector has momentum, so I guess that means the auto sector has momentum. It is embarrassing to read that in this document. It is not embarrassing for me. It is embarrassing for the Liberals who would print such rubbish.

Let us talk about Stellantis because there is a story coming. What we have seen so far on Stellantis is that the industry minister said 10 months ago that the Liberals would do whatever they could to get those jobs back at Stellantis and that they were going to sue. It has been 10 months. Did they sue? They absolutely did not. Then there was a memorandum of understanding to sell that plant to Roshel. At that time, did they sue? They said they were going to protect the jobs. They said they were going to sue and seek an injunction to stop that plant from being sold because there was a contract that said they had to maintain the Brampton auto assembly plant. Did they sue? No, they did not. Why did they not sue? I am increasingly hearing from whistle-blowers that, behind the scenes, the Liberals were orchestrating the sale of the Stellantis auto assembly plant in Brampton.

It is bad enough that that is what is going on behind the scenes. What is even worse is the fake outrage that the Prime Minister has tried to convey saying that this was outrageous and a betrayal. Either the Prime Minister does not know what his own department officials are doing in meeting with Stellantis and Roshel and helping draft the press release for the sale, or the industry minister did not know what her staff was doing, because it looks like they were involved as well. Either the Liberals do not know what is going on, in which case we have massive amounts of incompetence, or they actually did know what was going on, which is what I think is the case, so their statements on betrayal are fake. They are pretending to care about the plant being sold. This kind of behaviour is disingenuous and it is gaslighting the workers at Stellantis.

● (1725)

Instead of printing a budget that says the auto sector is gaining momentum, I think the Liberals should just stand up here, apologize for the decimation that they have brought to the auto sector in Canada, and apologize for suggesting to Canadians that they were going to do anything to stop this sale.

If the Liberals were going to do it, they would have done it. The fact that they did not do it tells us everything we need to know about all their fake protestations that they were going to save those jobs. What I can say is that we are not done looking into this. We know that there was something more going on. This is going to be like the WE scandal. This is going to be like the green slush fund scandal. We are going to keep fighting. The Liberals should apologize for what they have done to the auto sector.

*The Budget*

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** It being 5:30 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment to the amendment now before the House.

The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

If a member participating in person wishes that the amendment to the amendment 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.

**Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

● (1805)

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** The question is on the following amendment to the amendment.

Shall I dispense?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to the amendment to House*]

● (1815)

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

*(Division No. 194)*

YEAS

Members

| | |
|---|---|
| Barsalou-Duval | Beaulieu |
| Blanchet | Blanchette-Joncas |
| Bonin | Brunelle-Duceppe |
| Champoux | DeBellefeuille |
| Deschênes | Fortin |
| Garon | Gaudreau |
| Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan) | Larouche |
| Lemire | May |
| Normandin | Simard |
| Ste-Marie | Thériault– — 20 |

NAYS

Members

| | |
|---|---|
| Aboultaif | Acan |
| Aitchison | Al Soud |
| Albas | Ali |
| Allison | Alty |
| Anandasangaree | Anderson |
| Anstey | Arnold |
| Auguste | Baber |
| Bailey | Bains |
| Baker | Baldinelli |
| Bardeesy | Barlow |
| Barrett | Battiste |
| Beech | Begum |
| Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River) | Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt) |
| Bendayan | Berthold |
| Bexte | Bezan |
| Bittle | Block |
| Bonk | Borrelli |
| Bragdon | Brassard |
| Brière | Caley |
| Calkins | Caputo |
| Carr | Casey |
| Chagger | Champagne |
| Chang | Chartrand |
| Chatel | Chenette |
| Chi | Chong |
| Church | Clark |
| Cobena | Cody |
| Connors | Cooper |
| Cormier | Coteau |
| Dabrusin | Dalton |
| Dancho | Dandurand |
| Danko | Davidson |
| Davies (Niagara South) | Dawson |
| Deltell | d'Entremont |
| DeRidder | Deschênes-Thériault |
| Desrochers | Dhaliwal |
| Dhillon | Diab |
| Diotte | Dowdall |
| Duclos | Duguid |
| Dzerowicz | Earle |
| Ehsassi | El-Khoury |
| Eyolfson | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake) |
| Falk (Provencher) | Fancy |
| Fanjoy | Fergus |
| Fisher | Fonseca |
| Fortier | Fragiskatos |
| Fraser | Fry |
| Fuhr | Gaheer |
| Gainey | Gasparro |
| Gazan | Genuis |
| Gerretsen | Gill (Calgary Skyview) |
| Gill (Brampton West) | Gill (Calgary McKnight) |
| Gill (Windsor West) | Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley) |
| Gladu | Gobeil |
| Goodridge | Gould |
| Gourde | Grant |
| Greaves | Groleau |
| Guay | Guglielmin |
| Gull-Masty | Gunn |
| Hajdu | Hallan |
| Hanley | Hardy |
| Harrison | Hepfner |
| Hirtle | Ho |
| Hoback | Hodgson |
| Hogan | Holman |
| Housefather | Hussen |
| Iacono | Idlout |
| Jackson | Jaczek |
| Jansen | Jeneroux |
| Jivani | Johns |
| Joseph | Kayabaga |
| Kelloway | Kelly |
| Khalid | Khanna |
| Kirkland | Klassen |
| Kmiec | Konanz |
| Koutrakis | Kram |
| Kramp-Neuman | Kronis |
| Kuruc | Kusie |
| Kwan | Lake |
| Lambropoulos | Lamoureux |
| Lantsman | Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles) |
| Lapointe (Sudbury) | Lattanzio |

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|---|---|
| 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 (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk) |
| Maloney | Mantle |
| Martin | McCauley |
| McKelvie | McKenzie |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McKnight |
| McLean (Calgary Centre) | McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke) |
| McPherson | Melillo |
| Ménard | Mendès |
| Menegakis | Michel |
| Miedema | Miller |
| Mingarelli | Moore |
| Morin | Morrison |
| Morrissey | Motz |
| Muys | Myles |
| Naqvi | Nater |
| Nathan | Nguyen |
| Noormohamed | Ntumba |
| Oliphant | Olszewski |
| O'Rourke | Patzer |
| Paul-Hus | Petitpas Taylor |
| Poilievre | Powlowski |
| Provost | Ramsay |
| Rana | Redekopp |
| Reid | Rempel Garner |
| Reynolds | Richards |
| Roberts | Robertson |
| Rochefort | Romanado |
| Rood | Ross |
| Rowe | Ruff |
| Sahota | Saini |
| Sarai | Sari |
| Sawatzky | Scheer |
| Schiefke | Schmale |
| Seeback | Sgro |
| Shahnawaz | Sheehan |
| Shipley | Sidhu (Brampton East) |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Small |
| Sodhi | Solomon |
| Sousa | Steinley |
| Stevenson | St-Pierre |
| Strahl | Strauss |
| Stubbs | Sudds |
| Tesser Derksen | Thomas |
| Thompson | Tochor |
| Tolmie | Turnbull |
| Uppal | Valdez |
| van Koeverden | Van Popta |
| Vandenbeld | Vien |
| Villeneuve | Vis |
| Warkentin | Watchorn |
| Waugh | Weiler |
| Williamson | Yip |
| Zahid | Zerucelli |
| Zimmer | Zuberi– — 294 |

PAIRED

Members

| | |
|---|---|
| Anand | Au |
| Blois | Carney |
| Duncan | Gallant |
| Généreux | Godin |
| Joly | Lalonde |
| McGuinty | Perron |
| Plamondon | Royer– — 14 |

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

* * *

[*English*]

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-234, an act respecting a national framework for fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

# PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

## FAIR REPRESENTATION ACT

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-259, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (fair representation), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by taking a moment to acknowledge the work of my colleague and friend, the member for Edmonton Strathcona. I know this bill is a reflection of her desire to improve things for the people we represent, and I thank her for that.

I rise this evening to speak to Bill C-259, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code with regard to fair representation. My Bloc Québécois colleague and friend, the member for Shefford, has already explained our position. I think it is clear that the Bloc Québécois will support the bill in principle. This legislation strengthens protections for federally regulated workers from any form of company union that is controlled or dominated by the employer.

Everyone knows that protecting workers' rights has been a longstanding priority for the Bloc Québécois. This evening, we are debating one of our society's fundamental principles: the right of workers to organize freely.

These days, we are seeing repeated attempts to circumvent this right, which we feel is well established. Employers are not the only ones attempting this; the federal government is too.

Before continuing, I have to digress for a moment to make a side comment on Bill C-39. Bill C-39 is an abomination. It represents a brutal step backwards on the environment, workers' rights and democracy.

I see that not many people on the other side are listening.

That bill directly weakens workers' rights and limits the right to strike. The simple truth is that that bill is one of the worst attacks on workers' rights in history, yet the Liberals are patting themselves on the back over it. This is unheard of.

Fortunately, the bill that we are debating this evening proposes the opposite. It essentially focuses on company unions. Put simply, these are unions that are dominated, controlled or influenced by the employer and that basically became an extension of management rather than a defender of the workers' interests. Historically, this practice was used to circumvent workers' true right to organize. The employer would set up a sham union, negotiate with it and then claim that it was respecting union rights. Behind this facade, workers were being denied what was most essential: union autonomy and real bargaining power.

It is important to remember that many of the protections we now take for granted were won through the efforts of trade unions. I know this personally: My father was a trade unionist, and I was active in the labour movement myself. The right to paid vacation, parental leave, workplace pensions, safe working conditions and fair wages were secured over time by workers who organized and presented a united front.

This contribution is not merely a part of our history. Trade unions continue to act as a counterbalance in today's workplace. They empower employees to defend their interests, negotiate fairer terms and assert their rights. Union representation is also associated with higher wages, lower gender pay gaps and stronger protections against workplace accidents and occupational hazards.

Although the Canada Labour Code already prohibits employers from dominating or interfering with the formation or administration of a trade union, the current provisions are general in nature and rely much more heavily on the interpretation of case law.

Bill C-259 is a continuation of this framework, clarifying the concept of employer domination and influence and clearly linking it to the consequences of such a strategy. That is not all. The bill also strengthens enforcement mechanisms. It provides for substantial fines, introduces the possibility of imposing administrative monetary penalties and expands the powers of the Canada Industrial Relations Board.

These are important measures, because a prohibition is only meaningful if it comes with real consequences for non-compliance. The objective is to discourage employers who may be tempted to indirectly control or influence unions at the expense of workers' freedom and independence.

When it comes to an issue like this, it is hard for me not to make a connection with my riding, Lac-Saint-Jean, and the people who work there and who are the lifeblood of our region.

● (1825)

My thoughts go out to the thousands of workers who help keep our economy running day after day, whether they work in the industrial, forestry or manufacturing sectors, in the service industry, or in local businesses. For them, as for all workers in Quebec and Canada, it is essential to be able to count on union representation that truly belongs to them, that defends their interests, and that acts with complete independence.

Quebec has a long tradition of upholding labour rights and protecting workers. This tradition is not a recent development. Long before the federal government modernized its own labour relations system, Quebec had already begun to structure and legally recognize union activity.

A pivotal moment in this history came in 1944 with the passage of the Labour Relations Act. This law paved the way for a more formal framework governing relations between employers and unions. It was followed, 20 years later, by the passage of the Quebec Labour Code in 1964. This evolution was the result of decades of activism by Quebec's labour movement. From Catholic unions to today's major labour federations, workers have fought to secure recognition of their rights and to establish a more balanced power dynamic with their employers.

Quebec has developed an approach where freedom of association must not simply be recognized on paper. It must be protected by rules and mechanisms that allow workers to organize, engage in collective bargaining and defend their interests. That is one of the reasons why Quebec continues to be recognized for having one of the highest unionization rates in North America. This is a testament to our tradition of working together and recognizing the role that unions play in our society.

For all of these reasons and out of respect for all of the workers who get up every morning and make Quebec what it is today, the Bloc Québécois supports the principle of the bill introduced by my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona.

I will close with an anecdote. I helped create a documentary with absolutely no money. Back in 2004, I went to Colombia with a group of friends. We did not have a penny to spend, nor did we have a permit to film there. We went to meet with trade unions representing female workers in the flower greenhouses in the Bogota Valley. The trade unions were fighting against the company unions. I saw it first-hand. It happens elsewhere in the world.

In Colombia in 2004, union rights were not exactly robust, shall we say. I saw first-hand what that meant. It meant higher union dues to belong to trade unions not controlled by the employer, but it also meant additional perks even in the factory canteen or in the flower greenhouses for workers who belonged to the company union. That is how it used to be. We have seen how that turns out. We do not want that here in Quebec or in Canada.

[*English*]

**Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to stand and to represent the wonderful people of the city of Guelph. I would like to thank the member for Edmonton Strathcona for bringing this bill forward and for advocating tirelessly on behalf of workers. The government recognizes the spirit and intent of Bill C-259. Workers deserve unions that are truly their own and represent their best interests. Fairness for Canadian workers has been and will always be a top priority for our government. I met today with members of the Canadian Labour Congress. We talked about this bill, and we agree it is an important time for us to affirm and reaffirm our commitment to protecting workers' rights and the integrity of collective bargaining. This is why it is my privilege to stand up and speak in support of this bill.

Canada is deep in the throes of an illegal and unjustified trade war. It is an attack on our economy and on our sovereignty, but Canadians are determined and so is the government. We have all heard the Prime Minister say that we are focused on what we can control. The way forward is to invest in ourselves, to build fast, to build big and to build Canada strong. We cannot build a strong economy without respecting the workers who keep it running every day. When we talk about building Canada strong, we know it is our people who will do it, our Canadian workers. I had a great conversation with one of our steelworkers just this morning.

This belief in our people, in our workers, is one of the reasons we are investing $6 billion in Red Seal trades through team Canada strong. We are working with our unions to make sure those apprenticeships are seen all the way through, including a completion bonus. We know our workers are the foundation of Canada's economic strength and they expect us to have their backs. We do. We certainly saw that at Stelco last week.

It is our job to make sure Canada's labour framework continues to protect federally regulated workers and to support well-paid jobs with strong collective agreements. More than one million workers and over 22,000 employers keep our ports, railways, airlines and telecommunications running every day. Labour relations in these sectors shape wages, productivity and economic stability not only for these folks, but also for broader society. When these workplaces are constructive, healthy and more stable, supply chains are more reliable and our economy is stronger. Our country is the better for it.

Collective bargaining works only when workers trust their union and employers trust the process, and both depend on union independence. A union that is dominated or influenced by an employer undermines that balance. It weakens workers' voices at the table and erodes trust in the whole system. This is why protecting the credibility, independence and democratic operation of unions is not a peripheral issue. It is a long-standing principle in the Canada Labour Code. The code already reflects this. Part I prohibits employer interference in the administration and representation activities of trade unions. The Canada Industrial Relations Board has interpreted these protections broadly in past decisions.

Bill C-259 raises a fair question: Are those existing tools sufficient to ensure workers are represented by organizations that are genuinely independent and accountable to their members and not to the employer? That question deserves careful examination with workers, with employers and with parliamentarians in the House.

I would also like to highlight our broader approach to supporting federally regulated workplaces and the collective bargaining process that is protected by law. Our federal labour relations framework works well. Our federal mediation and conciliation service supports parties in reaching new collective agreements together that work for both sides. This is why 95% of all collective bargaining is resolved at the table. It makes for stronger agreements, better workplaces and better communities, but we are always on the lookout for ways to build greater trust in the system, to strengthen labour-management relationships and to provide parties with the tools they need to resolve issues before they become entrenched.

This is why this year, we consulted unions, employers, employer representatives, indigenous partners and labour organizations about whether the federal labour relations framework still meets their needs. We heard a range of perspectives from all sides, but one was made clear by all: The best collective agreements are achieved through good-faith negotiations between employers and unions themselves at the bargaining table. That feedback informed Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. The central objective of these reforms is very straightforward: to support workers and employers in negotiating good, durable agreements and to strengthen collective bargaining, because collective bargaining is not an obstacle to economic growth, but its foundation.

● (1830)

Bill C-39 would do this in several concrete ways. First, it would support earlier engagement in higher-risk bargaining situations so issues could be addressed before positions become entrenched. Second, it would help rebuild labour management relationships following a particularly difficult dispute, through postdispute remediation facilitated by the federal mediation and conciliation service. Third, it would provide additional support for first collective agreement negotiations. Workers who have recently chosen union representation deserve a fair opportunity to secure a first agreement. Under Bill C-39, they would be provided earlier assistance and access to binding arbitration where negotiations remain unsuccessful after nine months.

Fourth, the bill would also provide more time for parties to work through their differences by extending the conciliation period and creating additional opportunities to reach negotiated settlements. Fifth, it would lay the groundwork for expedited grievance arbitration in certain sectors. It would also lay the groundwork for an administrative monetary penalty regime to address bad-faith bargaining, including complaints that are vexatious, frivolous or not made in good faith. We would also invest in the capacity of the federal mediation and conciliation service and the Canada Industrial Relations Board so the board could address growing caseloads and backlogs, and complaints would be decided in a timely and effective way, which is good for workers.

Every one of these measures has the same purpose: to help parties reach agreements themselves at the bargaining table, strengthen good-faith bargaining and support productive labour management relationships over the long term.

I mention Bill C-39 because Bill C-259 shares the same goal: healthy, good-faith bargaining relationships built on trust and legitimacy. Bill C-39 focuses on the bargaining process. Bill C-259 focuses on who sits at the table on behalf of workers. Both matter, because a strong process does not mean a thing if workers cannot trust the people who are speaking for them. Collective bargaining functions best when workers have confidence that their union represents their interests independently and when employers have confidence in a fair and balanced process.

The government remains firmly committed to protecting workers' rights to fair worker representation, supporting meaningful collective bargaining and maintaining public confidence in Canada's labour relations institutions. That is precisely why we introduced Bill C-39. Its measures would strengthen the collective bargaining process by giving parties better tools to resolve disputes earlier, build stronger labour management relationships and reach durable agreements through negotiation.

We look forward to continuing to work with the member for Edmonton Strathcona, with committee members and with stakeholders on all sides as this discussion moves forward. I would once again like to thank the member for bringing the bill forward and for her advocacy on behalf of Canadian workers.

● (1835)

**Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great honour that I rise in the House today to speak on behalf of the people of Elmwood—Transcona regarding Bill C-259. The bill proposes amendments to the Canada Labour Code on the topic of employer influence and dominance of trade unions.

Before I was elected as a member of Parliament, I spent 20 years working as a construction electrician, working in the trades alongside the men and women who help build and maintain our communities. My last day on a ladder was only a few days before I was elected to the House. As I get a chance to speak here now, I am proud to say that I continue to serve as the sitting vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2085. As I speak in the House, I am able to bring the perspective of someone who has experience living as a construction worker.

I have spent decades working alongside Canadians who depend on meaningful representation and the ability to have their voices heard. At its core, Bill C-259 aims to amend the Canada Labour Code to help address situations where employers dominate or interfere with the independence of trade unions. Workers should have the freedom to organize and to choose their own independent representatives who genuinely advocate for their interests without interference or control from their employers. The purpose of a union is to represent its members. The responsibility of a union is meant to be the workers, not the employer. An employer's having control over a union can be damaging—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre is rising on a point of order.

* * *

## POINTS OF ORDER

CORRECTION TO OFFICIAL RECORD

**Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I give my sincere apologies to my colleague from Winnipeg. He was just hitting his stride.

I tried for about 25 minutes in the previous vote to log in. I was in my office in the Confederation Building and was unsuccessful in being able to do that.

I would not normally ask this of the House, but I am looking for unanimous consent to register my vote as a yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

**Colin Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker—

**Ben Carr:** You have me as a nay?

**The Deputy Speaker:** It will be listed as a nay?

**Ben Carr:** As a nay, yes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, that is agreed.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

* * *

## FAIR REPRESENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-259, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (fair representation) be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** May I start from the top, Mr. Speaker?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Colin Reynolds:** Mr. Speaker, workers should have the freedom to organize and choose their own independent representatives who genuinely advocate for their interests without interference or control from their employers. The purpose of a union is to represent its members. The responsibility of a union is meant to be the workers, not the employer. An employer having control over a union can be damaging to the purpose of collective bargaining, which can only function properly when workers have the confidence that their representatives will advocate on their behalf. Workers have to be confident in the organization representing them, that it is independent from the employer and that their interests are being put first.

Addressing employer interference is a priority in protecting workers, but we have to be able to examine whether the legislative approach in this bill is the right way to reach this goal. We should examine not only what the bill aims to achieve but also how the clauses would work and what potential consequences they could have for workers, employers and even Canada's labour relations system. Legislation needs to be clear and supported by evidence. We have to make sure the changes would be an actual solution to the problem without creating additional problems somewhere else.

I recognize the importance of the main principle behind this bill. The Conservative Party and I support accountability, transparency and the right of Canadian workers to have independent representation. On the other hand, while we support these principles, there are some provisions in the proposed legislation that need to be examined further.

Workers deserve to have independent representation with the union they choose to advocate their priorities and interests, without employer control over unions and decision-making. One of the changes proposed by Bill C-259 is to the current wording of the Canada Labour Code under subsection 25(1), which refers to an employer having a union that "is so dominated". The bill explains that this should be changed to simply refer to a union being "dominated".

No amount of employer domination of a union should be acceptable, and the clear change would strengthen protections for workers across the country. Canadian workers should never have to wonder if the organization representing them is acting independently or if an employer is influencing its decisions. Changing the wording could help strengthen the idea that employer domination is unacceptable.

Bill C-259 mentions the implementation of governance requirements for trade unions. The bill seeks to introduce requirements to make sure that unions are governed by members who were elected so that the workers receive proper representation. Accountability within unions is a legitimate concern, but not every union operates under the same governance model. There are different organizational structures. Some unions operate directly through local representatives, and others have governance arrangements that involve elected national or regional leadership and appointed local representatives.

The bill aims to ensure that the Canada Industrial Relations Board makes sure the unions are governed by members who are elected by the employees. There needs to be clear understanding of how a governance requirement would apply to different unions to make sure the bill would not cause any unnecessary consequences. Unions should have the ability to deal with their own internal affairs and set up governance structures that fit with their needs, their interests and priorities of their members. A single model of governance should not be imposed on every organization, as it may not work for every union.

Additionally, another aspect of Bill C-259 suggests broadening some definitions in the Canada Labour Code. Bill C-259 specifically wants to broaden the existing definition of employer domination by adding participation, interference and "financial or other support". The intention behind these changes is to make sure employers would not find more ways to exercise control over a union or weaken its independence.

That said, we have to consider how these vague definitions could be interpreted by others and the unintended consequences that could appear. There is a major difference between improper employer interference and legitimate interactions between employers and unions. Labour relations need communication and co-operation between both sides to be able to engage in discussions about concerns, and to work toward solutions, without this being seen as potential interference.

Definitions that are too broad can lead to uncertainty for employers and unions. Organizations can become more hesitant to engage in legitimate interactions that could be interpreted as prohibited. The goal of adding to a definition is to make it more understandable, not to make it more vague. We need clear definitions that distinguish between employer domination and legitimate engagement. We also need transparent enforcement standards so that employers and unions can understand what is prohibited and what is not.

● (1840)

Lastly, there is the 25% threshold proposed in Bill C-259 for initiating an examination of a union. The goal of the implementation of this threshold is to make it easier for workers to raise their concerns about employer influence and the independence of their union. However, it may cause further issues. The threshold proposed in this bill sparks concern about the situations of when applications could be made, how frequently and what safeguards exist against repeated applications.

This threshold could lead to an opportunity for repeated challenges of a union's certifications, which can be disruptive toward already established collective bargaining relationships. There is a possibility this process could be used in a way that does not reflect genuine concern about employer domination. For this reason, without safeguards in place, there could be repeated applications, which can create instability in the workplace.

A union's certification represents the relationship between workers and their union. There should be a way for workers to address legitimate concerns, but it should not undermine the stability of this relationship. On top of that, a union that represents a smaller group of employees works differently from one that represents thousands of workers across multiple workplaces. The real outcomes of a fixed threshold will change, depending on the size and circumstances of this organization.

Workers deserve the ability to challenge employer interference and to be confident in their unions. Having safeguards in place is important to prevent repeated applications. The CIRB needs to have precautions when assessing these applications.

Workers should have the freedom to organize and to choose their representatives to advocate for their interests, without employers in a position of control. At the same time, union autonomy needs to be respected, and we should keep away from procedures that could unnecessarily destabilize labour relations.

Bill C-259 brings up important questions about the independence of trade unions and the priority of protecting Canadian workers. We should work toward legislation that protects workers from employer domination and preserves the autonomy of the organizations meant to represent them.

Canadian workers deserve to choose their representatives while being confident that their unions are acting in their best interests and that employers cannot interfere. Addressing employer domination is important, and there needs to be an implementation of meaningful protections for the independence of trade unions. That said, the measures to be introduced will need to be carefully considered and not create unnecessary barriers or undermine union autonomy.

Protecting Canadian workers and guaranteeing them an authentic voice in the workplace must remain a priority. It is important to ensure that the changes that would come with Bill C-259 would work to strengthen worker representation without compromising the stability of labour relations systems. We need to make sure the laws we carry out actually work for Canadian workers. Canadian workers deserve to choose their representation without interference or pressure from their employer.

● (1845)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The right of reply goes to the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, the member for Guelph and the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona for their comments today.

Today I have the great privilege of standing in the House because of the extraordinary work of Canada's labour movement. While my name is on the legislation, the bill belongs to the workers who inspired it, who helped develop it and who have fought tirelessly for it.

I want to thank the Canadian Labour Congress, Canada's Building Trades Unions, the Building Trades of Alberta, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, the United Steelworkers, the operating engineers, IBEW, LiUNA, the sheet metal workers, particularly Local 47, the Edmonton District Labour Council, the Alberta Federation of Labour and so many other organizations that showed up and showed their support for this piece of legislation.

I also want to take a moment to thank the incredible labour leaders who have given so generously of their time, their expertise and even their friendship. In particular, I want to thank Bea Bruske, Marty Warren, Sean Strickland, Terry Parker, Rob Calver, Mike Reinhart, Scott Crichton, Gil McGowan and my friend Tyler Bedford from the operating engineers.

I want to take a moment to send my thoughts to Tyler and his son Callen during this extraordinarily difficult time for their family.

Most importantly, I want to thank the workers. I want to thank every single worker who wrote a letter, who called their MP, who spoke to their colleagues, who attended a meeting or who travelled to Ottawa to fight for this legislation.

Workers did this not for themselves but for workers they may never meet, for the next generation of apprentices, for young people just entering the workforce, for people who deserve the protection of a strong, independent union but do not yet have one. That is what solidarity looks like, and it is a beautiful thing.

Virtually every advancement for working people in the country has come because workers organized. They stood together and they demanded something better. I am so incredibly proud of the long history of New Democrats standing alongside them in those fights. Today, every member of the House has an opportunity to be part of that history.

To my colleagues, I ask them to vote for the legislation. Let us send it to committee. Let us give workers the opportunity to be heard. Let us work together to make this the strongest possible legislation.

To Canada's labour movement, I thank them for trusting me to bring this fight to Parliament. I thank them for their determination, their generosity and their unwavering commitment to each other. There is no greater honour for a New Democrat than to stand with working people. I will always be in their corner. I will always fight alongside them. I will never forget that when we stand together, there is so much we can accomplish, in solidarity.

● (1850)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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

**An hon. member:** Mr. Speaker, I request that it be carried on division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried on division. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

# ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

LABOUR

**Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the afternoon before the Liberals shot down my bill, Bill C-247, to uphold the right to strike and repeal their strike-breaking tool, section 107, I asked the Minister of Transport whether the Liberals would finally stand with workers and stop the unconstitutional attacks on their rights. The Minister of Transport replied by saying the quiet part out loud, that through the Liberals' Bill C-39, “We want to make those strikes all too rare.” The Liberals do not want to do it by doing it the proper way. They want to do it by violating the right to strike.

It is true that the government is continuing to attack workers' rights, as well as indigenous rights and the right to a clean, safe environment through this fast-tracked bill, Bill C-39. The bill takes even further the government's unconstitutional powers in section 107, which has been used nine times, in fact, in just three years to violate workers' right to strike. This right is protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and by international law. It is workers' tried-and-true method of bringing home a fair livable wage when corporate bosses fail to bargain in good faith.

Let us not forget the Liberals have aided and abetted corporate bosses, like those at Air Canada, forcing people back to work after only 12 hours of being on the picket line.

In fact, today I met with representatives of the Canadian Labour Congress, whose foremost priority was protecting the right to strike from ongoing Liberal attacks. They are clear that they will not allow these attacks on workers to continue. If we want to get workers working, then we have to uphold workers' right to strike. Make no mistake, labour leaders like Marty Warren have made it very clear that they will not sit idly by while the government threatens their charter rights.

Meanwhile, the government has totally sold out workers by giving its blessing to Trump's deindustrialization of Canada through the sale of Brampton's Stellantis plant, all the while misleading the public that the government is opposed to the deal. While the NDP leader, Avi Lewis, stood yesterday with Unifor workers in Brampton supporting their call to reverse the sale, the Liberal government continues to stand by and do nothing while workers' livelihoods are placed in jeopardy. That is another example of how its true allegiance is with its corporate buddies and the billionaire class.



There is still time for the government to reverse course and stop its attacks on workers, including by withdrawing the unconstitutional restrictions on the right to strike contained in Bill C-39, which is being studied and fast-tracked through committee as we speak.

● (1855)

**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 cannot build a strong Canada without the workers who keep it running. They deserve fair pay, safe workplaces and rights they can count on. I would like to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for her question and for her commitment to Canadian workers.

Our government will always protect workers and their rights. Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act, preserves their right to bargain collectively and their constitutional right to take labour action. It does not take away the right to strike. Workers in federally regulated sectors are the backbone of our economy. In these challenging times, strong protections and good labour relations are absolutely essential to Canada's growth.

Before introducing this bill, our government held two rounds of consultations in the spring and summer of 2026. We heard from Canadians, unions, labour organizations, employers, employer associations and national indigenous organizations. We received over 100 written submissions. We also brought employer and employee representatives together in a consultative body to provide independent advice on workplace and labour issues of federal, national and international significance. The message was clear: Free and fair collective bargaining must remain the foundation of our labour relations system, because it works.

Almost 95% of labour disputes are resolved without work stoppage. For the remaining 5%, reaching an agreement can be harder. In a much smaller share of cases, exhausting negotiations leave strained relationships and consequences that reach far beyond the bargaining table. Stakeholders asked for earlier, more adaptable support in those cases. They also asked for clarity and transparency around section 107 and limits on the minister's power if that tool is retained. That is what Bill C-39 delivers. It reinforces section 107 of the Canada Labour Code as a last resort, with clear guardrails, greater transparency and accountability to unions, employers and Canadians. It remains a tool only for the small number of deeply entrenched disputes that threaten serious consequences beyond the parties themselves. The objective is to help workers and employers reach an agreement together. That is where the strongest labour relations begin.

The member asked what this means for families. It means stronger tools, supports and processes to help parties resolve even complex disputes at the table. It means engaging earlier when bargaining relationships have been difficult, supporting collective agreements and reinforcing the obligation to bargain in good faith. These measures help parties reach agreements to avoid strikes or work stoppages, and the ripple effects that Canadians feel.

This bill, together with supporting non-legislative measures and investments, protects workers' paycheques and their safety. It increases our capacity to tackle misclassification and wage theft so workers receive the pay and protections they are owed. It helps them keep their union representation when contracts change hands. It strengthens accident prevention, including through new officers, to enforce the Canada Labour Code. A worker should receive the wages they have earned and come home safely. All of their rights should be respected.

We have also heard from Manitoba's business community. Bram Strain, president and CEO of the Business Council of Manitoba, called these important and welcome steps that respond to priorities the businesses in Manitoba have been raising.

Protecting workers' rights and supporting good-faith bargaining deliver better outcomes for workers, businesses and our economy. A stronger workforce makes our economy stronger and that makes Canada stronger.

● (1900)

**Leah Gazan:** Mr. Speaker, just because one says something does not make it true.

I met with CLC representatives today who wanted one thing that the government could not provide. That was to repeal section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. In fact, they are even asking, as a last-ditch attempt, for the government to amend some of the labour laws it is trying to entrench in the unconstitutional Bill C-39 that, once again, goes further in violating the right to strike.

I find it really offensive that the Liberal government can be so smug to say that it consulted. I can tell members this. The government has been consulting with indigenous people for a long time, and it is talking about consultation fatigue. I can tell members what that is. The Liberals consult and then do whatever they want. The government needs to repeal section 107.

**Leslie Church:** Mr. Speaker, workers deserve safe, fair, stable and productive workplaces. That is something we should all be able to agree on. The Canada Labour Code supports workers and employers in federally regulated sectors, including ports, rail, air, marine transportation, telecommunications and banking. Our responsibility is to work with unions and employers so that the framework continues to support them and Canada's economic resilience.

I also met today with the Canadian Labour Congress. Bill C-39 would preserve and strengthen collective bargaining. It is a discussion we had. It would give unions and employers more support to reach agreements themselves at the table and in good faith. That is how we strengthen labour relations and support workers, and that is how we are going to build prosperity and long-term growth for all Canadians. I invite the member to work with us in supporting that work.

## THE ECONOMY

**Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on October 30 I asked the Liberal government to adopt our Conservative plan to lower grocery store costs by scrapping all federal taxes on diesel sales until at least Canada Day 2027. I emphasized that Food Banks Canada reported 2.3 million food bank visits in March of this year alone, and Liberal inflation has only made things worse since that report was released.

In Salmon Arm, my hometown, the food bank now serves 500 clients per month. Because many of these are families, 7% to 10% of our small city could be relying on the food bank to meet basic dietary needs. Other small towns and cities, like Golden, B.C., have seen up to a 500% increase in food bank reliance. Working families are visiting food banks in increasing numbers because wages have not kept up to rising Liberal inflation. This is a failure of the government to rein in inflation-causing, wasteful government spending and deficits.

The minister's response that day in October suggested that Canadians should be grateful for the government programs that return the same tax money the government took from them in the first place.

Fuel costs are also crippling small businesses. Last week, I spoke to a young couple who run a small logging company, employing five people. They are unsure how much longer they can continue with fuel costs the way they are. Their fuel costs have almost tripled over the last five years and are now reaching $33,000 per month for a small operation with five people.

The government is reaping huge benefits from increased fuel costs and the taxes, but instead of providing immediate relief to small businesses and consumers, the Liberals keep the fuel taxes in place, run the profits through the bureaucracy, and buy votes with cheques to the very people they took the money from in the first place.

Since October 30, the government has introduced a new budget that would add a record-smashing $765 billion in deficit. That is billion, with a B. This Liberal plan will make an average family of four pay almost $6,000 in federal debt interest costs alone this year, while driving up the cost of food, fuel and housing.

The clearest warning sign is the growing cost of servicing this debt. Just a few years ago, debt interest consumed five or six cents of every tax dollar. Today, it consumes 11¢, roughly $60 billion annually, and more than the federal government transfers to provinces for health care transfers.

At the fuel pumps, where Liberal taxes are driving up the cost of everything, why will the government not give Canadians a break where it would make the biggest difference, by eliminating federal taxes on diesel sales until at least Canada Day 2027?

● (1905)

**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, Canadians work hard and that work should help them get ahead. They should be able to buy groceries, pay their bills and save for their future. Our government has a responsibility to help make that possible and it is a responsibility that we accept. Budget 2026 is all about this.

Let me start with the grocery bill. The Canada groceries and essentials benefit launched this year helps more than 12 million Canadians and families with low or modest incomes. It replaces the GST credit and increases benefit amounts by 25% for five years, starting in July 2026. Eligible Canadians also received a 50% top-up this past June.

Now, budget 2026 proposes another 50% supplement, arriving in eligible Canadians' bank accounts in early 2027. With the 25% increase, the June 2026 top-up and the early 2027 supplement, total support this upcoming year would reach about $1,290 for a single individual without children and up to $2,570 for a couple with two children. That is money for the essentials. The supplement would provide $4.1 billion in additional support to Canadians and is expected to lift an additional 120,000 people out of poverty in 2027.

For Canadians working on low wages, we are going further. The Canada workers benefit provides a refundable tax credit to supplement the earnings of about three million low- and modest-income workers. Through budget 2026, we propose a new build Canada workers benefit. It would lower the minimum earnings threshold to qualify, and increase the maximum benefit to $1,859 for single individuals and $3,143 for families. That would mean more money for about 1.9 million low-income workers, including 180,000 new recipients of this benefit. The benefit would lift an estimated 240,000 Canadians out of poverty.

Now, the member asked about fuel taxes. Our government has acted. We temporarily suspended the federal fuel excise tax earlier this year. On the first day, gasoline prices fell by 11¢ per litre. Canadians saw immediate relief at the pump. When global uncertainty kept pressure on fuel prices, we extended that relief through Bill C-38 until the end of January 2027. While the full suspension remains in place, Canadians save more than $5 every time they fill up a 50-litre tank of gas. Those savings also help lower costs for businesses moving food, building materials and other essentials across Canada.

We are taking the same practical approach to heating bills. Millions of households still rely on oil, propane, diesel and outdated furnaces. We are investing more than $2 billion to make homes more energy efficient, including through the national heat pump rebate. The rebate alone will help up to 820,000 households install a heat pump. Together with other energy-efficient measures, we expect to reach up to one million homes. A one-time, $2-billion investment to retrofit one million homes will save Canadians $1 billion every year.

Helping Canadians get ahead means making a difference in their household budgets. That is the work that our government is doing, and we are going to keep at it.

**Mel Arnold:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's attempted response, but it just shows how out of touch this Liberal government is.

I spoke about companies that are struggling to survive with a $33,000 diesel bill, and trying to keep their small business running, and food bank use that has gone up by 500% since the government came to power. She fails to recognize that it is her government's policies of ever-increasing deficits and national debt over the last 10 years that are putting the future of our next generations of workers, children and grandchildren at risk.

Why will the Liberals not take steps immediately, steps that they could take with the stroke of a pen, instead of trying to take money from citizens and then give it back?

● (1910)

**Leslie Church:** Mr. Speaker, I very much welcome the member's concerns about affordability, and I hope those concerns translate into support for measures that help Canadians.

The member mentioned small businesses. We were in our ridings last week, and I spoke with members of my constituency, small business owners, talking about the productivity mega deduction and how, even for a small business in need of new infrastructure, such as a café that needs a new commercial coffee maker or a hotel that needs to upgrade some of its facilities, the deduction that we have put in budget 2026 would make a difference for many small businesses right across Canada.

I also want to focus on something that affects so many Canadians: finding a home they can afford. Our budget is focused on building the homes Canada needs, including putting Canada on a path to end homelessness.

I hope these measures are just some of the ones that the member will support.

PARKS CANADA

**William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in October, I raised an important issue during question period: the Liberal government's decision to cut the search and rescue dog program in Banff National Park. I asked a straightforward question about why the government is cutting a 55-year-old program that helps save lives in our national parks. What was the response from the parliamentary secretary? Not once did he mention the rescue dog program. Not once did he address the concerns about visitor safety. Not once did he explain why Parks Canada is eliminating a proven program that has helped find missing people for more than five decades. Canadians deserve answers.

Let us look at what the program actually does. The last rescue dog, Leroy, located 57 people over seven years. These dogs can cover terrain up to 50 times faster than human rescuers can. That is not an unnecessary expense. That is a life-saving resource, and this is not just about one dog or one program. It is about the safety of thousands of Canadians and visitors who enjoy our national parks every year.

I launched a petition calling on the government to reverse this decision and protect the Banff search and rescue dog program. Canadians from across the country have responded. More than 12,000 people signed the petition to do the right thing. These are people who understand the value of the program and want to see it protected.

When I posted my question and the government's responses, the video received hundreds of comments, including the following ones. Mark said that this is politics summed up right there: When someone brings up in the question something that is important to people, it is followed by a completely pointless non-answer. William wrote that I should keep asking, because people need an answer and we need to keep the program going. He said the parks are getting busier and there are more rescues, so as many people and dogs as possible are needed. Ross asked about the 3,000 Parks Canada staff who received termination notices. He says that making people pay to go to the parks this summer would have paid for a lot of programs and staff. The mayor of Banff has raised concerns about the government's approach to our national parks. Bringing back free national park admission while cutting essential services is completely “tone deaf”, to use her words.

Parks Canada is also facing another round of workforce reductions, with approximately 500 full-time positions expected to be eliminated. These cuts could affect approximately 17% of park wardens, who are on the front lines. They protect visitors, enforce the law and respond to emergencies. At the same time, Parks Canada has spent approximately $400,000 on catering and $2 million in bonuses. How does that make sense? How can the government justify cutting frontline staff and proven life-saving programs while millions of dollars are being spent on bonuses?

For the third time, the Liberal government is offering free admission to national parks through its Canada strong pass to everyone, including international visitors. I want Canadians to enjoy the national parks, as they are the most beautiful places in the world, but we have to be honest about the cost. More visitors, fewer staff, fewer wardens and fewer search and rescue resources is not a responsible plan. Responsible spending does not mean cutting the very people and programs that keep Canadians safe, and the government needs to get its priorities straight. We need to protect the search and rescue dog program in Banff National Park, and we need to protect frontline Parks Canada employees and park wardens. We need to properly fund the services that keep our national parks safe.

Will the government finally listen, reverse these cuts and commit to protecting the people and programs that keep our national parks safe?

● (1915)

**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, visitor safety remains at the heart of Parks Canada's work. Its capacity to respond promptly to emergencies, conduct search and rescue, and help visitors in distress remains strong. Every day, visitor safety specialists, dispatchers, park wardens and operational teams help people enjoy our parks safely and confidently.

I want to share that I hold Banff National Park in a very special place and have visited it on many occasions over the decades with my family. Just this summer, we hiked in Waterton Lakes National Park in southern Alberta. We have hit the slopes in Jasper National Park. It has been a highlight of my life to have biked the highway between Jasper and Banff.

We want future generations to enjoy exploring Canada in these ways too. That is why budget 2026 proposes $3.6 billion over 10 years, beginning in 2027-28, to preserve infrastructure in national parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas. This builds on the $520 million announced this summer to help rebuild Jasper National Park following the devastating wildfire a few years ago.

I also very much want to recognize our rescue dogs and their handlers. Their work has mattered to people and families in some of their most difficult moments, and they deserve our gratitude. My understanding is that at the time of Parks Canada's decision in this respect, there was one dog and one handler position in Banff National Park and its approach is intended to focus internal resources on core responsibilities and the highest needs and risks.

Parks Canada continues to invest in trained personnel, specialized equipment and emergency response protocols. Established partnerships with external organizations and specialized providers, including dog handling, will continue. These partnerships have already delivered effective responses and helped meet specialized needs.

I would also point out that Public Safety Canada's heavy urban search and rescue program continues to fund specialized task forces trained to handle emergency scenarios in a variety of different ways, including the use of canine search.

Budget 2026 invests $2.5 billion in wildfire response capacity and equipment. It also invests $7.8 million to support first nations with wildfire protection and an additional $7 million for the first nations fire protection strategy.

Canadians can count on our continued commitment to visitor safety in our parks, effective emergency response and ensuring that a whole new generation of Canadians can experience the wonder of Canada's geography from coast to coast to coast.

**William Stevenson:** Mr. Speaker, from that response, I would like to ask again whether she knows of any dogs and their handlers in the Rocky Mountains anymore. The response is ignorant of the fact that there are none anymore with these cuts.

Canadians want to know why this 55-year-old search and rescue program that has helped save lives is being eliminated. They also want to know why the Liberal minister responsible for Parks Canada has still not responded to my letter, which I sent weeks ago and included the names of thousands of petitioners. More importantly, why has she not acted on it?

Let us not forget about the government offering free admission to national parks for a third time, with no clear understanding of whether it generates any benefits for communities in and around the parks. Reducing Parks Canada revenue while cutting the staff needed to manage these parks is wrong.

In a question of priority, will the government exclude Banff National Park from its free pass, stop cutting frontline Parks Canada jobs and reinstate the search and rescue program in Banff before another life is at risk?

● (1920)

**Leslie Church:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to assure the member opposite that visitor safety remains at the heart of Parks Canada's work, and it remains at the heart of our government's ambition to ensure that we have beautiful, sustainable national parks right across this country for generations to come.

Every day, visitor safety specialists, dispatchers, park wardens and operational teams help Canadians and visitors enjoy our national parks safely and confidently. Parks Canada continues to invest in the personnel, specialized equipment, emergency response protocols and expert partnerships that help it deliver a capacity to respond to emergencies, conduct search and rescue and help visitors in distress. Canadians can count on that commitment. Protecting visitors and supporting safe experiences in our parks will remain an unwavering priority.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow, November 18, at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:21 p.m.)

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