HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

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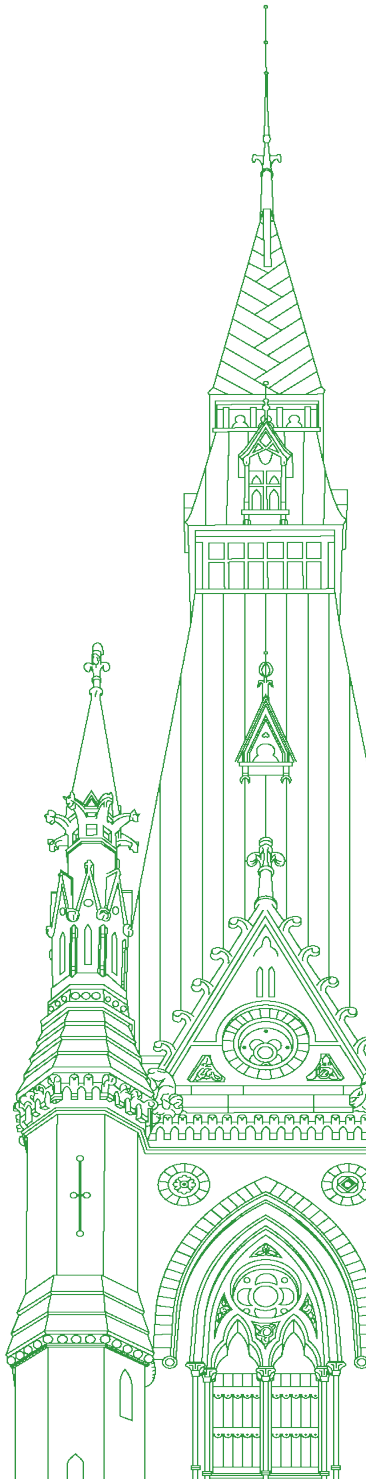
House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, November 18, 2026



Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour will be leading us in the singing of the national anthem today.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

HAMILTON ELECTION RESULTS

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with municipal elections having concluded just a few weeks ago, I want to recognize the choices Hamiltonians have made for the future of our great city. Special congratulations go to Keanin Loomis on earning the trust of Hamiltonians from Flamborough to Stoney Creek and from the mountain to the north end. Hamiltonians have spoken, and I look forward to working with the mayor to build a stronger, more affordable and safer Hamilton for all.

I would also like to congratulate the newly elected and re-elected city councillors, particularly those who represent my riding of Hamilton Centre: councillors Maureen Wilson, Cameron Kroetsch, Nrinder Nann and Jason Farr.

Finally, I thank the outgoing mayor, Andrea Horwath, for her leadership and years of service to Hamilton. It has been a pleasure working with her to deliver for Hamiltonians, and I wish her all the best in her future.

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STUDENT LITERACY

Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to sound the alarm about a very serious problem that the Liberal establishment is overlooking and underplaying. One in three nine-year-olds in Canada cannot read. Older kids in grade 10 are up to three years behind in basic reading skills compared to where grade 10 students were 25 years ago. This information comes from recent research by the Aristotle Foundation for Public Policy.

The Liberal government may want to dismiss this as solely the responsibility of other levels of government, but every person here in Ottawa should feel a responsibility to empower Canadian students to live up to their potential. The Liberal government must stop ignoring the struggles of Canadian kids and start treating Canadian kids as if they are integral to our country's future, because they are.

Moms, dads, children and all Canadians deserve better.

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GURU NANAK FOOD BANK

Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the remarkable work of the Guru Nanak Food Bank, an organization making a real difference in Fleetwood—Port Kells.

Founded during the pandemic in 2020, it became the first food bank in Canada established by the Sikh community, and it is entirely a volunteer-run organization. Since its founding, it has delivered over 84,000 food packages, distributed more than 80,000 welcome kits to international students and newcomers and provided support during natural disasters and other emergencies.

I would like to thank the volunteers, donors and leadership of the Guru Nanak Food Bank for their outstanding service and commitment to helping those in need.

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● (1405)

KEN NEWANS

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this past Grey Cup Sunday, Calgary lost a sports broadcasting legend. Ken Newans passed away peacefully at age 95. Noodles, as some affectionately called him, began his broadcasting career in Moose Jaw in 1956 and moved to Calgary in 1968, joining CFCN, where he remained until his retirement in 1996.

During his long career, he covered seven Olympics, 30 Grey Cups, 12 seasons as the radio voice of the Calgary Stampeders and decades as a supporter of amateur football, including the University of Calgary Dinos football program. In 1981, he was in Baden-Baden, West Germany, covering the awarding of the 1988 winter Olympics, a moment many Calgarians will remember. He later said that covering the 1988 games in Calgary was the highlight of his career.

The winner of many awards, including induction into the Canadian Football Hall of Fame, Ken will be missed by Calgary's sports and broadcasting communities and by a generation of Calgary sports fans. May he rest in peace.

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[*Translation*]

CERCLE DES FERMIÈRES SAINTE-ODILE

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 8, the Cercle des fermières Sainte-Odile, in the riding of Beauport—Limoilou, celebrated its 50th anniversary.

The organization's 69 members share a commitment to working hard each year to improve their skills and learn new techniques in their respective fields, demonstrating boundless imagination and creativity. With more than 2,000 volunteer hours contributed last year alone, these women farmers are clearly very devoted to their organization. They respond to the needs of their community and do what they can to lend a helping hand.

I would like to recognize this organization for the tenacity and pride it has shown over the past 50 years, and I wish its members many more years of redefining Quebec craftsmanship and volunteerism.

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GLEN CONSTANTIN

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an important chapter came to a close yesterday in Quebec City with the announcement that Glen Constantin will be stepping down as head coach of Université Laval's Rouge et Or football team.

Over his 25 seasons at the helm, the team won 11 Vanier Cups, recorded 237 wins and saw only a handful of losses. He turned the Rouge et Or into a true powerhouse of Canadian university football and brought nationwide recognition to Quebec City.

Aside from the records he set, what has stood out most in the tributes paid to him since yesterday is the impact he has had on people, particularly players and young people. He was praised for his generosity, his attentiveness and his passion, all of which left a mark that extends far beyond the end zones.

For our youth and for Quebec City, Glen Constantin's legacy goes well beyond the championships he helped win. I want to thank the coach for everything and offer him my best wishes for the years ahead.

[*English*]

NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, Lib.): *Uqaqtittiji*, budget 2026 proposes major investments in northern sovereignty, affordability, well-being and nation-building infrastructure that could benefit Inuit and Nunavummiut.

Building on the Inuit child first initiative in creating the pirutsiagutiit in partnership with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, it would provide stable, long-term funding to help ensure that Inuit children and families can access the health and well-being services they need. Budget 2026 would also support Nunavut communities by funding modern, recreational and cultural infrastructure, such as replacing the Igloolik Kipsigak Arena, which tragically burned down. Reforming nutrition north Canada is a step in the right direction. This would help lower the cost of food and support local harvesting distribution.

I welcome our government's commitment and support to strengthen Inuit and Arctic communities.

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THE BUDGET

Ellis Ross (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the national debt continues to climb, and Canadians deserve to know exactly where their money is going.

Budget 2026 promises $8.6 billion in savings but provides no breakdown showing where those savings would actually come from. Spending on consultants continues to rise despite repeated government promises to rein it in. Then the Prime Minister commits over half a billion dollars to a Brazilian tropical forest initiative, while here at home Parks Canada is having to cut its search and rescue dog program and the jobs necessary to keep our parks safely maintained.

Canadians deserve a government that puts Canadian needs first. Taxpayer dollars should be invested in the services, infrastructure and support programs that directly benefit Canadian families, not be wasted on expensive consultants or foreign projects while Canadians shoulder the burden of our growing national debt during an affordability crisis.

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● (1410)

[*Translation*]

MAISON DES ARTS SAINT-FAUSTIN

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for 30 years, the organization La Maison des arts Saint-Faustin has been bringing visual arts and culture to the heart of our region.

It is supported by passionate volunteers and gives professional and amateur artists alike a place to display their art, create work and share their talent with our community. The organization does not shy away from being daring. For example, its exhibition dedicated to Dadaism, an artistic movement that challenges conventions and encourages us to view art in a new light, was the only one of its kind in Quebec and Canada.

It has taken a lot of hard work, perseverance and self-sacrifice to keep this gathering place and centre of cultural discovery running for 30 years. Today, La Maison des arts Saint-Faustin needs our support to continue its mission. We need to help it out so it can look forward to another 30 years of culture, daring and creativity.

Let us celebrate culture in the regions.

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[*English*]

SICKKIDS CAMPAIGN

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that unites every member of the House, it is the fundamental belief that every child deserves the chance to live a full and healthy life. When a child becomes seriously ill, a family's world is turned upside down. In those moments of fear and uncertainty, SickKids hospital is there to help. As the world's leading pediatric hospital, SickKids represents the very best of Canada.

Through its heal the future campaign, SickKids is advancing precision child health to ensure that every child receives the right care at the right time, leading to faster diagnosis, more personalized treatments and better outcomes for families and children all across Canada and beyond. This afternoon, I invite all colleagues to join me and one of my constituents, Cohen Lane, who has raised over $100,000 for SickKids, to launch the heal the future campaign, because a brighter future for Canada is a brighter future for our children.

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THE BUDGET

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new budget shows Liberals will always choose higher spending, no matter the cost. Over the next five years, they are planning to add $765 billion in new debt. What Canadians get in return for their tax dollars is, sadly, only more debt. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that debt costs are the fastest-growing line item. Taxpayers are expected to pay $2 billion more on debt interest than for the Canada health transfer. By 2030, interest payments will be $17 billion higher than health care.

Despite the Liberals' campaign promise to protect the Canada health transfer, the federal budget plans to cut it by 2% in 2028. The premiers have said these health care cuts are leading to a fiscal cliff. Nurses in Saskatchewan have not gotten a raise in over four years. The Liberal member from northern Saskatchewan has delivered nothing but bad news while sitting in cabinet. I guess it is no different from when he was part of a provincial NDP government that cut and cancelled 54 hospitals in Saskatchewan.

Again, I have to ask, what do the Liberals deliver for Canadians besides more debt and bad news?

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RECOGNITION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour Nora Findlay, an amazing woman from Bristol.

Nora's commitment to her community began when she was only 11 years old, when she started volunteering at her local hospital. Over eight decades, while raising 10 children and caring for 16 foster children, she found time to volunteer with the Shawville Fair, minor hockey, figure skating, her church and the Bristol Community Association. Her remarkable dedication earned her a Quebec Lieutenant Governor's medal in 2023.

I thank Nora so much for everything she has done for our community. She is such a beautiful example. She shows us we can be stronger when we care for one another in this country and in our community.

* * *

● (1415)

THE ECONOMY

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed what Canadians are feeling. The government spends and borrows more and more while leaving less and less in the pockets of Canadians.

The PBO found that $765 billion in new borrowing is projected over five years. No foreign leader or administration did that to us. That was our own Liberal federal government. Our own regulatory and tax barriers have produced an uncompetitive business environment that is driving investment away. It was not the work of another country that did this to us. It was our own government. Between 2015 and 2024, more than $1 trillion in investment has left Canada. Today, 42% of Canadian manufacturers have moved or are considering moving production elsewhere.

Again, the call is coming from inside our own house, and now is the time to fix the house. Canadians are realizing it is the Liberal government's policies that are making Canada a harder place to build, invest and do—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Terrebonne.

[*Translation*]

CITIZENS HONOURED FOR THEIR SERVICE

Tatiana Auguste (Terrebonne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, men and women have chosen to serve our country and keep us safe, sometimes making the ultimate sacrifice. Last week, we had the opportunity to honour them. During the Remembrance Day parade in Terrebonne, I had the privilege of presenting MP medals to Roger Laliberté and Major Dave Armstrong.

Mr. Laliberté, a veteran of the Royal 22nd Regiment, is a proud resident of Terrebonne. He served Canada with distinction and continues to promote the values of remembrance and solidarity. Major Armstrong, a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, chairs Terrebonne's "friends of veterans" association and is deeply committed to his community. Through their service, their dedication and their unwavering commitment to others, Mr. Laliberté and Major Armstrong embody the values that make Canada strong.

To them and to all those who have served or are serving in uniform, we offer our deepest gratitude.

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[*English*]

FOREIGN AID

Jasraj Hallan (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Liberal Canada, the only ones who get ahead are Liberal insiders and donors, all while Canadians foot the bill. Liberals are racking up the national credit card with overseas charges. We are sending millions to Vietnam for gender-just rice. Millions went to Congo for woke bean-farming projects. Now half a billion dollars is going to Brazil for its rainforest. I was not aware Canadians had to pay Brazil so it would not have to destroy its own rainforest.

The Prime Minister is focused on padding his own global résumé instead of on Canadians. Back here at home, a record-smashing 2.35 million Canadians visit a food bank every single month. In the first nine months of this year, we had the worst insolvencies since the great recession, and young Canadians have given up on the dream of home ownership.

It is time the Liberals put Canada first. Canadians are having to cut back. It is time the Liberals do the same with their woke foreign aid projects.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2026 is good news, just as the finance minister has said. Canada is outperforming the G7; the operational budget will be balanced by next year; and the focus is on people, growth and sovereignty.

I was pleased to see $22 billion in affordability measures, recognizing the difficulty Canadians are facing and providing help. The continued focus on affordable housing is great, since this is the number one priority in my riding. The plan to end homelessness within 10 years is also welcome news.

The growth continues with investments in 27 nation-building projects, diversification of our trade, supports for businesses and workers through this tough time and, last but not least, the protection of our sovereignty, with a focused plan to build our defences, protect our children online and protect our data.

Budget 2026 is so good that I will be voting for the budget for the first time in 11 years.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other day, I spoke with Nikki, who had to wait four years for back surgery. Six million Canadians have no family doctor, yet the Prime Minister is proposing a massive increase in immigration. He plans to bring in 650,000 new permanent residents, 50% higher than the biggest year under Justin Trudeau.

How does the Prime Minister intend to care for Canadians while bringing in 650,000 new permanent residents?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives claim they care about the pressure our health care system is under, so I have good news for them: I have reserved an extra 5,000 spaces for doctors. I prioritized health care professionals under the express entry system. This government has invested $100 million in credential recognition and $5 billion in hospitals. I am keeping immigration at sustainable levels. If this is really what the Conservatives want, they should support our plan.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other day I spoke to Nikki, who waited four years for back surgery. She had to work through the pain because, of course, with this economy, she could not afford to take time off.

Six million Canadians have no doctor. Canadians are dying on wait-lists, yet the Prime Minister plans to bring in a record 650,000 new permanent residents, 50% higher than the biggest year under Justin Trudeau.

How does the Prime Minister expect to accept so many new people to this country at a time when Canadians cannot get the basic health care they need?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are here fighting for Nikki and for all the people in this country who deserve and need health care.

Conservatives are claiming they care for Canadians and for health care. I have reserved 5,000 spaces in the immigration plan for health care professionals. I prioritized health care professionals with our express entry system. This government has invested $100 million for credential recognition and $5 billion for hospitals.

We will continue to make our immigration plan durable, stable and in control.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if it were true that the minister is bringing in 5,000 new doctors, we do not need to have 650,000 new permanent residents to do that. However, it is worse than that. According to the national nurses union, thousands of nurses already here as immigrants cannot get licensed to work. According to the medical association, there are 13,000 doctors who cannot get licensed to work. We proposed a blue seal program that would get them licensed nationwide and serving in our hospitals.

Why does the Prime Minister not do that before bringing in a record-smashing 650,000 new permanent residents?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government supports provinces and territories to license newcomers who are medical professionals through our foreign credential recognition program, something the member opposite votes against time and time again.

The Conservatives are talking out of both sides of their mouth. They say they care about newcomers who want to use their skills in Canada, yet they undermine them every chance they get.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are spending lots of money. They are just not licensing any new doctors. It is an awful lot like the money they are wasting while Canadians have empty stomachs and fridges. The Prime Minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The Leader of the Opposition may start over.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, they spend lots of money. They do not get any results for Canadians here at home. While folks in this country have empty stomachs, empty fridges and empty bank accounts, the Prime Minister throws away money on foreign countries. The PBO reported spending is up $333 billion under the Prime Minister, with 60% going to day-to-day operations. It is here today, gone tomorrow, like half a billion dollars for Brazil.

Why is the Prime Minister sending our money out of this country when our people cannot afford to eat here at home?

● (1425)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know it is Wednesday and I have good news for the Leader of the Opposition. It is called "Masters of our destiny", budget 2026. That is what this country is about: building resiliency, investing in our growth and affordability. There is more than $22 billion in affordability measures in this budget to help Canadians. We will see whether the Conservatives stand up and do one thing, which is to vote for the bill we presented that would help 12 million Canadians.

On this side of the House, we will always be on the side of Canadians and build Canada strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are on the side of corrupt foreign governments, giving half a billion dollars to a country that has an even bigger economy than we do here in Canada, claiming that it has something to do with the rainforest, the same rainforest the Prime Minister's company helped destroy. Nine thousand hectares of land was destroyed by Brookfield. Now he takes half a billion dollars of Canadians' money, supposedly for the same thing. This is part of a $13-billion fund that works out to almost $1,000 per Canadian family. How can Canadians pay their own bills?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have some good news for the Leader of the Opposition. He is going to have a chance to support the forestry industry in Canada. We are introducing the first-ever national forestry program and investing $6.5 billion in this industry. He has an opportunity to vote for that. Let us see what he does.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford to pay their bills, and the Prime Minister is throwing away their money all around the world to the benefit of foreign countries and foreign corporations. Whether it is gender-just rice in Vietnam, supposedly the rainforest in Brazil with his friend Lula or countless other foreign ventures that do nothing to pay the bills, why is it the Prime Minister is so content to send our money out of this country? Why will he not put Canadians first for a change?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the member has an opportunity to support us. He has an opportunity to support the 18,000 jobs at Darlington, the thousands of jobs that go with Pacific link, the thousands of jobs that go with the expansion of the LNG industry and the thousands of jobs that go with clean energy. What do they do? They vote against it every single time.

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the system put in place to oversee the Prime Minister's ethics and potential conflicts of interest includes a screen, an alarm of sorts. It should not be triggered very often, of course, but it has sounded 29 times, including a dozen times just since June, and the count is still rising. Any time the Prime Minister talks about investment and trade, alarm bells start ringing somewhere, so there is cause for concern.

Is the Prime Minister not concerned that owning shares and options whose value is influenced by his decisions as the Prime Minister might place him in a conflict of interest?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like all members on this side of the House, the Prime Minister rigorously follows all ethics rules, including the provisions relating to conflicts of interest.

I invite the leader of the second opposition party to also adhere to these ethical standards, as we all do.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): When Brookfield's stock rises, the Prime Minister increases his holdings. That is what Mr. Beber, Brookfield's chief operating officer, told the ethics committee. He also said that the Prime Minister could divest himself of his options to eliminate any appearance of a conflict of interest.

Would the Prime Minister not be better able to fulfill his responsibilities, free from public suspicion, if he either was completely transparent about his assets and earnings or sold his shares?

Does the Prime Minister not want the conflict-of-interest alarm to stop ringing?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, the Prime Minister strictly adheres to the provisions of the framework established by the Ethics Commissioner. All members of the House must also strictly adhere to those provisions.

● (1430)

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister chose to become Prime Minister. That is a legitimate choice. Owning shares is also a legitimate choice, but the two may become incompatible. The conflict of interest screen that flags potential conflicts is the clearest proof that a prime minister cannot make decisions that would increase the value of their own investments. The Prime Minister could sell his shares, but he has not indicated that he intends to do so.

Why will he not do the only thing that would inspire confidence, namely choose to be either an investor or Prime Minister, and divest himself of his Brookfield stock options?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister rigorously adheres to the arrangements and commitments he has made with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are more reports critical of the budget. Here is what PBO Annette Ryan said:

> Housing starts are down. Funding is up. And the government is falling behind on 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 proposes to approve an additional 200,000 permanent residents to Canada in Budget 2026.

The Prime Minister promised in the last election "to build homes at a scale and at a speed not seen since the Second World War." What happened?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know it is Wednesday, and we need to remind the Conservatives. Let me quote a great Conservative premier. I think his name is Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan, talking about the budget: "I would say it's probably the best budget we've had in a decade". That is visionary.

I want to talk about the premier-designate of British Columbia. Maybe they will prefer that. "Today's federal budget proves British Columbia is critical to Canada's economic success."

Canadians across the nation understand that we need to build this country, tackle affordability and defend our sovereignty. We are going to build Canada stronger.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the PBO said interest payments "are already the fastest-growing expense in the fiscal framework." She said interest payments "will rise to $85.5 billion in 2030-31". That is more than the government spends on public health care.

Now the government is not only cutting the Commissionaires; it is now cutting most cadet activities until next spring.

The Prime Minister promised, last election, "responsible fiscal management". How is spending more on interest than public health care, cutting the Commissionaires and cutting cadet activities "responsible fiscal management"?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is Wednesday, so I have more good news. Let us talk about the Canadian Chamber of Commerce: This is a radical shift, and the government is now focusing on "the kind of business investment and reinvestment Canada needs."

That is exactly what budget 2026 is about: fiscal discipline, visionary investment, defending sovereignty and helping Canadians with affordability. Canadians understand that from coast to coast to coast. We are going to build Canada strong together.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has exposed the Prime Minister's accounting trick, $136 billion of expenses relabelled as investments. The Prime Minister, in fact, has not balanced the operating budget. He created an accounting scheme to make the numbers look better, and then he boasted about balancing the operating budget, but under the original definitions, that budget will remain in a deficit for at least another five years.

Why is the Prime Minister telling Canadians that the operating budget is balanced, when he knows it is not?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that leader's office flees to B.C. to work for their premier. By the way, that premier called our budget the best he has seen in a decade. We agree with that B.C. premier.

We are going to build Canada strong while looking after the most vulnerable. Our groceries and essentials benefit will be topped up by 50%, and our productivity mega deduction will unleash capital investment in our country like not ever seen before.

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member clearly dodged the question, but let me say this: The finance minister, in fact, said that he did this for transparency. He invented definitions not used anywhere else in the world for transparency, and then used them inconsistently for transparency. Then, the numbers cannot be independently replicated with public information for transparency, but conveniently, this accounting scheme moves $136 billion of expenses to investments and causes the operating budget to be balanced.

Does he really think that Canadians are foolish enough to believe his scheme, or does he think that telling the truth does not matter anymore?

● (1435)

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, budget 2026 is titled “Masters of our destiny”. That leader is master of division in his caucus and in his office.

We have a plan to build Canada strong. We have a plan to invest in Canada to unleash capital investment in projects. We are going to invest in major projects, infrastructure and housing. On this side of the House, we have a plan to build our economy strong. They have no plan whatsoever.

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HOUSING

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister promised to spend less and invest more, but the verdict is in. Even his own parliamentary budget watchdog said that this budget spends more and borrows more. That is $765 billion of net new borrowing.

The PBO also confirmed that the government had abandoned its promise to build 500,000 homes a year. Instead, housing starts are dropping to just 200,000, yet the Liberals plan to accept a record 654,000 new permanent residents. When will the Prime Minister hand Canadians the keys he promised? He has already handed them the mortgage.

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. This government has always been and remains laser focused on housing supply and building affordable housing at a scale that is unprecedented. With the reaction to our budget 2026, I will share a few of the quotes. Build Canada said that this is a budget for builders. The Canadian Construction Association said, “The budget takes a fiscally prudent approach while making important investments”.

Experts in the field, the people who actually build the housing that we need, are weighing in and supporting budget 2026 to build.

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[*Translation*]

FINANCE

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, families in Quebec and across Canada are struggling to pay their rent and buy groceries. Meanwhile, here in Ottawa, it is projected that $765 billion in new debt will be added over five years—a sad record. The Montreal Economic Institute points out that the government is forecasting a deficit of more than $62 billion next year. Unfortunately, it is future generations that will be paying off the government's credit cards.

When will the Liberal government finally stop its wasteful spending and reduce the deficit?

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, I was in my riding last week. In Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est, 39,000 Canadians are benefiting from the Canada groceries and essentials benefit.

My colleague calls it wasteful spending. I would love to take him around Hochelaga and let him to say that out loud in my riding. I think his comment would be poorly received.

Eric Lefebvre (Richmond—Arthabaska—des-Sources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, $19 billion on consultants is a lot of wasteful spending. I will visit Hochelaga anytime.

The Liberals are fudging the numbers to make it seem as though the operating budget will be balanced. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the government is categorizing over $35 billion as capital investment, which does not comply with international standards. If the government applied the international standards, there would be an operating deficit every year for the next five years. That is the truth.

How can Canadians trust a government that fudges the numbers?

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that my colleague will come and visit Hochelaga. I have plenty of great places to recommend.

Let us talk about a few different things. The mega deduction will help small businesses. We are all proud of them. We need look no further than social media to see that they are some of people's favourite places. This measure will help to maintain jobs and increase our productivity and competitiveness.

We can help our economy thrive while still providing measures that directly support Canadians.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals keep going off the rails with Bill C-39.

Yesterday, we had a vote on a simple amendment. Its purpose was to prevent the federal government from authorizing projects by sidestepping environmental laws in national parks and marine protected areas. They voted against it, for crying out loud. Under Bill C-39, even national parks will be at the mercy of developers pushing oil, gas, mining and nuclear projects, among others.

When will they speak out against this abuse of power?

● (1440)

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say it again, as I have done many times in this place. Our bill C-39 does not lower environmental standards. How does it help us? It helps us build good projects that will help us expand our electricity grids, which we need to do to achieve net-zero.

I hope my colleague will support us by voting in favour of Bill C-39.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what the Liberals are doing with Bill C-39 is appalling. Last night, they gave themselves the power to build projects in parks like Forillon National Park, La Mauricie National Park and the Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, and even in the St. Lawrence, without respecting environmental laws.

I am appealing to the Liberal members from Quebec. There must be a few on the other side who have not yet drunk the oil-flavoured Kool-Aid.

What will it take for them to speak out against Bill C-39?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we look at the nature strategy, if we look at all the investments we are making in national parks, and in the protection and conservation of nature across the country, it is obvious that this is a priority for our government. We will continue to protect what matters to Canadians across the country, specifically nature.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to increased demand, average wait times for health care in Canada have increased to 31 weeks, and more than 23,000 Canadians died while waiting for care in 2024-25. Youth unemployment is at 13.7%, and housing starts are down by 10%.

Housing is down, unemployment and wait times are up, and yet the minister plans to bring in more than 650,000 new permanent residents next year. How can she possibly justify that as sustainable?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about youth unemployment for a moment, and talk about the obstruction from Conservative members of Parliament who continually vote against the interests of our youth, including Canada summer jobs, which all of them benefit from in their own riding, and the $8 billion for team Canada strong, which is building new apprentices, building new tradespeople and helping people, like those in the Canadian Construction Association, find the talent they need.

These guys are talking out of both sides of their mouth. They do not want to be part of the solution. They are obstructing for the purpose of obstruction, and that is not what Canada needs or wants.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the immigration department warned the Prime Minister that rapid increases in immigration put pressure on health care, but he ignored that warning and he is bringing in close to a million new people next year.

When two families are waiting for the same scarce hospital bed, the blame does not belong on a newcomer who came to Canada to build a better life. Will the Prime Minister admit that the blame belongs squarely on him, because he is bringing in too many people too fast for housing and health care to keep up?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well that what she is saying is not true—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: We cannot impugn that way. Maybe the minister could take another run at it.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, the information is not accurate. The fact is, the majority of the people who will be coming into permanent residency next year are already people living here, paying taxes, working, helping our children in day cares, feeding people in their homes and helping those in hospital beds. They are already here on temporary status. Which ones would she like to get rid of? Can she please tell us?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us think about what the minister just said. She just admitted that the 5,000 people she was going to give the spots to are already here and already practising. There are six million people in Canada who, even with those people here, already do not have a doctor. Why would the Prime Minister bring one million more people to Canada? These people also need hospital beds and diagnostic imaging.

My question to the minister is this—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1445)

The Speaker: Not from the top, but the member may continue.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, one million new people to Canada need hospital beds and access to surgery. My question to the minister is this: Which hospital bed does the Prime Minister plan to give the one million newcomers? Is it the one that does not exist or the one that somebody already here is waiting for?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those are totally fabricated numbers that the member is talking about. Our immigration plan is to maintain control of our system. It is to bring fairness to people who are already in the country. I will quote a physician who is a Hong Konger. He said:

> The time-limited measure presented in this year's immigration levels plan gives our Hong Kong community renewed hope. By clearing the backlog for the Hong Kong pathways, Canada will not only honour its commitment, it will also unlock valuable health care manpower that is already here in Canada, contributing to our economy

[*Translation*]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, successful and responsible immigration depends first and foremost on integration capacity. To talk about integration capacity is to talk about housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation anticipates 223,000 units. That is half of what the Prime Minister promised. At the same time, the Prime Minister wants to give permanent residency to 654,000 more people. No matter how we do the math, we still end up short on housing.

Why does the government have an irresponsible immigration policy that makes immigrants its primary victims?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have taken decisive action to restore balance and control to our immigration system. The number of temporary residents declined in 2026. Asking rents have fallen for 25 consecutive months. The Conservatives do not seem to be listening, but TD Economics says that Canada's rapidly slowing population growth is easing pressure on social and economic infrastructure—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone in Canada knows that the Prime Minister and the CEO of Telesat have been friends for a long time. We have no problem with their friendship, but it is creating ethical problems. This Liberal government has already given Telesat $5 billion, and now it is planning to give the company another $5 billion in defence contracts.

Can the Prime Minister assure the House that he will not participate in any discussions in this regard, yes or no? As we know, it would be illegal for him to do so.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he has already given those assurances.

* * *

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

Emma Harrison (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are looking to us to build a stronger, more affordable and more independent economy. Our plan is grounded in a simple principle: Hard work leads to greater opportunity and Canadian workers and Canadian labour will be at the heart of building a stronger and resilient economy. However, while we build a stronger economy, we know affordability remains a very real concern.

Can the Minister of Finance tell my constituents in Peterborough how budget 2026 is providing greater certainty and support for low- and modest-income workers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Peterborough for her excellent work. In budget 2026, she is right that we announced Canada's worker benefit, which will help lower-income Canadians continue to work and contribute to Canada's economy, while keeping a little extra money in their pocket, which means their families will receive up to $3,100 per year in support. That means increased financial certainty for nearly two million Canadian workers who will benefit. That means an additional 240,000 Canadians will be lifted out of poverty—

Oral Questions

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these Liberals and the industry minister have done absolutely nothing to stop the sale of the Stellantis plant in Brampton and now we know why. On July 14, four Liberal MPs toured the plant with Roshel, including the member for Brampton Centre. The industry minister has done nothing to stop this since the MOU was signed in September.

Is this minister actually going to try and stand up here now and pretend that she is against the sale when Liberal MPs were touring the plant in July and she has not sued to stop the sale?

● (1450)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the number one priority of this government is to protect jobs, jobs that are affected by American tariffs and tariffs that have not yet been denounced by the Leader of the Opposition. Colleagues should know that we will continue to fight for these jobs. We were able to fight and win at Stelco in Hamilton. We will do the same in Brampton.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, do colleagues know what was missing from that? It was a denial of what I just said, and that is telling. Here is what we know. We know that she issued a notice of default 10 months ago and did nothing. We know Liberal MPs toured the plant in July with Roshel. They were in on it. They did nothing to stop it. The MOU was entered in September. They did nothing to stop it. How about we have some honesty from this minister?

When did you know the plant was going to be sold? Why did she not sue to stop it the second you found out?

The Speaker: Nobody told me.

The hon. Minister of Industry.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only company we are negotiating with is Stellantis, and that has always been clear. Do members know what is also clear?

I would like to remind members what my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon once mentioned. He said that we have solid contracts with job guarantees at Stellantis. Do members know what? That is true. Either they protect the jobs or we will get our money back.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am looking for some clarification. The Prime Minister said that he called the Stellantis sale a betrayal. We then learned from a CTV report that, in fact, the Liberal government not only knew the terms of the said sale but they also participated in the discussions behind closed doors and did nothing to stop it.

I have a question for the industry minister. When did she first learn about the potential sale of Stellantis and what did she do before a deal was signed to protect auto workers in Brampton?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no big secret here. We have been negotiating for months, for a year actually, working with Stellantis, working with Unifor and working with the Ontario government. We have always said that any solution needed to protect the workers, period.

Do members know what? Stellantis is on the hook. If they go ahead with the sale, there is no problem. Do members know what will happen? They will have to pay back the government and Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, period.

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know what Stellantis did but what I was asking is what the industry minister did to protect the workers at Stellantis. The Brampton workers deserve some accountability. One cannot facilitate and participate in negotiations around a sale behind closed doors and then stand up in the House and pretend one is against said sale.

I have a simple question for the industry minister. Will she stand up, take some accountability and finally tell us why she has done nothing to protect the jobs of the Stellantis workers?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position is clear. If they go ahead with the sale, we will go after our money. Meanwhile, if they want to keep the jobs in Canada, we are willing to put an aggressive package to support the workers. Do members know what will happen—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I want to hear the rest of it. The minister may continue.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, I hear them heckling, calling it corporate welfare. Do members know what? While they call it corporate welfare, we say it is about protecting the jobs and we will do the work.

* * *

● (1455)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Telesat saga continues. The Prime Minister's friend, Dan Goldberg is restructuring Telesat's debt. They have been given a month-long reprieve and a new deadline where they will not have to pay until after the House votes on a $1.6-billion spend for the very program that Telesat has already gotten billions from.

Does the government intend to give the Prime Minister's friend another bailout?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what that member is alleging, but we obviously have very clear and rigorous conflict of interest guidelines in the country. All members must follow them. I hope that member is as well.

Jamil Jivani (Bowmanville—Oshawa North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, we have a mouthpiece of the government saying that there is nothing to see here, that we should not be asking any questions. The Prime Minister's Office admitted in a letter to the ethics committee that they did not start paying attention to the issue of Dan Goldberg until we started talking about it and there was "current public attention" on Telesat. The question remains.

Will they be handing the Prime Minister's friend another bailout?

Do they intend to actually do right by the taxpayer and support our call for an investigation at the ethics committee?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as for that member, I am sure many of us on this side of the House would like to understand what he is a mouthpiece for.

With respect to all of the disclosures, with respect to our ethics guidelines, with respect to all of the things that all elected members must follow, the Prime Minister has done so rigorously and is in complete compliance with all of the rules.

[*Translation*]

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what we know: The Prime Minister has been friends with the president and CEO of Telesat for a long time. However, since 2019, the Liberal government has given this company over $5 billion in taxpayer money. The Conflict of Interest Act is very clear. Friends of a public office holder can put that office holder in a position of conflict of interest.

Will the Prime Minister agree to immediately hand this file over to the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner for review?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has complied with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's requests. He proactively disclosed everything that needed to be disclosed and he is strictly adhering to the provisions of the act.

* * *

[*English*]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in July, the Liberal finance minister gave $100 million to Millar Western Forest Products to protect Canadian jobs. Within weeks, Millar Western announced a curtailment at its Quesnel mill in my riding. One hundred days to the date, Millar Western announced it was shuttering its doors indefinitely, meaning hundreds of jobs lost in my community, just before Christmas.

Was the minister aware that Millar Western was going to shutter its operations in Quesnel when he gave it the $100 million?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the unfair and unjust tariffs that are being imposed on the industry. We understand how challenging that is for all these communities. That is why we put forward $2.5 billion in supports for the industry. That is why, in this budget, they have an opportunity to vote for the first-ever $6.5-billion national forestry strategy to transform the industry. I sure hope they are going to vote for it.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will say this a bit more slowly for the minister. The Liberals can give $500 million to save the Brazilian rainforest and $100 million to Millar Western. Did I mention Millar Western is owned by an American equity firm? The finance minister literally gave it $100 million to protect Canadian jobs, and 100 days later, hundreds of jobs were lost in my riding.

It took the money and ran, so who is the minister really protecting, Canadian workers or American shareholders?

● (1500)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we actually care about the forests. That is why we do things for the rainforests. That is why we are doing the first-ever national forestry strategy: $6.5 billion to help transform the industry, including mills in Alberta. The gentleman has the opportunity to vote for—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. minister can stop for just a moment. I did not hear half of that because of the noise. It is important that the Chair be able to hear.

I ask the minister to pick up midway through the answer if he can.

Hon. Tim Hodgson: Mr. Speaker, as I said, yes we care about the rainforests, and we also care about Canadian forestry workers. That is why we put $2.5 billion toward helping them against these unfair and unjust tariffs. That is why they have an opportunity to support our forestry strategy: $6.5 billion toward the first-ever national forestry strategy. I sure hope they will support this.

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Danielle Martin (University—Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians look out for one another. This is particularly true when it comes to our caregivers. As a physician, I have seen first-hand the essential role that caregivers play in supporting Canada's most vulnerable people. Whether they are paid or not, they are there when people need them most. It is time we gave them the recognition they deserve.

Can the Minister of Finance and National Revenue tell us what measures in this budget will help support Canada's caregivers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for University—Rosedale for her question and for her excellent work as an MP and as a physician.

She is referring to a flagship measure in the 2026 budget: making the caregiver tax credit refundable. This is an important support measure for those who care for our loved ones. It is a vital measure that will recognize the work of caregivers across the country. It will support 180,000 caregivers nationwide and lift 15,000 people out of poverty across the country. We will continue to support Canadians.

[*English*]

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in June, the health minister promised an independent, third party audit into the $300-million PrescribeIT scandal. More than 150 days later, Canadians have seen no audit and no accountability. Meanwhile, Infoway executives are walking out the door after pocketing millions of dollars of taxpayer money. The Liberals are now claiming they have hired an independent auditor.

My question is simple: Whom did the minister hire to conduct the audit, and what day will the audit be completed?

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always said we will share the findings of the review and the audit as soon as we have them. I look forward to sharing the results once they are completed, along with next steps. We will have more to say very soon.

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was a simple question. I would like to live in a high-trust society with an open and transparent government. When $300 million of taxpayer money goes missing, Canadians expect to see an audit. The Minister of Health promised this five months ago.

Why will she not just say the name of the auditor she has hired? An open and transparent government should have no problem answering.

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always said we will share the findings of the review and the audit as soon as we have them. I look forward to sharing the results with all members, and I will have more to say very soon.

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is this a joke? The question is simple. What is the name of the auditor? This is a democracy. The minister has freedom of speech. People are in the gallery wanting to hear basic answers to basic questions.

What is the name of the auditor she has hired?

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell my colleague that it is very serious, because we are talking about the health of Canadians. I will also tell him that the Auditor General has confirmed that our government is taking the right approach with this fight. I will have more to say very soon.

* * *

● (1505)

HOUSING

Amandeep Sodhi (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a Canada where we are masters of our own destiny is one where every Canadian can feel safe and secure in a place that they call home. For many Canadians, particularly younger generations, purchasing a first home represents one of the biggest financial commitments of their life. While we are taking action to build more homes and make housing more affordable, we know that there is still more work to be done.

Can the Minister of Finance share with the House how our government is helping bring the dream of home ownership within reach for younger Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful to the member from Brampton Centre for her advocacy she brings for younger Canadians.

In fact, she is right. Our government is taking action to make it even easier for young Canadians to get into the housing market. Through this year's budget, we would expand mortgage loan insurance to help lower the cost of building homes. This builds on our partnership with Ontario to lower development charges and remove HST on new homes, saving all buyers up to $200,000.

On this side of the House, we will do everything to make sure we support younger Canadians.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a single father is at a grocery checkout, with milk, bread, ground beef, blueberries, potatoes, butter and carrots. The price adds up. When the juice boxes scan, there is dread. He is over budget. Picture him holding up the line, with his kids, telling the cashier he cannot afford it. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister just pledged over half a billion dollars to a communist in Brazil for a save-the-trees fundraiser.

Before another Canadian father has to deal with that shame, will the Prime Minister pick up the phone, call Brazil and tell it Canadian families will not bankroll its national landscaping project?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we care deeply about supporting Canadians. We see it with our one million homes retrofits, our groceries and essentials benefit and the work that we are doing time and time again.

However, I do want to correct some of the misinformation about the funding that went to the tropical forest forever facility. First of all, it is a loan to a fund that is co-managed by Norway. It is going to protect one billion hectares of tropical forests in 70 countries. Other donors include Germany, the U.K., France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. This is actually a good thing.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Prime Minister: "Depending on the market structure, the form of oligopoly can lead to more competition with fewer players under certain circumstances." What an Orwellian word salad that is. Canadians already pay some of the highest cellphone rates in the world. Make it make sense.

Why is the Prime Minister defending corporate consolidation and oligopolies that will drive prices even higher for Canadians during an affordability crisis? Will he just say no to the Quebecor and Telus takeover?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, my statement on the issue stands. We know of the proposal by Quebecor to Telus, and we will do our work. We will update our policy.

As we know, there are geopolitical and technological changes that are important, and we need to make sure that we protect our sovereignty at a time when we also want to lower costs for Canadians. There are clear processes in place through the Competition Bureau, the CRTC and legislation, and we will follow them.

[*Translation*]

Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period, the Minister of Industry misled the House when she stated that the leader of the official opposition had never denounced the U.S. tariffs. However, on February 1, 2025, he stated that the Conservatives—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: So noted. I thank the hon. member.

The member appears to wish to raise a point of order on another matter.

● (1510)

Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, my microphone was turned off when I asked you to request that the minister withdraw her remarks.

Routine Proceedings

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 13 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

GROCERY AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ACT

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-42, an act respecting certain measures related to affordability and housing.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports: the report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's 25th winter meeting in Vienna, Austria, from February 19 to 20; the report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's 33rd annual session in The Hague, Netherlands, from July 4 to 8; and the report of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's election observation mission in Hungary, from April 10 to 13.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-223, an act to amend the Divorce Act.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage: the 10th report, entitled "State of the Journalism and Media Sectors", and the 11th report, entitled "State of Creative and Performance Spaces Across Canada".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these two reports.

[*English*]

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling a dissenting report on the creative spaces study done at the heritage committee. This study comes at a critical moment as the Liberal government is actively working to strengthen ties with the Chinese Communist Party.

In our dissenting report, we discuss the state of creative and performance spaces across Canada. During our study, we heard how the CCP has targeted and intimidated artistic organizations in Canada, including Shen Yun, which has faced bomb threats and performance cancellations because of foreign interference from the Chinese government.

When Conservatives brought forward a simple motion at committee to condemn this, the Liberals voted against it. Witness testimony reminds us that safety and security are very basic needs and that without them, sectors like the performing arts do suffer. When the government turns a blind eye, it puts Canadian artists, cultural institutions and our sovereignty at risk.

Our report calls on the government to take responsibility and ensure that no foreign regime can intimidate Canadians or silence artistic expression on our soil.

I also have the opportunity to table our Conservative dissenting report with regard to a journalism study that was done at the heritage committee. The committee study raised serious concerns about the state of journalism in Canada and the role the Liberal government has played in shaping a media environment that favours government-supported outlets, while showing considerable hostility toward independent and community-minded journalism.

From the minister turning a blind eye to serious allegations of toxic workplace culture and political bias at the CBC, to government subsidies that disproportionately benefit established legacy media, to independent journalists being denied access to government press conferences and smaller outlets being left out in the cold by being denied financial support, the evidence paints a deeply troubling picture of Canada's media landscape.

Our report puts forward solutions, however, like greater accountability at the CBC, fairer support for independent journalism, repealing Bill C-18 and giving Canadians greater choice in the journalism they support. Canadians deserve a media landscape that is diverse, fair, balanced and independent.

● (1515)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I believe the hon. member for Drummond is seeking the House's consent to table a supplementary report as an appendix to the 10th report.

Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to submit a supplementary opinion on the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the state of the journalism and media sectors, which was tabled by the member for Hamilton Mountain.

The Bloc Québécois agrees with the report's major findings on the state of the journalism and media sectors: The media ecosystem is fragile, journalism plays an essential role in our democracy and we need to protect high-quality news that is produced by independent professionals. However, we want to express significant reservations about the way that some testimony was presented in the report.

We do not disagree with the witnesses' right to express themselves. Parliament must remain a place where different opinions can be heard. Citizens and organizations are well within their rights to criticize the media, point out errors and demand accountability. No journalist should be above criticism.

However, the right to express oneself does not mean that all opinions have the same value as journalistic expertise. Journalism is based on specific standards: fact-checking, editorial independence, balance, the avoidance of conflicts of interest and accountability. A parliamentary report on this profession must therefore make a clear distinction between journalism, opinion and activism.

The Bloc Québécois recognizes that there are new players in the news reporting industry and that this industry is experiencing major changes in this day and age. However, it is incorrect to claim that groups like Rebel News, whose methods do not adhere to any of the core criteria of journalism, or HonestReporting Canada, which calls for journalists to be harassed when they believe that coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict is biased, deserve the same consideration as university researchers, recognized news media and other objective experts. It is fine for them to participate in public debate. They are free to present their perspectives on current events. What we are concerned with is the manner in which these groups were presented in the report, which may give the impression that they are on the same level as media and journalistic organizations that are subject to recognized professional standards. All voices can be heard, but they are not all part of the same journalistic practice.

Lastly, the report recommends improving media literacy. The report should apply this requirement by clearly distinguishing between different forms of speech. For the Bloc Québécois, this rigour is essential for the report's credibility and to ensure respect for professional journalism. Protecting freedom of expression and recognizing the uniqueness of professional journalism are complementary responsibilities, not contradictory ones.

[*English*]

PETITIONS

PARENTAL BENEFITS

Hon. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to rise to present two petitions on behalf of constituents. The first is with regard to EI parental benefits and the tragedy of stillbirths. The petitioners are asking that, should a parent experience a stillbirth, they be entitled to the EI they had agreed to and that the government honour that commitment it had entered into with the parent.

● (1520)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hon. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with regard to climate change and environmental protections. Petitioners note that there are increasing extreme weather events in our country and around the world. They are urging the Government of Canada to honour and ensure Canada's 2030 and 2035 emissions targets and strengthen the policies that make them achievable, for the love of our children and grandchildren.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in January, the Minister of Agriculture released his plan to cut 665 positions and shut down seven research stations across Canada. Later in the spring, the minister also confirmed that six scientific positions would be cut as part of this plan at the Brandon Research and Development Centre. This is a frankly backwards and wrong-headed decision at a time when Canada faces food affordability, food sovereignty and food security crises.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to: recognize the critical role of agricultural research in supporting farmers, food security and economic growth; immediately reverse the decision to close the seven research facilities and eliminate 665 positions, including the reversal of the decision to cut six scientific positions at the Brandon Research and Development Centre; and commit to maintaining and strengthening agricultural research capacity in Brandon and Westman.

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, petitioners in Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford are concerned about uncontrolled population growth, which has put too much pressure on our housing, jobs and health care systems. An unsustainable immigration surge has overwhelmed critical infrastructure. The influx has outpaced housing development. Hospitals and clinics are struggling to keep up with demand, with wait times for surgeries and doctor's appointments reaching unprecedented levels in some regions of Canada. The influx has sparked concerns about wage suppression and job competition, particularly in low-skilled sectors.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the government to rebuild an immigration system that works for Canadian citizens, a fair and orderly system that prioritizes economic contributions and sustainable growth, and to keep the rate of population growth below the rate of housing growth, job growth and health care accessibility.

FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition initiated by Crystal Braunwarth of Burnaby and supported by 5,585 signatories. The petition highlights that Canada's motion-picture industry supports more than 181,000 jobs and generates over $10.2 billion in annual production activity.

The petition is calling on the Government of Canada to eliminate the federal grind on the production services tax credit so provincial incentives no longer reduce the federal credit. This change would strengthen Canada's competitiveness, attract investment and protect jobs for Canadian workers in the film and television industry.

MILITARY DECORATIONS

Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to speak today on behalf of many veterans across the country, particularly after we just celebrated Remembrance Day ceremonies across the country. These individuals are concerned about the unauthorized wearing of military decorations and insignia, which is commonly referred to as “stolen valour”.

This has been a problem in Canada for many years, and veterans have asked me to present this petition on their behalf, asking for changes to the Criminal Code's section 419 on the unlawful use of military uniforms and certificates, to reclassify the offence as a hybrid procedure, which would enable the prosecution to pursue stronger sentences for those who violate stolen valour by using an insignia in a public way.

It is my honour to present this petition on behalf of 301 Canadians.

HEALTH CARE

Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting petition e-6982 today.

This petition was initiated by Richard Hackett, a constituent whose passion for his son led him to advocacy. His son suffers from ADHD and has not been able to receive access to an occupational therapist for well over four years.

Richard and the 12,000-plus signatories are calling for the universal access to education and health care in this country to be negotiated with the provinces. It is a difficult feat to be sure, but I do not discount the passion, determination and love, frankly, that Richard has for his son. It is an honour to present a petition on his behalf today.

● (1525)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions from constituents in my riding of Victoria.

The Budget

The first recognizes that in the context of the Iran war that began earlier this year, globally oil and gas companies are projected to make up to $90 billion in excess profits.

Canada is in the middle of an affordability crisis and is feeling the impacts of the climate crisis. The petitioners call on the federal government to investigate and implement an excess profits tax of 75% for fossil fuel companies so that the profit they are gaining from these geopolitical events can go to support the important investments Canadians expect, including renewable energy, public transit and an east-west electricity grid.

The second petition is in a similar vein. It recognizes the dire impacts of climate change for this country and for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It calls on the federal government to invest in sustainable industries and to work toward decarbonizing our economy, including by reducing subsidies for fossil fuel companies and investing in clean infrastructure, building retrofits and active transportation.

OPIOIDS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place after my neighbour from Victoria with his excellent petitions.

The constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands have asked me to deliver this petition, which reminds the government that the poison drug opioid crisis remains a public health emergency, although not recognized as such by the government. They point out that, since 2016, there have been over 34,000 drug-related deaths in Canada. While checking statistics recently, although the number has dropped slightly, the deaths continue to mount in 2026.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to declare a public health emergency due to the poisoning crisis of fentanyl and opioids, to follow expert recommendations, to decriminalize possession of unregulated drugs for personal use, to reduce stigma and barriers to care, and to regulate and provide a safe supply, such that we can pursue addiction treatment and treat this as a health crisis and not a criminal justice issue.

RED BRIDGE

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

For the seventh time, I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents who want to see funding for the rebuilding and fast-tracking of the Red Bridge, which is a cultural and important landmark that connects the mainland to the Tk̓emlúps te Secwépemc area.

It is very important that we see federal money earmarked for this. It is time that Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola is no longer left in the cold when it comes to federal funding.

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling petition e-7344, on the passenger rail service in the Lower St. Lawrence. The petitioners are calling on the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Via Rail restores daily, reliable and accessible passenger rail service, allows stops to occur at reasonable hours at stations in the region, and implements measures to improve the punctuality and reliability of passenger rail service. I thank everyone who signed this petition.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 1490, 1491, 1492, 1493, 1495, 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499, 1500, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1506, 1507, 1508 and 1509 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in electronic format immediately.

● (1530)

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from November 17 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Carleton.

I took the time to carefully read the budget tabled in this House on November 5 by the Minister of Finance.

Last week, I was in my riding of Beauport—Limoilou, where I took the time to speak with many constituents. Naturally, we talked about the budget and the measures it contains. I also had the opportunity to discuss the actions that will be taken over the coming months and years. As I spoke with people, I could not help but start imagining what could be achieved. I found myself beginning to dream a little. To properly convey the significance of the commitments set out in the budget, I took the time to explain my vision, and I would like to share it with the House today.

I projected myself forward to the year 2050. This is what I saw: In 25 years, in Beauport—Limoilou and across Canada, the economy will be dynamic, prosperous, green and diversified. Whether our workers live in urban or rural communities, they will have access to efficient transportation options while helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ease traffic congestion on a daily basis, and they will be able to enjoy our vast and magnificent country.

The high-speed train is an investment in a better quality of life. In 25 years, my daughters and sons, along with their families, will be able to live in smaller communities while still commuting to jobs in the city, without spending hours stuck in traffic. In 25 years, my grandchildren will be able to come home for the weekend without spending too much of their hard-earned savings. Who knows? In 25 years, my wife and I might be those grandparents who can no longer drive long distances, but who will still be able to visit our grandchildren without our kids worrying about us being on the road. In 25 years, my children, my grandchildren and future generations will be able to say that building high-speed rail was a success.

I can also see the impact the mega deduction will have on our local businesses, including those in my riding of Beauport—Limoilou. Through this measure, Canada is giving itself the tools to encourage investment by Canadian businesses while attracting foreign investment. It is a historic measure to boost the Canadian economy.

Imagine 25 years of investment. I see companies on the cutting edge of technology, companies based here, generating major economic benefits in their communities. I see a country processing more of its natural resources here, at home, making more industrial components and exporting more finished products rather than mostly raw materials. I see businesses that are a lot more productive thanks to robotics, artificial intelligence and modern equipment. I see better-paying jobs that let businesses pay higher wages, invest in training and create more skilled jobs. I see more diversified international trade. I see more competitive companies able to export more to Europe, Asia and other markets. I see a more even distribution of prosperity among the regions. Businesses located in Quebec City, Saguenay, Abitibi or the Maritimes could see more opportunities to modernize their facilities and create quality jobs, on par with the major urban centres.

Here is what I do not see in 2050: I see no homelessness. I see a society that has taken charge of its destiny and that takes care of its own. I see human dignity. We have managed to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion and create the conditions that people need to regain their self-confidence and take back their place in the community. We have succeeded in fostering a sense of belonging, human connection and community engagement. We have successfully improved the safety and quality of community life, creating neighbourhoods where vulnerable individuals, families, seniors and all residents can live together in safer, more welcoming surroundings. We have reduced prejudice and discrimination and fostered a society where people are measured by their human values, not judged by their residential status. Finally, we have strengthened social cohesion.

● (1535)

When I wake up from my dream, something really bothers me, something my gut tells me I should be concerned about.

What if we did nothing?

We live in a wealthy country, a country that is geopolitically stable, a country that is not at war, a country with the highest rate of educated people in the world, a country with the lowest debt in the G7.

Why, then, are we doing all this? Why change anything?

Why are so many of these measures related to national investment comparable to what we saw coming out of the Second World War?

I think this is a valid question and an important one. I would even say it is essential to understanding what lies ahead, and I have taken some time to reflect on this.

I spent 20 years working in finance with regular folks, helping them to finance homes and invest in RRSPs and RESPs for their children. After that, I provided financing for businesses, assembly lines, factory expansions and automation. I have worked out that, over the course of my career, I have met with over 5,000 people to discuss their finances and visited over 500 businesses in more than 20 different sectors. What became clear to me was the answer to the question: Why are we doing all this?

The answer lies in another question. What is the cost of inaction? What is the other side of the coin?

If we do nothing today and just let things continue the way they are, what might happen?

I will give a real-life example of inaction: Let us compare what has been happening with Detroit and Seattle since the 1970s. Both of these cities were once major industrial powerhouses, but they have followed very different economic trajectories.

Detroit was the symbol of American automotive power and home to General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. Seattle was heavily dependent on the aerospace industry, particularly Boeing, and also experienced a major crisis in the early 1970s. Today, Seattle is a global hub for technology, aerospace and innovation, whereas Detroit endured several decades of decline before it began to recover.

There is an important lesson here. Current wealth does not guarantee future prosperity. The ability to diversify, attract talent and adapt to economic change is vital. Here are a few statistics about the example that I just gave. In 1970, the population of Detroit was 1.5 million. In 2025, it was 650,000. The opposite is true for Seattle. Its population grew from 530,000 to 785,000. Between 2020 and 2024, the median household income was $40,000 a year in Detroit and $123,000 a year in Seattle. Detroit has a poverty rate of 32%, while only 9.9% of Seattle's population lives below the poverty line.

What can we learn from this example?

Three economic priorities stand out. The first is diversification. We need to diversify our economy, our partners and our sectors of activity. The second is investment. We need to invest in talent and innovation. We need to foster the creation of new businesses in emerging sectors of the economy. The third is anticipating change. We need to act while the economy is still strong rather than wait for a crisis to force transformations that are often painful.

Our decisions must always take into account the short, medium and long term. We cannot wait for shortages before taking action, because history is full of examples of governments that waited for a crisis before investing massively and embracing innovation. We are taking our future into our own hands right now whether through measures aimed at ending homelessness within 10 years, through the mega deduction, which encourages both very small and very large businesses to invest today and pursue their ambitions, or through the construction of a high-speed train that will allow future generations to stay connected.

Canada is doing well today, and now is the time to start writing the next chapter of our future.

● (1540)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I salute my colleague from the Quebec City region, the member for Beauport—Limoilou, and I thank him for his remarks. Indeed, thousands of people have turned to him for financial planning advice. I would like to thank him and congratulate him.

My question has two parts. First, regarding his account of where we will be in 20 or 25 years, he talked about high-speed rail and a scenario where his children would live in the countryside and be able to go into the city. I would like to remind him that the high-speed rail stations will be in Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, Montreal, Laval, Ottawa, Peterborough and Toronto. I do not know which of these cities will be in the countryside, but we might be in trouble if any of them end up in the countryside.

On a more serious note, on the issue of debt, he projected 25 years into the future.

Is he aware that, as we speak, the debt stands at $1.3 trillion and, in 2030, it will be $1.8 trillion? How much debt will there be in 2050 under a Liberal government?

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Quebec City region for his question. I have a great deal of respect for him. Let me quickly address high-speed rail, because we are talking about a high-speed rail network, not high-frequency rail.

When I was at the chamber of commerce, we did a lot of studies on transportation. Many people were leaving the regions for jobs in larger cities. The goal was to bring people closer to jobs. All the studies we did at the time really pointed to high-speed rail, which makes things easier for both business people and families.

In terms of the debt, we currently have the lowest rate of debt in the G7. As I said in my speech, we cannot just keep waiting. We need to act now so we can plan our future.

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for his speech, which provided an insightful assessment of the needs and challenges currently facing our economy. My colleague is an expert in corporate finance. He has chaired the chamber of commerce in his riding. He remains closely connected to businesses in his riding. I would be interested to know what he is hearing from business leaders in Quebec. Can he tell me how they view the measures we set out in our budget last week?

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. I appreciate him very much. Last week, I was again in my riding visiting entrepreneurs who are going through tough times, but they are working hard and adapting right now. As the saying goes, life is not about waiting for the storm to pass. It is about learning to dance in the rain. That is what our businesses are doing. They are resilient. As a government, we can see that they are adapting.

I will give a very simple example. At the time, the Business Development Bank of Canada, or BDC, did not provide financing for anything. It was impossible to get financing for even a single bolt destined for an aircraft used in the defence sector. Today, the BDC has billions of dollars available to support businesses.

I met with some former entrepreneurs again who told me that they could not get financing in the past. Today, the government is providing support through traditional banks. Right now, we are truly helping businesses get through these tough times and prepare for the future.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague spoke at length about his dreams and his vision for the future. However, I want to talk to him about reality. The budget projects a deficit of over $62 billion. How much will that cost in interest? It will cost $234 million a day.

My colleague has spoken a great deal about his expertise in economics. Is he comfortable with the fact that the government is paying more in interest on the debt than it is sending to Quebec to fund the health and social services system? What is his priority? Is it paying interest on the debt or taking care of people?

● (1545)

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, everything related to the debt is important. When I worked in banking, we talked about this a lot. However, we are in a unique situation right now, as the member is well aware. He knows full well that the cost of living is what is most important to the people in his riding, my riding and all the others.

I find it rather ironic that he is here spouting statistics when people in his riding need dental care and he voted against dental care. There are many examples like that. Right now, people are talking to us about the cost of living. That is what is important. We need to take measures to help people immediately. That is what they need right now.

[*English*]

Bruce Fanjoy (Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to budget 2026, "Masters of our destiny".

This budget responds to the challenges and opportunities facing Canada at this critical moment. The world is changing, and in many ways, it has become an uncertain place. Shifting global economic conditions, growing geopolitical tensions and accelerating impacts of climate change are reshaping the world around us. In the face of these circumstances, our country remains strong and stable. The measures in budget 2026 would ensure that Canada is ready, and Canadians are prepared to seize this moment. It is for these reasons and more that I say budget 2026 is the blueprint that this country needs for us to truly be masters of our own destiny.

There is no doubt we have a moral and economic imperative to address climate change. People and communities across Canada are experiencing the growing impact of climate change, with many indigenous and northern communities facing particularly significant risks.

At the same time, the global market for clean energy technologies is expanding, and we need to build competitive clean industries and supply chains so that we may be better positioned to capture these opportunities. The government cannot build a low-carbon competitive economy alone. Achieving this transformation will require action from all parts of Canadian society, including provinces and territories, indigenous peoples, businesses, communities and Canadians themselves.

To turn this shared ambition into meaningful action, we need a clear and coordinated approach to expanding clean energy, improving affordability and strengthening Canada's economic competitiveness. This is where Canada's electricity strategy comes in. The national electricity strategy would expand access to reliable, clean energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to long-term health and environmental benefits. These investments would also support skilled jobs, create new opportunities and support broader participation in the clean energy economy.

Building on Canada's clean electricity advantage, our government's electricity strategy is guided by four key pillars: build, switch, transform and innovate. First, we build, expanding clean, reliable and affordable electricity generation and transmission to meet the needs of our growing economy. Second, we switch, accelerating the electrification of transportation, buildings and industry to reduce emissions and transition toward cleaner energy sources. Third, we transform, improving energy efficiency and productivity to help Canadian households and businesses lower their energy bills and strengthen competitiveness. Finally, we innovate, supporting the development and deployment of Canadian clean fuels and technologies, creating new industries, supporting new Canadian jobs and strengthening our position in the global clean energy economy. Together, these four pillars provide a framework for building a cleaner, more affordable and more competitive Canadian economy.

Budget 2026 is putting this plan into action with new investments proposed under each pillar. We are building out Canada's electricity system by providing greater certainty for clean energy investment, including measures like extending the clean technology and clean electricity investment tax credits to the end of 2040. We are helping Canadians make the switch to electric technologies through the new national heat pump rebate, to support up to 820,000 households to install an electric heat pump. We also propose funding for the zero-emission vehicle infrastructure program, to install up to 55,000 additional EV charging stations to support increased EV adoption.

Canada's new budget proposes renewing the green industrial facilities and manufacturing program. Now named the strategic high-efficiency industrial facilities transition, it would optimize the energy efficiency of Canadian industries and manufacturing facilities to help them remain competitive as demand grows for products with the lowest carbon footprint.

● (1550)

We are also driving innovation through the proposed renewal of the industrial research assistance program's clean technology initiative. This program would help Canadian small and medium-sized businesses to commercialize clean technologies, supporting the development and deployment of solutions needed for a lower-carbon economy.

Climate action is not just about addressing the challenges we face today but also about harnessing the power of clean electricity to build a stronger, more affordable and more prosperous Canada for generations to come. Together, these investments would help Canada build more clean power, switch to electric technologies, waste less energy and bring new technologies to market. They would support the building blocks to transform and build Canada's competitive net-zero economy.

Budget 2026 would help Canadians manage everyday costs and strengthen pathways to employment and economic opportunity with funding to support retrofitting up to one million homes, to help Canadian families lower their household energy costs. This funding would enhance support for low- and median-income households while also supporting retrofits in larger buildings. These investments would also help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support employment opportunities in construction, energy efficiency and skilled trades. For example, a family living in an older home may face high heating bills during Canada's winters due to poor insulation and an inefficient heating system. By upgrading insulation, replacing windows and installing an energy efficient heat pump, that family could significantly reduce its energy consumption and lower its monthly utility bills. These investments in energy efficiency can make life more affordable for Canadians while supporting jobs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

I am proud to champion home energy retrofits, including through a study I brought forward at the environment committee to help Canadians make their homes more energy efficient. As Canada works toward doubling the capacity of our electricity grid, we must ensure the transition to a cleaner economy is affordable and equitable. Across the country, too many Canadians are struggling to afford the energy they need to heat, cool and power their homes.

Energy poverty is not simply an issue of affordability. It is also an issue of health, housing and quality of life. That is why I am proud to be working alongside Senator Mary Coyle as the House of Commons sponsor of Bill S-251, an act to establish a national strategy to end energy poverty. The legislation calls for a coordinated national strategy to measure, significantly reduce and, ultimately, eliminate energy poverty in Canada. It recognizes that as we modernize our electricity system and accelerate the transition to cleaner energy, we must also address financial barriers.

Canada is facing a future that is far from certain. What is certain, however, is that Canadians will rise to the moment, as we always do, and meet it with collective effort and a united desire to seize every opportunity that comes our way. Budget 2026 is the government's plan to capitalize on Canada's strengths, its people, its land, its openness to do business with the world, and to position our country and our economy for growth and future success.

One more thing is certain: that it is Canadians who will decide our future. We are now forever masters of our destiny. In all of us command.

● (1555)

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

I must confess, it sounded like a bureaucrat wrote that speech, unfortunately.

At the end of the day, we have to ask ourselves if the Canadian public is any further ahead. At the end of the day—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, we are hearing from somebody here whose father was a bureaucrat. I commend the member's father. I quite like him.

At the end of the day, as members of Parliament, I think we should be writing our own speeches. Maybe the member could actually talk about that.

The average Canadian is not further ahead after 11 years of the Liberal government, and we hear speeches that tell us absolutely nothing about how they are going to get ahead. Not only that, but there is a tax burden, an extra $44,000 for the average person.

Bruce Fanjoy: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for demonstrating why his party keeps losing. It really is remarkable that in over 18 months, he has learned nothing.

An hon. member: Who wrote your speech, Bruce?

Bruce Fanjoy: Mr. Speaker, I did—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Let us keep the crosstalk down.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I have noticed that the Liberals get very excited when the topic of electrification comes up. They are boasting about what they see in the budget, but if we take a closer look, we realize that electrification accounts for only 17% of Canada's overall energy mix. However, if we look at Quebec's energy mix, 40% comes from hydroelectricity. The Liberals say they are going to double that by 2050. That means that, by 2050, Canada will be where China is today. They consider that ambitious.

At the same time, they are investing to build a pipeline. I do not know how my colleague can justify that. I know he is not particularly fond of the Conservative members opposite, but for some time now, his party has been looking remarkably similar to them.

Bruce Fanjoy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer in French because the question was asked in French.

I have electrified my home. I have electrified my means of transportation. Clean energy is part of every aspect of my life.

The member is right that more remains to be done. I can promise him that I will do everything I can, together with my colleagues, to move us toward a future powered by clean energy.

[*English*]

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for that great speech. Agriculture, of course, is an important part of our economy. It is a big part of our GDP in the country and one of the reasons Canada has been successful historically. I know that agriculture plays a role in his region and also in building the country.

Can the member reflect on the way he sees agriculture helping us build a stronger country and what these investments in the budget mean for Canadians in the agriculture sector?

Bruce Fanjoy: Mr. Speaker, we cannot build Canada strong without building our agricultural sector and without supporting and seeing our rural communities thrive. It is absolutely essential, and that is why I am so happy to see that we have a national food security program.

I would also like to point out that agriculture is the first industry in Canada to take advantage of clean energy and solar energy. I am delighted when I see electrification happening across our rural communities. In fact, just last week I saw a barn in my riding whose rooftops were completely covered in solar.

● (1600)

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the always radiant member for Calgary Nose Hill.

I am going to speak to health transfers. I am no naysayer. I am capable of admitting that the budget contains some positives. Before I get to the health transfers, I will point out that the budget includes a fairly significant amount for the forestry industry. We will see what the terms will be and how it will be rolled out. The government announced $6.5 billion for its forestry industry strategy following the recommendations made by the task force, though it recommended $10 billion over 10 years. The $6.5 billion is a step in the right direction, but I would like to make one comment.

I had a conversation with the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade in committee yesterday. He seemed flabbergasted to learn that $12 billion is sitting in trust funds at the US border right now and that people in the forestry sector could really use that money, which has been accumulating since 2017. The softwood lumber dispute has been going on since 2017. The government has not lifted a finger. Instead, in response to the trade war that is happening, the government has made massive investments in oil and gas infrastructure, even though that is the only sector that is not subject to tariffs. I will repeat what I have been saying for far too long now. That is the only sector that is not subject to tariffs, 91% of our exports go primarily to the United States, and 60% of the ownership structure of the major oil companies is American-owned. I explained all that to the minister yesterday. If investing in a sector that will benefit U.S. energy security and the U.S. economy is not colonization, then I wonder what it actually means to be colonized. That is what we say back home in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean about someone who is blind to their own interests. That is just a little observation.

I want to return to the issue of health transfers. Health transfers are a source of tension in the federation. Year after year, when people are asked about their top priorities, whether in Quebec or elsewhere in the country, health care consistently ranks first. However, for many years now, the federal government has failed to meet its responsibilities when it comes to health transfers. In Quebec, roughly 42% of the total provincial budget is devoted to health care. What does that mean? It means that only about 57% or 58% of the Quebec government's budget is left for other core responsibilities such as education, poverty reduction, infrastructure, road construction, support for municipalities and support for Quebec's economic development. In other words, 42% of the total budget is eaten up because the federal government is not fulfilling its role in health transfers.

I would like to point out that, when Canada first established a public health care system, for every $1 invested in health care, 50¢ came from the federal government and 50¢ came from Quebec or the provinces. Between the 1960s and the present day, health care funding has deteriorated significantly. Let me recap what happened. It is very important to know the background, because this budget is a continuation of a trend. Those who are a bit older, like the government's parliamentary secretary, may recall that infamous period in the 1980s and 1990s, when the Mulroney government made successive cuts to health transfers. That was the first decline we saw, but the undisputed champion of cuts to health care transfers is Paul Martin.

● (1605)

After the referendum, in 1996-97 and 1997-98, the Quebec government faced recurring $2-billion cuts to federal health transfers. As a result, every Quebec health minister since then has struggled in that role, because they have had to make do with fewer resources. Demand for health care is constantly rising, and they have had to make do with a system that is unable to secure sufficient resources to meet needs.

That is why the so-called shift to ambulatory care happened. Who paid the price for that? Well, at the time, it was Mr. Bouchard. He was portrayed as a proponent of a narrow-minded, hidebound economic liberalism, despite the fact that it was Paul Martin who was really to blame. To top it all off, around the same time, Prime Minister Chrétien went to the G7 and told his counterparts the secret to his success. He said that the federal government could slash transfer payments to the provinces without looking like the bad guy because the public would believe that the provincial premiers and provincial health ministers were the ones not doing their job. I have to hand it to Jean Chrétien. He was honest. He himself said that when transfer payments are cut, the usual mechanism of political accountability does not apply.

The federal government is doing that again in this budget. It is making frivolous announcements, like the return of *Heritage Minutes*. It is also planning huge celebrations for Canada Day next year. It is spending a lot of money on frills while trying to reduce the deficit and balance the books by cutting transfer payments. To me, quite frankly, that is outrageous.

I want to talk about this troubling dynamic because, although the federal government does not get blamed when it cuts transfer payments, the provinces do. I mentioned two periods in particular, under Prime Minister Mulroney and under Prime Minister Martin, but we are seeing the same pattern repeat itself today. Why? It is because the federal share of health care funding continues to fall. The major issue is that the rising costs of the health care system are having an impact.

We are no longer in the world of the 1980s, the 1990s or even the early 2000s. There are related pressures that are placing an enormous strain on health care systems. We have an aging population, which places a tremendous burden on public services. Plus, the cost of medications continues to rise sharply. New pharmaceutical technologies are being developed and, at the same time, there are new treatment and care options. On top of that, new avenues are opening up in health care. That is why health care spending is constantly rising across Canada. However, the federal government continues to follow the same approach: It balances its books by reducing transfer payments and leaving the provinces to suffer.

Under the Harper government, a consensus had already been reached on a 3% escalator to try to cover the system's costs. Members will recall the last negotiation on health care transfers, when the united front quickly broke down and Ontario decided to go its own way. In the end, the agreement did not live up to everyone's expectations. The one positive thing was that the health care transfer escalator was set between 5% and 6% for a time. That was still not too bad. However, budget 2026 states that the federal government has decided to set the escalator at 3% starting next year.

What does that mean for Quebec? It means a loss of at least $3 billion annually. Over five years, forecasts show that Quebec will likely chalk up a $14-billion shortfall as health care costs continue to climb. Considering all the money the government is investing to support the gas and oil sector, this is completely appalling.

However, there is a solution—this is how I end all my speeches—and it is called independence.

● (1610)

Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, does the Bloc Québécois realize that federal health transfers will actually continue to increase from $57.4 billion in 2026-27 to $67.7 billion in 2030-31? They may not increase as much as the Bloc would like, but I would also like to add that we will be investing a small fortune in ending homelessness, which, in my opinion, is also part of health care.

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, in answer, I would humbly say this to my colleague. Every last person, as my father used to say, in the health care system is well aware that the health care system's operating costs are rising faster because of the factors that I mentioned: population aging, new technologies, medications. The federal government's contributions are not keeping pace with these skyrocketing costs, and that is harming Quebec and the other provinces. The federal government does not seem to want to recognize that.

Just once, I would like to hear a federalist acknowledge that the fiscal imbalance is a problem. What we are going to be dealing with in the coming years are the same harmful consequences of this imbalance. The government has more revenues than expenditures, and the provinces are the ones paying the price.

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in this budgetary document, the government buried its immigration levels report. It used to be a stand-alone document, but now it is not. The levels of permanent residency admissions are the highest in Canadian history. This is going to have an impact on every province.

Can my colleague speak to the impact that it is having on his province, as well as some of the comments made by Quebec's premier?

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I fully agree with my colleague's reasoning on this point. Frankly, I have never seen anything like this before. Immigration targets in a budget? I have never seen anything like it in my life.

Here is how this is going to play out. Quebec is already grappling with questions about temporary foreign workers. Most ordinary people do not distinguish between temporary foreign workers, asylum seekers, international students and family sponsorship cases. They lump them all together, which will make it even more difficult to have flexibility with regard to temporary foreign workers.

I get the impression that the federal government is deliberately setting the stage for a confrontation with the Quebec government. Then, it will complain. That is the worst part.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his eloquent speech, which was full of wisdom and truth.

I would like to hear his comments on the situation at Parks Canada. In order to promote Canada strong on a grand scale and with much fanfare, Parks Canada has provided free admission to parks for the past two years and says it will do so again next year. That represents $150 million in forgone revenue. At the same time, job cuts are being announced at parks, including Mauricie National Park in my region. Many people stand to lose their jobs. Maintaining those jobs would have cost $145 million. In other words, everyone is getting free access to the parks, but there is no one left to look after them.

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, that is yet another example of the Liberal government's idea of consistency. It offers free admission without first considering how existing services will be maintained. That is the Liberal government in a nutshell. It is like the storefront of a shop. There are bright neon lights and a flashy sign to draw people in, but the interior is rather sparse. That sums up the intellectual void at the heart of the Liberal Party. How sad.

● (1615)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): We have time for a very brief question, about 20 seconds.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, Lib.): *Uqaqtittiji*, I thank the member for focusing his speech on health in the budget.

I very much appreciate, in this proposal, the investments that are going toward indigenous health, including $2.9 billion for non-insured health benefits, as well as $290 million for indigenous public health, strengthening disease prevention and outbreak response.

I wondered if he would vote in favour because of the great investments that will be—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Jonquière—Hébertville—Pays-des-Bleuets has 20 seconds to respond.

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, a budget is often like a dish at a restaurant. Some of the ingredients look tasty, like funding for indigenous health care, but others are not very appetizing. I would say that the total federal funding for health care is rather unappetizing in this budget.

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are here debating budgetary policy and this year's budget.

Every year, the federal government is supposed to table something called the immigration levels plan. This is a document, required by law, which sets out how many people the government is going to allow into the country in coming years. Instead of tabling a separate document for parliamentarians to peruse, look through and really dive into to understand whether or not the numbers are sustainable, the government buried this document in the budget. It is actually in the budget this year, but the day after the budget came out, the Liberals tabled some very fine print, which showed the highest levels of permanent resident admission in Canadian history. At a time when the vast majority of Canadians are feeling that the government has let too many people into the country too fast for housing, health care and jobs to keep up, and at a time when many newcomers themselves are falling behind in the country or are in precarious circumstances, the government, instead of lowering levels, snuck the numbers into this budget and increased them to the highest levels in Canadian history.

Why is this a problem? Some public data released this morning showed that, I believe, over 60% of Liberal voters themselves opposed the levels that were set in the budget, and it is because of these issues.

The first is housing. Having high immigration levels set such that the housing supply cannot keep up with the demand created by the levels that the Prime Minister is setting is good for only one group of people. It is good for corporate landlords like Brookfield, the Prime Minister's former company. Rents go up when there is less housing and more people. When rents go up, people think that maybe they should try and buy a house, because they are paying so much in rent. Where do they go? They go to Brookfield's subdivisions, and if they need to have mortgage insurance, they go to one of Brookfield's mortgage insurance companies. Who benefits from scarcity in housing because of high immigration levels? It is rich corporations like the one the Prime Minister used to work for.

Who does not benefit? Let us imagine a student in a foreign country who wants to come to Canada to build a better life. Their parents have saved up their life savings to send them to Canada to go to school. They end up in Brampton, paying an exorbitant amount of money or responding to ads on Kijiji that are asking for sexual services in exchange for rent, to live 10 deep in a basement suite. They cannot find a job, and the college their parents sent their life savings to is a scam college that is essentially profiting from them. Those are the people who have had their promises broken.

On one hand, we have corporate landlords like Brookfield, benefiting from high rents. On the other hand, we have newcomers to Canada who are being scammed and abused and having the promise of being able to build a better life in this country completely eviscerated. That is what is in this budget, and that is disgusting.

There should be no world in which immigration levels are set such that the people who are coming to this country are treated as units of corporate profit, and that is what we are seeing with these levels. There is not enough housing in the country to house the levels of people included in this budget. That is just the reality.

The Prime Minister has not answered the question of where these people will live. That is not fair to anybody. It is not fair to the newcomer who is coming to Canada to build a better life, and it is not fair to people who are already here, who cannot afford housing and therefore cannot afford to build a family of their own. That is why the levels need to come way down, and that is why the levels set in this budget, the highest levels in history, are unconscionable.

● (1620)

However, it is not just housing. It is also wage suppression. Every day, there is a corporate lobby group. In fact, I would be shocked if there was not one right now on Parliament Hill, lobbying for higher levels of immigration. These powerful corporate lobbyists come, and they talk to everybody in this place and give these lies. They say there are no Canadians who want to do these jobs. Well, that is baloney. There is a stronger word for that. We have a youth unemployment crisis in this country. We have a first entry-level job crisis in this country.

We have corporate lobby groups that are coming here to say we need more immigration, because they want to give the promise of Canada to a newcomer. They do not want people coming to Canada, finding a good-paying job and a decent place to live to build a better life for themselves and their family, like so many immigrants who have built this country have done. What they want is for immigrants to this country to be indentured to their company so they do not have to train people who are already here and so they can suppress wages, because if there are too many people for the jobs available, wages go down.

If we scratch the surface of any corporate lobbyist who comes to this place to ask for more immigration, for the most part, it is for one of these three things. Number one, their business model, their profit model, is based on suppressing wages through high immigration rates. The second thing is that they are not invested in skills training. There are so many youth in Canada who are underemployed or unemployed, who probably just need a bit more training or a place to be trained in an entry-level job in order to get ahead. They just need that chance, but those corporations do not want that. The last thing is that they do not want to invest in productivity.

It is not me saying this. These are major economists. The Bank of Canada is saying that immigration rates that are too high suppress wages. Let us think about how much it now costs, how many multiples of an annual salary it costs to buy a house in Canada. That multiple has increased exponentially over the last several years, because we have brought too many people into this country too fast for social infrastructure to keep up. That is breaking a sacred promise, not only to Canadians who are already here, but to immigrants who were told that when we say welcome to Canada, it means welcome to Canada, that there is a job for them, that there is affordable housing for them, and, the third thing, that there is health care for them.

The corporate lobbyists who come in and ask for higher levels of immigration are not looking at diagnostic imaging waits. They are not looking at the 33-year-old man in Alberta who died in an emergency room earlier this year due to "overcrowding". No, they do not care about that. Where are these people going to get surgery? What CT scan are they going to be scanned in? People who come to Canada deserve access to quality health care in a timely way, and so do the people who are already here.

Oftentimes, I think of newcomers who are in Canada who might be waiting for the same bed as somebody who is already here. It is not the fault of the newcomer. It is not the fault of somebody who is already here. It is squarely the fault of the Prime Minister, who has set levels too high. Immigrants have built this country. We support immigration. It has to be set in a way that people can come to Canada and successfully integrate.

I want to say this: It is actually the Liberal government that does not support immigration, because if it did, it would not be setting the levels so high that it is dooming newcomers to failure, that it is dooming newcomers to an environment of social tension created with scarcity that has been created by a lack of housing, health care and jobs, and by wage suppression.

That is wrong. The levels that are in here are way too high. It is about a city the size of Winnipeg in permanent residents alone. Where are they going to live? Where are they going to get health care? What jobs are they going to have? How are wages going to grow? If the government is not going to answer these questions, then it is dooming a whole generation of Canadians and newcomers to failure. That is not the promise of Canada. That is why we are going to fight against this. That is why levels need to be lower.

That is why Conservatives have put forward a whole swath of policies to reform the immigration system, but the first thing we need to do is reduce the levels.

● (1625)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually find it very upsetting and somewhat sad that the Conservative Party tries to give a false impression. The Conservatives try to give the impression to Canadians that there are going to be 600,000 people coming to Canada, which is just not true. At the end of the day, a majority of the individuals are people who are here today. We are talking about a 24-year-old young lady working for years in the province of Manitoba, and they are saying we should get rid of them. They are talking about our Ukrainian settlements, individuals from Hong Kong who have been here working and are part of our economy, paying taxes. Those are the ones the Conservatives are saying they want out.

Will the member accept the challenge and come to the city of Winnipeg to debate the issue of immigration?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, the government promised people from Hong Kong and Ukraine they could stay. It made that promise years ago. The government could have said they could stay here, but it did something different. It brought in close to 400,000 people on top of that, and that does not count the hundreds of thousands of temporary residents over that. Do members see how the Liberals are trying to conflate this issue?

I am from Winnipeg. A woman recently died in the St. Boniface Hospital. She presented with severe chest pain, and she died because the hospital was overcrowded, so my question would be this: Where are the 300,000 temporary residents going to get care from? The government members cannot answer that question, and that is why they are spinning this. It is disgusting.

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about successful immigration. We agree on that. It is important to have reasonable thresholds so that we can integrate people properly and honour our commitments to them.

She also talked a lot about health care. She gave a few examples of people who died because they could not get care. What does she think about the fact that the federal government is once again reducing health transfers to the provinces and Quebec? Even though the government should be guaranteeing a minimum of 6%, it is going to reduce that amount to 3% starting next year. Would she do the same thing in a Conservative government?

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I will emphasize how important the point is that my colleague is making. At a time when the government is reducing health care to the provinces, including Quebec, it is increasing the number of people, to record levels, who are going to use that already strained system. To add to the member's point, the government is spending so much money on so many ridiculous other things, except for health care, that the cost of servicing the debt on those expenditures is higher than the entire amount of money that the government is going to spend on health care. I do not know in what world that math works, but I do know this: There are a lot of the Prime Minister's friends who are getting rich. We have been talking about Telesat. These corporate guys are making a lot of money, and it is about time that people started standing up for Canadian workers and people who cannot access health care. I am sure proud to do that.

Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to express my sincere appreciation to my colleague for her insights into the mess of the immigration structure in Canada today. I have had the pleasure of working with her on the immigration committee over the last year or so. She also is aware of my passion for fixing the entrepreneurial side of immigration in Canada, and I wonder what her advice would be to the government, looking at over 30,000 entrepreneurial immigrant applicants who want to come to Canada. The government literally shut the program down. These are people who have investments to make in Canada, jobs to create and businesses to create.

I wonder if the member could give her opinion on how that mess should be fixed.

● (1630)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, my colleague just made an important point, and my colleague from the Bloc Québécois made an important point as well. There are regions of the country, and there are specific industries, that have legitimate needs, yet instead of setting levels in accordance with those needs, the government is raising overall levels. Without the social infrastructure, such as housing, health care and jobs, and with wage suppression, it is all getting lumped into one. The consensus for immigration in this country has been eroded. My advice to corporate lobbyists who could fall into that "genuine need" capacity, instead of letting themselves be roped into the Tim Hortons of the world, is to push back and say that they need to have housing, health care and jobs.

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa Centre.

[*Translation*]

It is a real pleasure to speak today about the budget on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Scarborough—Woburn.

[*English*]

> In an increasingly turbulent world, Canada is determining our future. We have the strength to build. The discipline to deliver. And the values to take care of each other.

These are the opening paragraphs from this year's budget. These words capture a main theme, an approach with this budget that we are at a time where we recognize the challenges in front of us, but we recognize that Canadians have the determination, resilience and talent to overcome them. Above all, we are in this together. Achieving our ambitions will require more than governments, MPs and business leaders. It will require the collective strength and commitment of all Canadians. I believe this budget presents a balanced approach to building a stronger economy while improving the lives of Canadians. It recognizes that economic prosperity and social well-being are not competing priorities, but go hand in hand.

To understand this budget, we must first understand the world in which it is being introduced. Global trading relationships are shifting. Geopolitical tension and conflict are disrupting our supply chain. Artificial intelligence is transforming how we live, work and do business. Businesses are navigating an increasingly unpredictable economy. Canadian families continue to experience significant affordability issues and pressures.

The world is changing and Canada must adapt. We must not confuse global uncertainty with Canadian weakness because, despite these challenges, Canada is entering a period of transformational change and is in a position of extraordinary strength.

Too often in this House we hear a narrative being built up suggesting that Canada is failing, but the evidence tells a very different story. Canada ranks first in the G7 for tax competitiveness. We are first for direct foreign investment per capita. We have one of the world's most highly educated workforces. We lead in the G7 for artificial intelligence talent growth. Our economics are quite strong. We have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Along with Germany, we are the only two countries in the G7 that have an AAA credit rating. Canada is projected to have the second-fastest-growing economy in the G7.

Beyond these statistics, we possess an extraordinary advantage. We have an abundance of natural resources, tremendous agricultural capacity, world-class researchers, innovative businesses and a diverse, highly educated population. Perhaps our greatest asset is Canadians themselves. The question is not whether Canada has the resources or talents to succeed, but whether we are prepared to fully harness those talents.

This is precisely what the budget is set out to accomplish. The budget builds on Canada's strength through investments in economic growth, affordability and national unity.

Let me highlight a few of these areas.

The first is building a stronger, more independent economy. Our government is advancing ambitious strategies in electricity, defence, critical minerals, food security, artificial intelligence and international trade. We are investing in expanding Canada's electricity supply and strengthening our nuclear industry. We are committing $2.3 billion to critical minerals, a sector that contributes over $33 billion to our economy across the country. Through trade diversification, we are working to double our non-U.S. exports by 2035.

These investments are about creating good jobs, strengthening our sovereignty and ensuring Canada can compete in the industries of tomorrow.

Housing is another critical priority. That is why we are investing almost $45 billion in housing outlined in the budget.

As chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I was so happy to see a $3.2-billion investment dedicated to strengthening Canada's food security. Food security is not simply an agricultural issue. It is an affordability issue, an economic issue and increasingly a matter of national sovereignty. A country that can feed itself, power itself and build for itself is a country better positioned to determine its own future.

● (1635)

Second is supporting Canadians and improving affordability. What I appreciate most in this budget is that it recognizes that while we must invest in businesses and industry, we also have to invest in Canadians who are struggling. The budget would increase the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, better support low-income workers through the build Canada workers benefit and lift 240,000 people out of poverty.

This budget also makes an important commitment on mental health, addiction services and home and community care. Through significant long-term investments, the government has established an ambitious goal of ending homelessness within 10 years. These measures reflect a fundamental principle: Economic growth means little if Canadians cannot share the benefits. A strong economy must create opportunities, reduce barriers and improve the lives of people we represent.

The third point I would like to make is that strengthening Canadian identity, culture and unity is a very important thing for all of us here in the House. One of the most unique aspects of this budget is it recognizes that nation building is about more than just infrastructure and economic development. It is also about our stories. It is about our culture. It is about our shared identity.

As Canada approaches its 160th anniversary, the government is proposing a $300-million commitment for initiatives celebrating our history and strengthening our national pride. The budget also supports Canadian artists, CBC/Radio-Canada and local journalism. One initiative that I find really extraordinary and exciting is the free national digital collection of Canadian books. Imagine a student in Scarborough, in my area, a family in rural Saskatchewan or a young person in northern Canada being able to discover Canadian stories free of charge. Whoever thought of this, I thank them, because this is such a great idea.

In addition to that is the renewal of the Canada strong pass. Free national museum admission for young Canadians is equally important. Economic investment helps us build a stronger country, but cultural investments help us understand what makes this country worth fighting for.

I began seven minutes ago reflecting, in my opening words, about how the budget starts and the words that were chosen. These are words that speak to Canada's strength, our determination and our shared values. We face extraordinary challenges in a rapidly changing world, but we also have extraordinary opportunities. We have the resources, the talent, the institutions and the economic foundations to succeed, and we have a budget that seeks to turn those advantages into greater prosperity and more opportunities for Canadians.

We have a budget that builds our economy while supporting those who need the most help, strengthens our sovereignty while expanding our place in the world and recognizes that our culture, stories and shared values are essential to our future. I believe the Prime Minister's relentless focus on building a stronger, more independent Canada reflects an important truth. We cannot simply react to the world around us. We must shape the future that we want as Canadians.

However, government cannot do this alone. It will take our workers, entrepreneurs, researchers, communities and Canadians from every background in every region in the country, because, ultimately, our greatest strength has never been simply the resources beneath our feet. It has always been the people who call Canada home. We must invest in their potential, remove barriers for opportunity and work toward a future where no Canadian is left behind. There is very little we cannot do if we stick together.

That is the ambition of the 2026 budget, and that is how we become masters of our destiny. It is not as individuals, but as a country working together, building together and moving forward together.

● (1640)

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague across the way particularly for mentioning the agriculture and agri-food committee, which I think is certainly one of the most important committees we have as part of the House. I agree with him. The national food security strategy is an important piece of the budget.

More specifically, on the monies allocated, my concern goes back to the last time the government allocated funds, and I am going to be very specific here, to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, or the PRD as it is known now. I forget what the number was, but it was $500 million or something like that, and it actually slowed down the process. I know the intention is, under the national food security strategy, to speed up the CFIA approvals and the PMRA approvals, but the last time they received money, it actually slowed the process down by more bureaucratic layers.

Can my colleague respond with how he sees this helping this time around?

Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, I know, without question, that the member is one of the strongest advocates on that side for agriculture, and I appreciate that. He actually comes from a beautiful part of my province of Ontario, where agriculture plays a huge role in economic development.

Investments into certain areas demonstrate good intention. I know intention is not the only thing we need to make something good, but the investment is the starting point. The Prime Minister has made agriculture a priority for Canada. It is one of our economic pillars, and it represents almost 10% of our GDP.

We are going to continue to invest in that, and if there are challenges along the way, we are going to work together across the aisle to figure out ways to make sure that we can accelerate and continue to grow our agriculture sector in the province.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to explain the contradiction he just presented to us with his fine words. He says that, for the Liberal government, agriculture is the top priority. As it happens, he is the chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

I would like to remind him that his government recently made cuts to three agricultural research centres, located in Quebec City, Ontario, and Alberta, cutting more than 665 jobs. Four experimental farms are also affected. He says he wants to improve food sovereignty. I am unaware of any other country in the world that is closing its research centres and cutting more than 665 jobs directly related to agri-business and agriculture.

I would like my colleague to explain to me how cutting jobs and research centres improves food sovereignty. These cuts affect people who are advancing research on food sovereignty, among other things.

[*English*]

Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, that is a good reminder to demonstrate that the government has, I believe, made the largest single investment in agriculture in the history of this country. The reason we have decided to go in this direction on this side of the House is that we recognize that if Canada is going to remain a strong sovereign nation, agriculture plays a role. We need to make sure that we can grow our own food and continue to lead in technology, lead in expertise and pave the way to the future of agriculture in this country.

● (1645)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could provide his thoughts in regard to how we continue through a theme of building a stronger and healthier economy. This is something we committed to doing through diversification, trade agreements, investments and major projects.

Can he provide his thoughts on that?

Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members in the House to read the first paragraph of the budget. It basically outlines the entire strategy.

If we are going to continue to be a successful country, we have to make sure that everyone is included, we pull from our best, and we remove barriers so people can reach their full potential. That is what this budget is trying to do. It works with industry, and it works with individuals who may need some help, but in the end, it is about reaching our full potential as a country through individual Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Labour; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Air Transportation; the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, Small Business.

[*English*]

Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Secretary of State (International Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on budget 2026 in my capacity as the very proud member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre. It is always an honour for me to stand in the House to reflect the views of my constituents of Ottawa Centre.

This budget is an extremely important budget, as we have been hearing from many members of the House. In order to prepare for the budget and to be able to articulate the views of my community directly to the Minister of Finance, I sent a householder with a questionnaire to all my constituents, as many of us do in the House, asking them questions so that they could help outline some of the priorities of our community here in Ottawa Centre. We received thousands of responses back, which I am grateful for, and I was able to send a response to the Minister of Finance, so that we could outline the kinds of things that are important to my constituents here in Ottawa Centre.

I am really happy to say that so many of those issues, whether they were around affordability, building more affordable homes, supporting our businesses, especially our small and medium-sized businesses, or the environment, are covered in the budget.

I want to take my limited time in front of the House to outline some of the key things that are important to my community of Ottawa Centre. Let me first start with the issue of addressing the cost of housing, food and energy. Obviously, what I like about the budget, and the reason I will be supporting the budget, is the emphasis on reducing the cost of living and making sure that people's lives are affordable. It is an issue that we all hear on all sides of the House, regardless of where Canadians are living.

Because of the circumstances around the globe, whether it is the war in Iran or the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia, we have seen the cost of things go up. Canada is not immune to the increase in energy prices that is resulting in the increase in food prices and fuel, for example. The government is making sure that the Canada groceries and essentials benefit is strengthened by injecting a one-time increase of 50%, which would result in about $1,290 for a single person or over $2,500 for a family of four, tax-free, which is a really important way of helping those low- to moderate-income Canadians, about 12 million of them.

I have heard from food banks in my riding, such as the Parkdale Food Centre, that this type of help really helps individuals. I know there have been discussions around the national food security strategy, which is going to ensure that we are able to grow more food in Canada so that we can not only ensure food security but also provide nutritious, fresh food right here in our country, which is also going to help.

Proposals like the national heat pump rebate, which is going to support one million home retrofits and bring the cost of energy and emissions down at the same time, are also very well received in my community. We have organizations that have been advocating for a heat pump program, such as organizations like CAFES in my community. I am really happy to say that we are actually putting in the resources to have this particular program.

Let me move on to the second issue, which I think is really important to my community, which is to build more housing, more deeply affordable housing. We are seeing a real, tangible commitment to end homelessness, to put us on a path toward ending homelessness in Canada within 10 years. This is something that I have heard from so many people, that they are really encouraged to see the government putting forward a plan, and not just a plan but actual real dollars, about $30 billion to Build Canada Homes, to make this happen.

In my community here in Ottawa Centre, we have a lot of federal lands, like Tunney’s Pasture or Confederation Heights or unutilized federal government buildings like the Jackson Building, which is just down the street here in downtown Ottawa, that can be converted into housing for urban indigenous people and for young people. We can also build affordable housing on vacant land.

● (1650)

This is the kind of effort that we are engaged in here in Ottawa Centre, which is going to really allow us to end homelessness right here in our city and across the country. I see projects like Odenak, which is being built by Multifaith Housing Initiative, and Gladstone Village and Rochester Heights, which are being done by Ottawa Community Housing. They are the kinds of projects that CCOC in my community is doing. All those are being funded through the government. They will help so many people, because this is not-for-profit housing, deeply affordable housing that is going to really have a huge impact on people's lives.

The third point that is important to my community of Ottawa Centre is around investment in both building a clean economy and protecting our environment with a practical plan, a pragmatic plan. We can really see some important elements in this budget to make that happen.

Let me start with the national electricity strategy, which is going to foster the affordable, reliable and clean electricity we need. Much of the way we will get away from fossil fuels and reduce our emissions is through electrification. For electrification, we need to make sure that we are generating clean electricity. The kind of investment that we are putting into hydroelectricity and the arrangement between Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador with Churchill Falls is a great example. Making sure we have the transmission lines to then take that electricity to other parts of the country is so extremely important. It is going to really help reduce emissions in our country. I have been really heartened to see the investments that should double our electricity system by 2050.

That is not to mention the automotive strategy, which really aims to promote electric vehicle production, support consumer adoption through EV incentives that are being well utilized, and support the installation of EV chargers. It is going to be another way we can help reduce emissions.

The nature strategy in this budget commits to delivering on Canada's commitment to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030, working with partners to conserve terrestrial and marine areas. These are, again, very important commitments with dedicated resources through this budget.

Lastly, I want to really highlight the work that is going on with the ocean strategy, which aims to protect our oceans, secure our waters and build our ocean economy sustainably, given that we have access to three oceans as Canadians. With all those efforts combined, I think, one starts to see the practical nature of our environmental plan.

In the short time I have left, I want to talk about the work we are doing to kick-start Canada's investment supercycle. I have heard from so many businesses that the productivity mega detection is absolutely a game-changer. It is going to allow businesses to invest, whether in machinery or in equipment, to help grow their businesses and to create good-paying jobs. As we build Canada internally, as we make sure that our businesses are able to really invest and fuel the growth needed to help them with the diversification process in international markets, this productivity mega deduction is very important. It is going to really help with the supercycle for investment and attract investment from other parts of the world, as we can see by the increased amount of foreign direct investment taking place in Canada.

I know my time is almost up, but I want to again highlight this. I want to thank my constituents here in Ottawa Centre for providing their feedback, encouragement and ideas to me. It has been an honour for me to put forward those ideas and see them reflected here in this bill: ideas around affordability, building more housing and putting an end to homelessness, around having a practical plan to fight climate change and, of course, making sure we are growing our economy.

I am looking forward to hearing the views of other members. I encourage all members to join me and vote in support of this bill so that we can build Canada strong.

● (1655)

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one would think, after listening to the Liberals, that things are just amazing here in Canada. Well, they certainly are not. I met with businesses last week, and they are struggling. They are struggling in my communities in British Columbia and across this nation. Meanwhile, the Liberals were able to pledge $570 million to Brazil's rainforests, despite Brazil's having an economy that is as big as ours. In British Columbia, we have plants that are closing, with thousands of workers who are out of a job.

This initiative of the Liberal government just reveals its priorities for outside the country and not for getting Canada going. Would the member not agree with me?

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member is using some talking points while I spend most of my time talking about what my constituents in Ottawa Centre have been talking about.

I am not suggesting that the times are not challenging. Of course, these are difficult times, but that is why we need a plan from our government to address the challenges, as we have presented through this budget.

My constituents are well aware of the tariff war, which is not of our own making, and the effort the government is putting in, not only in making sure that we have a deal with the United States, but also in the work we are doing in building Canada, supporting Canadians, and diversifying and opening new markets. That is the perspective I am presenting that I hear from my constituents, and I strongly believe that the budget addresses those concerns.

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague. I would like him to tell me what process the Liberals followed.

To build Canada strong, Parks Canada decided to offer free public admission to all of its parks. That is one thing. It cost the organization about $150 million. They have since announced plans to offer free admission again in the coming season. At the same time, they are sending out letters to nearly 3,000 workers, senselessly plunging them into uncertainty. Furthermore, in some cases, Parks Canada is preparing to cut 60% of these parks' resources.

What was the logic behind all that?

[*English*]

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for raising the initiatives around Parks Canada.

It is so exciting that we are renewing the Canada strong pass. I have had so many parents and members of my community tell me how much they have enjoyed using this pass.

I am really excited that we are making access to our museums free for young people until the age of 25. This is something I have been advocating for, even before my time in the House. There are lots of museums in my riding here in Ottawa Centre. I am so excited to see that, through this budget, we will be able to support those museums, and we will be able to create those learning opportunities for our young people.

I encourage all members to support this budget.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague talked about building Canada strong. He referred to our investment in housing and infrastructure, but if we want to build more in Canada, we need to have the workers to do so. For that, we are investing $6 billion in team Canada strong to recruit, train and hire skilled trade workers. For example, the $5,000 Red Seal competition bonus is already available.

I would like to hear the views of my colleague on why those measures are so important if we want to reach our goal.

● (1700)

Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I am keen to say that Canada is not only an energy superpower but also a food superpower and a talent superpower. We have some of the best workers in the world, from all over the world, who make Canada home. We need to make sure that they have the skill set and the talent necessary.

This particular program is going to invest in our young people to give them the opportunity to build the kinds of things we want to build in Canada and for us to grow and create opportunities for newcomers. I know there is a lot of focus on immigration somehow being bad. I am an immigrant, and I can tell members how much immigrants bring economic and cultural value to countries.

I am so proud that we are investing in our people. We are making sure that they have an opportunity to build a good quality of life so that we can make all Canadians better.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The Chair would like to make a brief statement regarding the French version of the amendment to Ways and Means Motion No. 12.

In subclause (j), the words “aux paradis fiscaux” were omitted. The corrected subclause reads as follows:

> j) en plus de ne pas éliminer les dépenses inconsidérées, il augmente les dépenses consacrées à la bureaucratie, à l'embauche d'experts-conseils, aux cadeaux aux entreprises, aux paradis fiscaux, à l'aide étrangère, aux avantages excessifs accordés aux faux demandeurs d'asile et au fiasco que promet d'être le projet ferroviaire ALTO.

I thank the members for their attention.

[*English*]

Amarjeet Gill (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the hard-working people of Brampton West to speak about budget 2026. After 11 years of Liberal government, Canadians were promised change, but promises do not put groceries on the table, build affordable homes or bring back lost jobs. Canadians do not need another expensive Liberal budget. They need jobs, food security, affordable homes and hope for their children's futures. Instead, they are getting another massive deficit, more borrowing and more debt. After 11 years, the Liberals have mastered one thing, which is spending more while Canadians struggle to afford less.

Let me bring this debate to Brampton West. Our community has become another victim of Liberal mismanagement. The Stellantis assembly plant was once a symbol of Canadian manufacturing and opportunity. Thousands of families depended on those good-paying jobs. The Liberal government provided hundreds of millions in taxpayer support to Stellantis.

Canadians were promised a stronger auto industry. What happened? Production plans changed, there was a proposed sale to Roshel and more than 2,200 workers remain laid off. These are not just numbers. These are parents, skilled tradespeople, families and people who built their lives around those paycheques. Taxpayers paid millions. Where were the job guarantees? Where was the accountability? Where is the plan to bring those jobs back?

Conservatives believe taxpayer support must come with enforceable commitments to protect Canadian jobs, enforce agreements and hold corporations accountable. Workers do not need another press conference. They need paycheques. Across Canada, families are struggling to put food on the table. Grocery prices are up 31.9% compared to October 2020. Parents are facing the impossible choice of whether to pay the rent, fill the gas tank or buy enough groceries. A working mother puts vegetables, eggs and milk back on the shelf, not because her children do not need them, but because she cannot afford them. A father works full-time, but still visits a food bank to feed his family. A record 2.4 million people visited food banks in September 2026, a heartbreaking reality in a country as wealthy as Canada.

Recently, I visited a local food bank in Brampton. Despite their receiving generous donations, they told me they cannot keep up with the demand. They struggle to provide basic essentials such as protein, cooking oil and rice. Even worse, their freezer is broken and they cannot afford to repair it. This is not the Canada our families deserve. Working Canadians should not have to depend on food banks to survive. Conservatives want to reduce taxes and costs that make producing and transporting food more expensive because affordability begins with the essentials.

Housing is another example of Liberal failure. Young Canadians are studying and working hard, but saving money for home ownership keeps moving further away. In Brampton, families are facing high rents and mortgage payments. Some wonder whether they will ever own a home. The Canadian dream should not require a lifetime of debt. The government's own housing agency, CMHC, reported yesterday that housing starts were down 1.7% in October. So much for the government's promise of building at a speed not seen in generations. Conservatives want to build more homes faster and at lower costs by cutting development barriers, speeding up approvals and rewarding municipalities that build and reduce unnecessary construction costs. Canadians need affordable homes, not more announcements and red tape.

Let us talk about fuel. When diesel costs rise, trucking becomes more expensive. When trucking costs rise, groceries and other essentials become more expensive, and Canadian families pay the price. Conservatives have proposed removing federal taxes on gasoline and diesel until at least Canada Day 2027, eliminating the GST on fuel, scrapping the clean fuel regulations and ending the industrial carbon tax. Our goal is simple. It is to lower transportation costs, help Canadian businesses compete and leave more money in Canadians' pockets. Canadians need relief at the pump, not another lecture from Ottawa.

● (1705)

Budget 2026 projects a deficit of $62.3 billion. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that, without new measures, the deficit would have been approximately $43.8 billion. The PBO also projects approximately $765 billion in borrowing over five years, which is three-quarters of a trillion dollars. Let that sink in. Borrowing comes with a price, such as interest payments, higher debt service costs and fewer choices for future generations. Debt charges are projected to exceed the Canada health transfer. Think about that. More money is spent servicing federal debt than transferring to the provinces for health care. Interest payments do not hire nurses. They do not build homes. They do not create manufacturing jobs. Every dollar spent servicing debt is unavailable for other priorities.

Borrowing is not automatically an investment. Real investment must deliver real results, such as more jobs, more homes and stronger businesses. Otherwise, we are simply passing the bill to our children.

Canada's economy depends on trade. Our manufacturers, farmers and auto workers depend on access to American markets, yet damaging tariffs and trade uncertainty continue. Where is the agreement protecting Canadian jobs? Where is the certainty for manufacturers? Where is the plan to restore confidence? Conservatives have called for a tariff-free auto pact, stronger supply chains, fewer investment barriers and policies that encourage businesses to build and hire in Canada. Economic sovereignty is not achieved through slogans. It is achieved through jobs, production and competitive industries.

Small businesses are the backbone of Brampton West and the entire country. They create jobs, support families and strengthen neighbourhoods. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business calls this budget “mega disappointing” for small businesses. Many small businesses cannot access the government's new incentive program. The small manufacturer is struggling with rising costs. Conservatives believe in cutting red tape, lowering business costs, rewarding entrepreneurs who reinvest and making it easier to hire Canadian workers. Small businesses need room to grow, not more government obstacles.

The government calls this budget “Masters of our destiny”. A country cannot become a master of its destiny by continuously borrowing against its future. Conservatives believe Canada can do better. We stand with Brampton auto workers, truck drivers who are keeping our economy moving, parents who are struggling with grocery bills and young Canadians who are trying to buy their first homes. The measure of a successful budget is not how much a government spends, but how much better Canadians live.

I cannot support a budget that would increase debt while Canadians struggle to pay their bills. I cannot support a budget that would fail to protect Canadians' jobs while Brampton auto workers remain laid off. I cannot support a budget that leaves families struggling to afford groceries, housing and fuel. Canadians deserve jobs, not excuses; affordability, not more debt; and accountability, not broken promises.

For all those reasons, I cannot in good conscience support budget 2026.

● (1710)

Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the member has to take a position. Even before the budget came out, folks from that side were saying they would not support it, and I understand that the member has to take a position. I understand that being part of the opposition is to criticize this side, but the member stands up in the House and talks about people who need help.

I can go through the list of things the budget supports. For example, there is the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, the HST exemption on new homes, child care, dental care, disability benefits and the mega deduction for investments into new businesses.

These are things that support people in Brampton. These are things that people are asking for. How could the member stand up here to say, on one side, that they will not support the budget, but at the same time, that they would do everything to support the people they represent?

Amarjeet Gill: Mr. Speaker, if everything is going well, why have we seen lineups at food banks? Why do they keep increasing? Why are people struggling to make ends meet? If there are things in the budget that are going to help Canadians, then they should be flourishing and they should be happy. Especially in Brampton West, I have seen what I explained in my speech. People are realistic. There were 2,200 workers who were laid off. They are without paycheques, and Christmas is coming. I think about those people, those who need help. I do not think that this Liberal budget would help Canadians in any shape or form.

Scot Davidson (York—South Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other side is touting the superdeduction. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business called it “mega disappointing”.

We should always read the fine print. This is the problem with the government. A business providing consultation services would not qualify, nor would a business operating in the agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining, financial, insurance and other utility businesses. Who actually would qualify for the benefits?

Amarjeet Gill: Mr. Speaker, a stronger Canada needs jobs, affordable homes and thriving businesses. Small businesses are struggling. People are struggling. Instead, this budget would deliver more debt, more borrowing and no meaningful relief for struggling families.

The Budget

Conservatives believe in results, not slogans. Canada deserves affordability, accountability and opportunity. That is why I cannot support this budget. I agree with my colleague as well.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government said it would exercise fiscal discipline. The Parliamentary Budget Officer announced that the government spent an additional $331 billion in its budget announcement as part of its overall investment total.

Is my colleague concerned about the fact that there is no plan to return to a balanced budget and that we are accumulating deficits and interest that everyone has to pay for?

[*English*]

Amarjeet Gill: Mr. Speaker, we really do not want a deficit. We want a balanced budget so we can have better things. Let us think about the interest payments we would make. They would exceed the health transfers. We could build many things with that—

● (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I am afraid I have to interrupt the member.

It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment now before the House.

The question is on the amendment.

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.

Harb Gill: Mr. Speaker, I would like a recorded division on the amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Call in the members.

● (1800)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 195)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Baber
Bailey	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	Berthold
Bexte	Bezan
Block	Bonk
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Calkins
Caputo	Chambers
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Deltell	DeRidder
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Goodridge	Gourde
Groleau	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Jivani
Kelly	Khanna
Kibble	Kirkland
Kmiec	Konanz
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kronis	Kuruc
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lawton	Lefebvre
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Mahal
Majumdar	Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Mantle	Mazier
McCauley	McKenzie
McLean (Calgary Centre)	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morin	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Reynolds
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ross
Rowe	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shipley
Small	Steinley
Stevenson	Strahl
Strauss	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vien
Vis	Warkentin
Waugh	Williamson
Zimmer– — 129	

NAYS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anandasangaree	Auguste
Bains	Baker
Bardeesy	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Begum
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)	Bendayan
Bittle	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Bonin
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Caley	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Champagne	Champoux
Chang	Chartrand
Chatel	Chenette
Chi	Church

Clark
Cormier
Dabrusin
Danko
d'Entremont
Deschênes-Thériault
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duguid
Earle
El-Khoury
Fancy
Fergus
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fuhr
Gainey
Gasparro
Gazan
Gladu
Gould
Greaves
Gull-Masty
Hanley
Hepfner
Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
Jaczek
Johns
Joseph
Kelloway
Klassen
Kwan
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Ma
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Martin
McKelvie
McKnight
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Normandin
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Perron
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Saini
Sari
Schiefke
Shahnawaz
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Solomon
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Thériault
Turnbull
Connors
Coteau
Dandurand
DeBellefeuille
Deschênes
Desrochers
Dhillon
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fry
Gaheer
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gobeil
Grant
Guay
Hajdu
Harrison
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Idlout
Jeneroux
Joly
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lambropoulos
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Larouche
Lauzon
Lavoie
Leitão
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
May
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Petitpas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rochefort
Sahota
Sarai
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sodhi
Sousa
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Thompson
Valdez
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi– — 189
Vandenbeld
Watchorn
Yip
Zerucelli

PAIRED

Members

Anand
Blois
Duncan
Godin
Lalonde
Plamondon
Au
Carney
Gallant
Hardy
McGuinty
Royer– — 12

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being 6:02 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION MONTH ACT

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.) moved that Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill S-215, which proposes to designate November as national immigration month. At first glance, some might think this is just about adding yet another acknowledgement on our calendar. However, this bill represents much more than that. It calls on everyone to recognize a fundamental reality, specifically that immigration is part of our history. It has helped build our country and continues to shape its future.

When we talk about immigration, we often think of the people arriving in Canada today. However, immigration did not begin with the current generation. It has been part of our history for centuries. In Quebec and across Canada, successive waves of immigration have shaped our cities, our neighbourhoods, our economy and our culture. Members of the Irish, Italian, Greek, Portuguese, African, Haitian and Vietnamese communities, among many others, have helped build the society we know today. They have started businesses, enriched our culture and contributed to the development of our communities.

I am reminded in particular of the words of the renowned Irish poet William Butler Yeats: “There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met”. Those words invite us to look beyond origins and differences. They remind us that every person who arrives here deserves to be welcomed, respected and regarded as a full member of society. The date on which our families arrived should never determine the place we hold in our society. I am living proof of that. For some families, this story stretches back several generations. For others, it is only just beginning. However, everyone must be able to contribute fully to our shared future.

Still, it is important to bear in mind an important distinction: First nations, Inuit and Métis are not immigrants. They are the first peoples of this land. Recognizing their history means recognizing that they have been here since time immemorial.

Behind every migration journey is a human story. There are parents who leave their country to provide better opportunities for their children. There are students who come here to go to school. There are workers who put their skills to work for our businesses and organizations. There are entrepreneurs who take risks, create jobs and contribute to the growth of our economy. There are also people who are fleeing conflict and persecution and find in Canada a place where they can life in safety an dignity. These stories are different, but they often have one thing in common: the hope of building a better future. Today, immigrants contribute to virtually every sector of our society. They work in our hospitals, schools, businesses and public services. They participate in research, innovation and regional development. However, their contribution cannot be measured in economic figures alone. It is also measured by the families these people raise, the bonds they form and the communities they participate in. Immigration is a source of human wealth.

I want to emphasize how important immigration is for our municipalities and the regions. We often talk about big cities, but newcomers also contribute to the vitality of our many small and medium-sized communities. In many municipalities, their presence helps meet labour needs, support local businesses, maintain services and keep our schools open. Integration does not just happen in large institutions. It happens in our schools, our libraries, our sports associations and our workplaces.

● (1805)

It also happens when a child makes new friends at school or around town, when an entrepreneur opens a first business, or when a neighbour welcomes a new family to the neighbourhood. It is through these simple acts that a sense of belonging is built. This responsibility does not rest solely with governments. It concerns all of us: municipalities, schools, businesses and community organizations.

We must also recognize the cultural and linguistic richness that immigration brings to our country. In Quebec, that richness must go hand in hand with the fundamental place of the French language. Welcoming newcomers is an opportunity to keep our language vibrant, to pass it on and to strengthen its use in every sphere of our society. Learning French enables people to participate fully in community life, find employment and build lasting connections.

However, integration also requires efforts on our part. We must create opportunities for people to meet, support organizations that assist families, and improve access to education and employment. We can be proud of our languages, our history and our Quebec and Canadian identity while at the same time recognizing the richness of the diverse origins that make up our country. These realities are not in conflict. They can reinforce one another.

I know that immigration is currently the subject of much debate. We are talking about immigration thresholds, housing, integration capacity, public services and labour needs. These are legitimate questions. We need to take them seriously and address them responsibly. Recognizing the contributions of immigrants does not mean ignoring the challenges. However, we also should not reduce immigration to mere numbers and statistics. Behind every number is a person. Behind every application is a journey. Behind every family is hope, hard work and sometimes great sacrifice. I am living proof of this. I have only been living in Canada for 16 years. Who would have thought that, 16 years later, I would be standing here speaking as an elected representative of Canadians?

This bill does not seek to change any immigration policies or eligibility criteria. It proposes something different, specifically taking some time every year to recognize the contributions that immigrants make to our society. That is an important distinction. The month of November was also chosen for a reason. As the bill reminds us, Canada already celebrates National Francophone Immigration Week during that month. In addition, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act received royal assent on November 1, 2001. November is a great opportunity to bring together these initiatives, share inspiring journeys and highlight the work of organizations that support newcomers.

I believe one of the most important aspects of this bill concerns future generations. We have a responsibility to teach our young people that Canada was built through millions of individual human journeys. We must teach them to recognize the contributions of others, to be open-minded and to understand realities different from their own.

For young people from immigrant backgrounds, that recognition carries particular significance. It reminds them that they can take pride in their origins, their family history and their heritage while being fully Canadian. For young people whose families have lived here for generations, it is also an opportunity to gain a better understanding of their own country's history. A strong society is one in which everyone can find their place, participate fully and feel supported and recognized.

● (1810)

Ultimately, the bill asks us to recognize the simple fact that immigration has helped shape Canada and will continue to play a role in its development.

We have to debate immigration policies rigorously, while recognizing the value of the people who chose to make Canada their home. We can acknowledge the challenges involved in integration but celebrate success stories too. We can be proud of our Quebec and Canadian identity but still welcome the different histories that enrich our society.

I will close with this thought. Whether our families arrived here generations ago or whether we were the first to cross the border into Canada, we all have a history that connects us to this country, except the indigenous peoples, of course, whose presence in this land stretches back to time immemorial.

Immigration is part of our collective history. Passing this bill is about recognizing that history, celebrating the contributions of the people who helped build our country, and sending everyone who chose Canada a clear message that their journey matters, their contribution matters and they are an integral part of our collective future.

For all of these reasons, I ask my colleagues in the House of Commons to support this bill and make November a truly national occasion for acknowledgement, dialogue and celebration.

● (1815)

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think it is remarkable, and I want to acknowledge something my colleague said.

To be an immigrant, like he is, to come to Canada and participate in this place, I think shows the promise of Canada that is available to people who want to come here and build a better life.

My colleague said something to the effect that recognizing the contributions of immigrants does not mean ignoring the problems, but that is exactly what he just did. He voted for a budget that had the highest levels of permanent immigration in Canadian history when we do not have the social infrastructure that keeps the promise that Canadians make to immigrants, which is if they come here, they should be able to build a better life with an affordable house, have access to health care and not have suppressed wages, which is what has happened in the Liberal government.

Would he support an amendment to his bill that would acknowledge that there are challenges that need to be fixed? I would like to see that amendment put in here to keep the promise to immigrants to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Mr. Speaker, there are immigrants in Canada, and particularly in Quebec, who have settled here with their families. Their children attend our schools and day cares. They have been living here for years. Our budget is primarily aimed at recognizing those who are already in Canada. We want to regularize their status at every level and enable them to fully enjoy their rights in Canada.

The member has contributed to the debate in Canada, but her question should not be seen as being at odds with my commitment to immigration in Canada.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees that immigration is an asset.

That said, it can also be deeply divisive. In the latest budget, the way things were announced was, to put it politely, convoluted. It was intellectually dishonest.

Does my colleague not agree that, on an issue as important as immigration, the facts should be presented honestly and transparently so that we can have a genuine debate and so that the public does not get the impression that we are trying to rush things through?

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Mr. Speaker, I have been in Canada for 16 years, and I do not think that I took any shortcuts. I followed the path that brought me here to Canada.

We presented our budget to all Canadians. We are not trying to hide anything from them. This is a public budget that is available for all Canadians to read. We vote here in the House every day on its implementation.

I think that, since my colleague and I share the same values when it comes to immigration and the benefits that it brings to Canada, we should support the budget to continue making immigration a source of strength for Canada.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his excellent speech, my colleague pointed out just how much immigrants have helped to shape our country and make Canada what it is today. He mentioned not only the economic contribution of immigrants but also their social contributions and contributions to the cultural vitality of our communities.

Before becoming an MP, I worked in the area of francophone immigration for about 10 years. I was working mainly to increase francophone immigration, but also to ensure that these people had access to high-quality settlement services.

I would like to give the member an opportunity to talk more about the importance of publicly recognizing all of the contributions that immigrants make to our communities, not just from an economic perspective but from a social and cultural perspective as well.

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. I would also like to acknowledge my colleague's commitment to the francophonie in Quebec and beyond. He is an outstanding leader on these issues.

Canada is one of the few countries that encourages its elected officials to take pride in their heritage. I can say here loud and clear, with pride, that immigration truly helps shape our country. Ever since I was elected and have been travelling around the country, I have seen in the regions, throughout Quebec, and across Canada, how immigration drives our economy and helps build communities outside the country's major urban centres. Our immigration system today sets Canada apart and makes it a welcoming country for everyone who aspires to come here.

In closing, I would just like to say that an immigrant is someone who chose to come here. Canada offers us a welcoming home. There is not just the American dream. There is also the Canadian dream.

● (1820)

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have in front of us today a bill that would create a national immigration month in the month of November. The bill would recognize the contributions of immigration to Canada. There is absolutely no argument that immigrants have contributed to Canada and built this country. I have a concern that my colleague has chosen November, which is typically prioritized for veterans' remembrance month. That is something we can discuss in committee, but I want to pick up on a few comments that he made during debate today.

First of all, the member said that integration requires effort, interaction facilitated across education and employment and we should be proud of our national identity. The problem with that statement is that the last Liberal prime minister, Justin Trudeau, said there is no mainstream or national identity and then the current Prime Minister said that being Canadian is not being American. Without talking more about what Canadian identity is and what the responsibility of immigration into the country looks like, it is difficult for a Liberal to make that statement. I wish he had pushed back on that a little more.

Why is that important? It is important when we are talking about the contributions of immigrants to Canada because Canada makes a promise to immigrants when they come here. The promise is that if they come here, work hard and respect the law, then they will have access to an affordable house to raise a family in. They will have access to good-paying jobs with wages that increase. They will have access to quality and timely health care, and more. That is the promise that Canada made to immigrants in the past and it is how so many immigrants who have come to Canada have enriched our country and become so successful, like the member of Parliament.

He said something else in response to a question. He said this bill mainly supports people who are here already. That is a problem, because the promise that Canada makes to immigrants is being broken day after day right now. That is because he and his caucus colleagues are voting to set immigration levels so high that the social infrastructure needed to integrate into Canada's national identity, and I do believe there is a national identity in Canada, is not there. The underlying principle, that social infrastructure needed for integration, is lacking. For example, there is not enough housing for everybody in Canada from an affordability perspective, certainly. The government's own department wrote that the levels are being set too high for housing to keep up. Who is profiting off that decision? Who is getting richer? Who is that promise being made to? It is being made to wealthy corporate landlords who become rich when rents go up because levels have been set too high for housing to keep up.

The other thing is health care. We know there are not enough CT scanners, doctors, hospital beds, surgeries, emergency rooms or emergency room staff to keep up with the pace of levels of immigration that the government has set. That is not fair to a newcomer who we have made a promise to. When my colleague stands up and says this bill mainly talks about people who are already here, we have to deal with the fact that the government is breaking its promise to every newcomer who comes to this country.

One of the things I am most concerned about regarding the failures of immigration policy under the Liberal government and the Prime Minister is the fact that we are resigning many immigrants to become low-wage, indentured workers to corporate lobbyists who depress their wages so they can send increased profits to shareholders in Brazil and the United States. The promise of Canada is not coming to Canada to be an indentured labourer in a coffee shop with no path toward self-determination in building a better life, yet that is exactly what the government is enabling. For immigration and integration to be successful, we need to have the right amount of social infrastructure and the right processes to enable people coming to Canada to be successful, as so many of them before have been.

● (1825)

My colleague is right. Immigration has built this country, and we have so much to be grateful for and proud of because of that. The very difficult issue that this bill glosses over is that there is social tension in this country right now because scarcity has been created by the Liberal government in setting immigration levels to benefit wealthy corporate lobbyists instead of the newcomers who are coming here, and the Canadians who are already here, and to get that enrichment component that he talked about. Without talking about these things, we are being dishonest to everybody, including people who have come to Canada and built a better life and are also experiencing that scarcity right now.

I am very uncomfortable talking about this bill with its sponsor not talking about these issues. The loss of the consensus for immigration in Canada happened under the current Prime Minister, under the current Liberal government, and the fact that the Liberals are just trying to gloss over that and not fix it is a broken promise to every immigrant who has come here or who wants to come here in the future. It is a broken promise to every Canadian who has supported immigration.

This was not an issue under the previous Conservative government. It did not come up in question period. It was not a top ballot issue, because we set immigration levels in accordance with Canada's capacity to successfully integrate people into Canada's social and economic fabric.

I think everybody on the other side actually knows this is a problem. They will try to spin it and try to do whatever, but this is probably the biggest social policy challenge of our time. It has been created solely because the Liberals are setting levels too fast for housing, health care and jobs to keep up. It is too many too fast. Again, it is not to help somebody who wants to come to Canada. It is to help people who are getting rich off of depressed wages.

I am deeply uncomfortable about the fact that the Liberals are just trying to gloss over this. We should be able to have uncomfortable, difficult conversations in this place that result in better public policy. It is why Conservatives have been relentless over the last year in putting forward concrete system reforms to make sure that there is, for example, less fraud in the temporary foreign worker program. The amount of abuse that was uncovered by the United Nations, to the point where the UN called it a form of modern-day slavery, should make people uncomfortable. The government should be accepting reforms. Instead, what we hear today is an attempt to gloss over this issue.

My colleague's response to that question just struck my heart. This is mainly about people who are already here? Well, the promise is being broken to people who are already here and to people who want to come to Canada. We have to have compassion for those students who just paid their families' life savings to come to school in this country and have been forced into a scam college, their life savings stolen, and are then resigned to live 10 deep in a basement suite in Brampton. That is not what the promise of immigration used to mean in this country. It has been broken.

It is disappointing that my colleague did not spend more time talking about these issues and talking about the need to reform the system. We can disagree on system reforms, or how to get there, but to just ignore that this is happening is actually breaking that promise to immigrants. It is doing a disservice and a dishonour to every immigrant who has come to Canada under the terms of that promise that used to exist across political stripes.

I would ask my colleague this. He needs to make sure when he is advancing this bill that he is pushing his caucus and the Prime Minister to reform the system, to keep that promise to immigrants, to set levels so hospitals and schools can be built; so people can go to class, learn the language and get jobs; and so wages are not depressed. That is how we restore the consensus for immigration, and that is how we honour immigrants' contributions to Canada, not by allowing corporate lobbyists to take advantage of newcomers. Immigrants are not sterile units of profit. They are contributors to this country and they should be treated that way.

● (1830)

[*Translation*]

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her inspired speech. I would like to hear her reaction when she, like me, combed through the latest budget and discovered, on page 216, what appears to be a target of 380,000 permanent resident admissions, unchanged from before. However, as one reads further, it becomes clear that an additional 200,000 temporary residents will be counted and added to that target. Then we learn that there will be another 80,000 people on top of that, meaning that, in the end, Canada will welcome 662,000 new permanent residents this year. Most of those newcomers will settle outside Quebec.

What does my colleague think that means? Why is the government doing this?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the member that I recognized him on debate, not to ask questions. I invite him to continue, if he wishes. There are nine minutes remaining in his allotted time.

Before I give him the floor, I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

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PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-42

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I am tabling a copy of a motion that the government gave notice of today in relation to Bill C-42.

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NATIONAL IMMIGRATION MONTH ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, immigration is a hot-button issue. It is a polarizing issue. Today, we are debating a bill to designate a specific month as immigration month. The Bloc Québécois supports this bill, but I see it as an opportunity to share certain facts that will help people draw their own conclusions about immigration.

In recent years, immigration levels have been very high. However, before we look at the numbers and the new statistics, let us first examine Canada's total population, followed by Quebec's, in order to put things in context. What we are seeing is that Canada's population grew very little between 2025 and 2026. In percentage terms, it was the slowest population growth since 1915. The situation in Quebec is much the same. According to figures released in the spring of 2026, Quebec's population declined slightly in 2025, although it had grown significantly, at an exceptional rate, from 2022 to 2024 because of uncontrolled immigration policies. Looking at the overall population in both Canada and Quebec, what we see at present is a slight decline, or at least a stabilization of population growth.

Another interesting point to consider before we discuss immigration targets is what is actually happening on the ground. It has received relatively little attention, but the day after the budget, on November 6, the government tabled its annual report to Parliament on immigration levels for the previous year. That report matters because it provides a clearer picture of the reality. What does it show? In 2025, the federal government had set a target of 367,000 temporary foreign workers and just over 300,000 international students, for a total of approximately 673,000 temporary residents in Canada for 2025. However, those targets were not met, and I think that is worth emphasizing and telling people. The government had planned for 367,000 temporary foreign workers, but only 208,000 arrived. The gap is even more striking in the case of international students. The target was 305,000, yet only 115,000 students came. We can see that, in reality, over the past year, the targets have not been met. I think that is worth pointing out.

What we are also seeing is a degree of course correction since 2024. Between the beginning of 2024 and the beginning of 2026, the number of new international students decreased by 71%. The number of new temporary workers fell by 57%. As for asylum claims, they were down 68% compared with the same period in 2024. These are facts that deserve to be mentioned before debating immigration.

There is also the issue of migration. With regard to the situation in Quebec, some fairly recent figures have been released. They show the impact of both international and interprovincial migration on Quebec. One interesting observation is that, in 2025, Quebec recorded a net loss in its international migration balance. In other words, 12,000 more people left Quebec for destinations abroad than the number of international immigrants who settled in Quebec that year. Another figure worth watching is the interprovincial migration balance. Are immigrants who first arrive in other Canadian provinces subsequently moving to Quebec? The answer is no. In fact, the opposite is true. More people are leaving Quebec for other Canadian provinces than are moving to Quebec from elsewhere in Canada. The net balance is a loss of 9,000 people. I mention all of this simply to put the facts on the table.

● (1835)

Now let us turn to what was announced in the budget on November 5. I touched on this earlier. Since I was not at the lock-up, I received a copy of the budget at four o'clock. On leafing through the document, we come to page 216, concerning the 2027-2029 immigration levels plan. At first, we see that the government's targets are 370,000 new temporary resident arrivals and 380,000 permanent resident admissions. We notice that these are the same targets that were announced last year. Then we get to the second paragraph, and things become really unclear. It reads, “Help transition the many longstanding temporary residents to permanent residency. Up to 200,000 temporary residents already in Canada would have the opportunity to become permanent residents by the end of 2027.” It states, in the conditional tense, “would have the opportunity”. We look at that and wonder what it means. It makes the people who drafted the budget look bad when readers are left with more questions than answers. It is a sign that it was poorly drafted. The question is: Was that done deliberately?

The first point to establish is whether the 200,000 residents mentioned are included in the 380,000. It is important to know that. Are these temporary residents, people who have been here for a long time and who will be offered a pathway to permanent residency? That could be a valid argument. In the end, it was by asking questions that we learned that the 200,000 would be added to the total. It was also by asking questions that we learned that there are also 80,000 temporary residents who were planned for last year and who will also be added, for a total of 662,000.

This is the second year that the government has done this. It sets thresholds, and then adds permanent residents who fall outside those thresholds. It really is a strange concept. We just want the government to give the real figures and explain things properly. That is really important, because, as I said at the beginning, immigration is a polarizing issue, one that is hotly debated. If the government wants to bring in 662,000 permanent residents by the end of 2027, it should say so clearly, take responsibility and defend its position. People will be able to judge for themselves.

What impact will the thresholds announced this year have on Quebec? It is important to note that Quebec sets its own permanent immigration thresholds. Quebec just had an election, and the Parti Québécois has proposed setting the permanent immigration threshold at 35,000. Announcements will be made in that regard. Since Quebec sets its own permanent immigration thresholds, if the Quebec government decides to move forward with the threshold of 35,000, then only 35,000 of the 662,000 new permanent residents will settle in Quebec. The rest will have to settle elsewhere in Canada.

The programs we are hearing about will be available outside Quebec. Will temporary residents of Quebec decide to settle outside Quebec to obtain permanent residency? That is something to keep an eye on. However, one thing is certain. If Quebec takes in 35,000 residents, it will be about 5% of the total. Our demographic weight within the Canadian federation would decline as a result. This illustrates the inherent difficulty of managing immigration within the Canadian federation. Either Canada agrees to lower its thresholds to align with Quebec policy—and I do not believe that will happen—or Quebec can become a fully independent country, able to manage immigration itself and make its own decisions rather than be affected by those of the federal government. Given that recent polling shows that Quebec is the most welcoming place in Canada, Quebec's independence would allow us to better manage immigration and be more successful at it.

● (1840)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to what I think is a fabulous bill. It is legislation that I would think every member of the House of Commons would want to see pass. At the end of the day, it is recognizing a reality in Canada today, in the past and looking forward into the future. I will break my comments into two areas. The first will be responding to what opposition members have said. The second will be specifically with regard to Bill S-215 and what my hon. colleague has brought forward to the House of Commons for debate today.

When I think of the opportunities within the legislation, I think of us designating months for a wide spectrum of things. On the floor, whether it is for our Lebanese community, our Filipino community, our Indian community, our Greek community or any of the many different groups, we have had recognition in the form of designating months. It provides a wonderful opportunity. To me, that is what Bill S-215 is all about. It is about recognizing a reality and how immigration from day one has made Canada the country it is today, along with first nations.

I would like to think that when it comes to awareness, for example, there are educational opportunities in terms of local schools in our communities. We can recognize that we have the opportunity, in the month of November, for a teacher to be able to encourage some sort of program; it could be a teacher or even a school. It is something that I would personally promote and encourage educational facilities to look at, even in post-secondary.

However, this is not only for educational facilities. I suggest we could even get workplaces and work environments involved. This could include community facilities seeing the value of recognizing Bill S-215 and the benefits of having that sense of awareness. I see that as a very strong positive. It is something we can see as a very special celebration. Every year, in the month of August, if someone comes to Winnipeg, they can experience Folklorama first-hand. I would say it is one of the world's best celebrations over two weeks with numerous pavilions, all different groups and celebrations of our diversity.

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● (1845)

PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-42

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I go to the second part of my speech, I do want to ask members, and I believe there have been discussions among the parties, for unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

> That the motion tabled earlier today regarding Bill C-42 be adopted.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. minister'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)

* * *

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION MONTH ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-215, An Act respecting National Immigration Month, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be able to recognize the substance of Bill S-215. Recognizing national immigration month is a positive thing.

Having said that, I am discouraged by the comments I have heard from my colleagues in the Conservative Party and the Bloc Party, in particular, the Conservative Party.

Earlier today, I put a challenge out to the shadow minister for immigration for the Conservative Party. I hope she takes me up on that challenge, because I believe there has been a distortion of reality toward the negative side in a certain sector of society that uses and sees immigration as a bad thing. It has raised the level of things like racism, and so much more. There are some within the House who are promoting it, indirectly.

Let me give members a tangible example. The Conservative Party of Canada, on numerous occasions, in question period, even this afternoon, has tried to give the impression that there are 600,000-plus immigrants coming to Canada in the next year. That is just not true. It is far from reality.

The minister herself made reference to the program, and well over 50% are people living in Canada today, most of whom are already employed. They are paying taxes. They are already housed. Every week I am talking to individuals, and I have a databank of hundreds of individuals who have been working in the province of Manitoba for two or more years. That is why I like the question the Minister of Immigration threw back today in question period when she asked the member which ones she would like to leave Canada. Is it those who have been working here for two or three years, or would it be the Ukrainian settlers? Is that who the official opposition wants us to kick out of Canada?

To me, it is more about perception and how, as an official opposition, they are trying to get that anti-immigrant feeling pumped to the degree that it is marginally racism, and that hurts us all. It is very short-sighted.

Earlier today, I sent an invite out to the shadow critic for immigration to come to Winnipeg. I will do better than that. I will go to Calgary. I will debate this issue in any major city in Canada, ideally Winnipeg, followed by Calgary, then maybe Ottawa. I am not scared of the truth. I see the benefits of what is being proposed on the floor of the House of Commons. It is sound.

Do members know how many health care workers have been working in a health care field, and who the Conservatives are trying to imply to Canadians are not even here, but in some other land, and the Government of Canada is going to bring them over? In reality, they are working here today, and contributing taxes, in health care, education and different ways.

The point is, when we look at this legislation, we should appreciate the contributions of immigration from the past, today and going forward. That is what Bill S-215 would do. Having national immigration month in the month of November, the very month in which we are having second reading on this bill, makes a whole lot of sense. It is something we should look at as a treasure.

● (1850)

One of the greatest treasures Canada has is our diversity, from first nations to the immigration policies to the immigrants who are coming today and everything in between. That is what has made Canada the greatest country in the world to call home, and we should not be preaching to others that they should be fearful of immigration. I can tell members on the opposite side that, in working collaboratively with provinces, I know that Manitoba desperately wants to be able to retain those individuals the Conservatives want to send away. Talk to the provincial government. Talk to the business council. Talk to the mayors of Winnipeg and Brandon and many other municipalities. They see the benefits that we all will have.

I look forward to the bill ultimately passing so that we can, in fact, celebrate the month of November as a month of diversity and immigration.

Harb Gill (Windsor West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as an immigrant, I can tell members that Canada has always been a country of promise, a promise that if someone came here prepared to work, contribute and play by the rules, they could build a better life. I am living proof of that promise.

I stand here today because Canada gave me a chance. That is why I support national immigration month, but it is also why I believe we have a responsibility to make sure that promise is still being kept.

I left behind my parents, my relatives, my friends and everything familiar to me. I arrived in a new country with no guarantees. I was not looking for a shortcut or special treatment. I was looking for a fair opportunity, and Canada gave me one. I studied here, worked here and raised my family here. I spent nearly three decades working as a cop, and today, I have the privilege of representing the people of Windsor West in the House. When I look back on that journey, I see a country that gave me the opportunity to earn my success, and I know thousands of Canadians have similar stories.

Look at Windsor: Generations of families came from France, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Greece, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, the Caribbean and so many other parts of the world. They worked in our auto plants, built our homes, staffed our hospitals, worked on farms and construction sites, and opened businesses. Many workers worked long hours and overtime, so their children could have opportunities they never had. They may not have had much when they arrived, but they had something powerful, the belief that their children could have a better future here. That is how Windsor was built, and that is how Canada was built.

Those generations taught us something important: People do not have to abandon their heritage to belong here. They can celebrate Diwali, Eid, Christmas or Hanukkah. They can speak another language at home and pass their traditions on to their children. They can be proud of where they came from, and they can be equally proud of where they belong now.

However, we also must be honest about the reality facing newcomers today. What happens when someone sells everything they own, leaves their family behind, spends their savings and travels thousands of miles, believing they are coming to a country of opportunity? They arrive, and they discover they cannot afford a home, their qualifications are not recognized, the job they expected is not there, and rent, groceries and transportation consume almost everything they earn. Many have to work far below their qualifications. Others are exploited by unscrupulous recruiters, immigration consultants and employers. Imagine someone making the enormous sacrifice, only to discover that the Canada they were promised does not exist. That is not the Canada or the Canadian dream we should be selling.

How did we get here? For years, the Liberal government allowed immigration and temporary resident numbers to grow dramatically without ensuring that housing, health care, infrastructure and essential services could keep pace. The government seemed to believe that announcing immigration targets was the same as having an immigration plan. It is not. A target is a number on a government document. A plan means making sure there are homes for people to live in, doctors to look after them, schools for their children and jobs that allow them to support their families.

The government recklessly increased the numbers, and it failed to manage the consequences. Everyone is paying the price. Young Canadians cannot afford their homes, families are struggling with rent and grocery bills, newcomers are finding housing out of reach, patients are waiting for doctors, and employers need workers while qualified people cannot get their credentials recognized.

Let me be clear. The newcomer did not create the housing shortage, and the Canadian families struggling to pay rent did not design the immigration system. These people are not each other's enemies. They want the same things: a safe place to live, a decent job and the opportunity to build a future. They deserve a government that understands that.

We can welcome immigrants and still insist on responsible immigration levels. We can celebrate diversity and still demand accountability. Those positions are not contradictory. They are common sense.

There is another part of this discussion we cannot ignore. For the Canadians born and educated here, who join our police services, serve our military and build businesses in this community, this is their home. This is their country, yet I hear from these same people that they are being asked where they are really from or told to go back to a country they do not even know. The hostility they experience today just did not happen 10 or 12 years ago.

A Canadian should never have to explain why they belong in Canada. They should never have to produce a family tree to prove that this is their home. Racism and hatred have no place in this country. We must confront them wherever they appear.

Political leaders have a responsibility to bring people together. Too often, the Liberal government has responded to legitimate questions about immigration, housing and population growth by questioning the motives of those asking those questions.

● (1855)

When people raise concerns about affordability, they deserve answers, not accusations. When communities say that their infrastructure is under pressure, they deserve a plan, not a reprimand. We must never confuse a debate about government policy with an attack on the people who come to Canada. We must never allow the debate to become an excuse for prejudice.

I want to bring this discussion to a more personal space. I spent nearly three decades in policing. I know what it means to put on a uniform, leave one's family at home and head out the door without knowing what the day will bring. This year, Canadians have mourned seven police officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community and their country. Among them were OPP officer Tarun Bali, who came to Canada from India as a child, and Montreal police officer Mohamed Benredouane, who came to Quebec from Algeria as a teenager. We also lost officers Ramandeep Kaur Maan, from India, and Nicolae Serban, from Romania.

They had different beginnings and different journeys but one country and one commitment to service. They put on a uniform, accepted their responsibility and went to work knowing that their duties sometimes meant putting themselves in harm's way. Tragically, they did not make it home. They were not outsiders. They were not guests. They were Canadians serving Canadians. They were our colleagues, our neighbours, our sons and daughters, and our heroes.

Their families came here believing in the promise of Canada. Their loved ones helped protect that promise for the rest of us, so I ask the government and every member of the House, are we are keeping faith with them? Are we keeping faith with families who came here believing their children could build a better future? Are we keeping faith with the next generation born and raised here, who should never have to question whether they belong? Those officers served their country. Their families made sacrifices for this country. The least we owe them is a country that lives up to the promise they believed in.

I also want to say something to my colleagues on both sides of the House. No community belongs to any one political party. We should never take people for granted or assume that someone's background determines what they believe. People want their children to be safe. They want decent jobs, affordable homes and a government that respects their hard work and spends their tax dollars responsibly. Those are Canadian values. They do not belong to one culture, one faith or one political party.

If November is going to be national immigration month, let us make it mean something. Let us tackle immigration fraud and worker exploitation. Let us address unreasonable processing delays. Let us recognize foreign credentials for nurses, doctors, engineers and tradespeople who can contribute. Let us confront racism wherever it appears. A commemorative month would not find someone an affordable home. It would not put a family doctor in a community that needs one. It would not protect a vulnerable worker or erase the hurt felt by a young Canadian who has been told they do not belong here. These things require leadership, accountability and action.

When I arrived in Canada in 1988, I came on my own with the hope and willingness to work. I was fortunate. This country gave me a chance. I want the next person arriving in Canada to have the same opportunity I had, and I want every Canadian, regardless of where their family began, to know that hard work, contribution and commitment still count for something in this country. That is the promise of Canada. A promise is fulfilled not simply by repeating it. It is fulfilled when a young family can afford a home, when a newcomer can put their skills to work, when a child never has to feel like a stranger in their own country and when every Canadian can look to the future with confidence.

Let us honour those who came before us, let us stand with those who are here today, and let us welcome those who want to build their future here. Let us make sure that the promise that brought generations of immigrants to Canada is not simply a memory of what the country once was but a reality for the generations still to come, because Canada is not simply a place people come to. It is a promise people come here believing in. Our responsibility is to make sure that promise remains alive for the next generation. That is the Canada worth celebrating. That is the Canada worth defending.

● (1900)

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak to this private member's bill today, and I want to just reiterate what my colleague, the member for Calgary Nose Hill, so eloquently said, which is that there should have been discussions from the mover of this bill, which have not happened.

Canada makes a promise to immigrants when they come here, and the promise is very simple. When someone comes to Canada, if they work hard and play by the law, they will be able to live in a safe neighbourhood and raise a family, to find a job that will afford them that privilege, and to get an education for their family. Those are the promises we make to immigrants, and we need to match our immigration levels with what our country is able to provide so everybody can afford a house to live in and so we can also provide the health care and the education that are necessary for immigrants to be successful here.

I want to talk a bit about my particular story. My grandparents were all immigrants to this country in the late 1920s. They immigrated here from southern Russia at that time. It is Ukraine today, the centre of where the conflict is happening between Russia and Ukraine.

On July 23, 1873, a promise was made to the Mennonites who came to Canada, and that promise—

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately I have to cut off the member. We will find out about the rest of his story when the House next takes this up.

[*Translation*]

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

LABOUR

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question tonight relates to the Air Canada strike and a decision made by the Minister of Jobs and Families to use section 107, but more fundamentally, it is a question about integrity. I know it is against our rules in the House to accuse a member of lying, and I would certainly never do that. I want to share some of the context around what happened in this case and allow people to draw their own conclusions about what the Minister of Jobs and Families said.

In the context of deciding to use section 107 to end a strike at Air Canada, the minister spoke specifically about the transportation of pharmaceuticals and organ tissue as being a motivator for ending that strike. She said in a written statement, not in an off-the-cuff comment, "This nationwide labour disruption is impeding the movement of passengers and critical cargo." Later in the statement she wrote, "Further, the shipments of critical goods such as pharmaceuticals and organ tissue, over 40% of which are moved by Air Canada, should continue to reach their destinations."

Blacklock's, I believe, was the first one to do an ATIP and identify the fact that there were no records within the Government of Canada to verify claims about how the strike was putting at risk the transport of organs and tissue. I repeatedly asked the minister and officials at committee whether they could present the evidence they had relied on to do this. I also asked whether, if they had been told in some meeting that the transport of organs and tissue was at risk, they could share with us who told them that and when the meeting was. I then asked officials whether officials have any record of this meeting, where it took place and which officials were present. Of course, typically officials or staff of some sort would be present for briefings with the minister.

No information was provided, in terms of when and where that meeting took place, so I followed up with this again with an Order Paper question, which is Question No. 1407. I asked in various ways what records the government has with regard to the transportation of organs by air and how those shipments are tracked and managed. In response to this question, the government repeatedly affirmed that it did not collect data. It had no data on those things. I then asked in the same question about the meeting or alleged meeting that took place in which the minister received this information. Again, there were no records of that meeting whatsoever and no record of the information.

The best that the government could offer is that "the Minister receives a continuous flow of information, analysis, assessments, and advice from a broad range of sources within and outside government." At best, taking the most charitable view, maybe the minister was, in private and off the cuff, told by somebody that this was a risk associated with the strike, and used that information as the basis for ending the strike, even though she had no evidence whatsoever to support that claim. Perhaps she made it up herself. Perhaps somebody else made it up and said it to her, but this was clearly a statement that was not true, one that the minister has repeatedly made and doubled down on.

Speaking of the integrity of the minister, is she or a representative willing to acknowledge that this was not true? At what point, given the clear evidence in this Order Paper question, are we going to have an acknowledgement of that reality?

● (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, I do not accept the member's characterization of the minister's actions. She has explained the concerns she was weighing in her responsibility to Canadians. At committee, the minister said she received briefings about disruptions to critical medical supplies. In the House, she explained why those concerns mattered.

Canadians depend on the movement of essential medicines and medical products, including organs for transplant, within Canada and across our borders. For someone waiting for treatment, getting those supplies on time matters. That had to be part of the decision. The member is entitled to question the decision. Canadians are also entitled to hear the context in which it was made.

The government believes in collective bargaining. We respect the right to strike. We know that a negotiated agreement gives workers and employers the strongest foundation to move forward together. That is why federal mediators work alongside the parties to help them find common ground. The vast majority of negotiations in federally regulated workplaces conclude without a work stoppage. That reflects the hard work of unions, employers and the people who help them reach agreements.

In the Air Canada dispute, negotiations had been under way for eight months. Despite extensive support, the parties remained at an impasse. The minister had a responsibility to protect Canadians' access to essential medicines and medical supplies. People depend on those deliveries for their care. Those needs could not be set aside. That meant weighing the consequences of a disruption alongside workers' rights. The minister directed the Canada Industrial Relations Board to send the dispute to arbitration under section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. As she has explained, the purpose was to help resolve the dispute and protect Canadians. Intervening in a labour dispute is a serious and exceptional step. Our preference was, and remains, an agreement reached by the parties at the table.

The concerns flight attendants raised about their own working conditions also deserve action. I have said in this House that nobody should work for free in this country. Flight attendants do important work to keep passengers safe. They deserve to be paid fairly for that work. When allegations of unpaid work were raised, the government launched an investigation into pay practices in the airline sector. We have been working with airlines and unions to examine compliance with the Canada Labour Code. Employers must meet their obligations. Workers deserve certainty.

We also want to give workers and employers a better chance of resolving difficult disputes themselves. That is why Bill C-39 proposes earlier support for bargaining and clearer requirements before section 107 can be used. A special mediator would work intensively with the parties. If they could not reach an agreement, a public report would help Canadians understand the outstanding issues and prospects for settlement. A national impact assessment would examine the consequences of a disruption beyond the bargaining table. These changes would make the process more transparent and give the parties further opportunities to reach a deal. Intervention must always remain a last resort.

Bringing people together takes work. It means listening to workers, expecting employers to do their part, and taking seriously the consequences for Canadians when talks break down. The government will continue to do that work. Workers deserve fair treatment, and Canadians deserve a government that takes their health and safety seriously.

● (1910)

Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot I could say about the unpaid work issue, but that is not the core issue here. The core issue here is the integrity of the government.

The minister made a written claim. That claim is not supported by any evidence or by any information the minister received. In response to my question tonight, the parliamentary secretary doubled down on and repeated this claim.

The claim that the strike impacted organ transport is not a matter of opinion or philosophy. It is a falsifiable, factual claim. That is, it is either objectively true or objectively not, and whether or not it is true is dependent entirely on the evidence. However, the minister made a claim, that factual claim, as we now know from the Order Paper question, the ATIP and other supporting evidence, entirely without information or evidence. How do they defend that?

Leslie Church: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite keeps repeating his allegation. The minister told the committee that she was briefed on risks to critical medical supplies. She has explained why she took those concerns seriously. Canadians depend on essential medicines, medical supplies and organs moving across this country and across our borders. Their needs do not stop because there is a labour dispute.

After months of negotiations, the parties at the time were at an impasse. The minister had a responsibility to work toward a resolution and consider the consequences for Canadians. That is why she referred the dispute to the Canada Industrial Relations Board. Nobody should be expected to work for free. We acted on allegations of unpaid work in the airline sector, and employers must meet their obligations.

The member is entitled to disagree, but the responsibility to protect Canadians does not disappear because a decision is difficult.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am standing today to talk about airport privatization. It was a question I brought up in the House earlier and is something that I and, I think, so many Canadians across this country are deeply concerned about.

The airports in this country belong to Canadians. They are our assets, purchased with Canadian dollars, and the benefits of those airports should be to Canadian communities and Canadians who travel and use those airports, not to private investors. However, we are seeing a desire by the Liberal government to sell those assets off and give them to private investors to make that income. There is only one way for private investors to make money off our airports. There are two things that can be done: reduce costs or increase revenue. Both of those things are to the detriment of Canadians.

The first thing we know about privatization of airports is that it will cost Canadians more. The Canadian Labour Congress report “Public Runways, Private Profits” examined privatization in Australia, New Zealand, Portugal, the U.K. and the United States. That report estimates that airports would need to generate 15% to 20% more revenue to provide competitive returns to private investors. At Perth Airport, after privatization, the cost per passenger went up 60% over a decade.

CUPE and Unifor have warned the government that there is a risk of increased airport improvement fees, landing fees, parking fees, even charges for dropping off family members. The Minister of Transport tells Canadians there would be no unjustifiable increases to the cost of travel for Canadians. He says, no unjustifiable costs. I would really like to hear from the minister as to what a justifiable cost is.

A perfect example would be Heathrow Airport. It is an example I know the government has used to justify the privatization of four of our biggest airports: the airport in Montreal, Toronto Pearson and the airports in Calgary and Vancouver. These four airports, by the way, make $525 million a year in revenue for the federal government, money that is then used to support smaller airports around this country. The example the government gave in its budget was Heathrow Airport. Heathrow, we have heard, costs up to 10 times as much as a public airport in Alberta does.

Canadians have a right to be very concerned that air travel, which is necessary in a country as big as Canada, and the cost of which is already very prohibitive for many Canadians, is going to get worse with this privatization scheme.

Aside from making things more expensive for Canadians who want to use airports, the second way these private investors and companies can make money is by cutting jobs and cutting corners. I am worried about the safety and the sovereignty of our airports, but I am also deeply concerned about the jobs that will be lost. There are good union jobs in these airports, and the government is giving up on those workers.

● (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, let me address the member's original question. As a Toronto member of Parliament, I have heard directly from hundreds of residents in my riding of Toronto—St. Paul's about Billy Bishop. Their concerns about noise, about health and about the future of our waterfront always deserve a clear response.

Our government is not supporting the proposed expansion. Following the consultation that closed on July 24, the Minister of Transport was clear: We will not pursue plans that encroach on Little Norway Park or Hanlan's Point Beach, that increase noise, that cause significant environmental harm or that hinder Toronto's ability to build housing. I share that position. I do not support losing green space or community amenities on the waterfront or the islands. The waterfront matters to people across our city. It is where families come to spend time together and enjoy the lake. The decisions we make now will shape that shared space for years to come.

We are investing in new homes, better transit and public spaces along the waterfront. The airport's future must respect the communities around it and the city we are building together. Toronto's municipal government has a vital role in those decisions. Ontario's move to acquire city lands makes transparent engagement with residents and the city all that much more important.

Billy Bishop serves travellers, supports jobs and connects communities. Our immediate priority is completing the runway safety improvements already approved. That work does not authorize Ontario's proposed expansion. For Canada's major airports, the proposed model for investment would require operators to follow clear, strict rules on fees, service standards, worker protections and safety. Airport lands and assets would remain federally owned. The purpose is to improve the infrastructure Canadians rely on, with clear oversight to protect the public interest.

As Toronto grows, as Canada grows, we need to build housing and transit, and improve transportation infrastructure while protecting the places people cherish. I will continue to insist that Torontonians have a meaningful say in the future of our waterfront in a city that we love.

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly think the member's government is also interested in protecting the Toronto waterfront because we keep hearing from the Toronto MPs that they have some interest in this, but then the government does not listen to Canadians, as usual. Members should listen as $7.3 billion of rent has been paid to the federal government by airports under the existing model, money that Canadians have earned, which the government has with the asset it has.

The member talks about the fact that Canadians will still own the land, but when the government has given away the running of those airports for 50 years to potentially foreign investors, what difference does it make if the land is still there because the profits have been given away? The rights have been given away.

There are 435,800 jobs in this sector and all of those jobs are at risk. This is shocking. It is a joke to have them talk about this as if this will be better for Canadians.

● (1920)

Leslie Church: Mr. Speaker, once again, I stand up in this House to share directly what I have heard from residents in my community about our airports. I share the determination to protect our city and our waterfront, while ensuring we have the transportation infrastructure and the public transit, in particular, in place to meet our city's needs.

Our government is not supporting the proposed expansion at the waterfront. We will not pursue plans that threaten cherished public spaces, increase noise, cause significant environmental harm or limit housing. The immediate focus is approved runway safety work.

On the broader airport proposals the member referenced, lands and assets would remain federally owned with rules to protect travellers and workers. Part of this proposal is to ensure we have the means to support regional airports, air connections between communities and the infrastructure, and transportation that connects people and airports.

Torontonians deserve reliable transportation. That is what we are going to deliver.

SMALL BUSINESS

Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to return to measures I raised in question period during Small Business Week. I specifically proposed two measures.

The first would be increasing the small business deduction threshold from $500,000 to $700,000, which would have reduced the taxes collected from Canadian businesses to help them keep more money in their pockets.

The second proposal I brought forward during Small Business Week was about increasing the GST small supplier threshold from $30,000 to $60,000 and indexing it to inflation moving forward. This would have saved many Canadian small businesses from the hassle of being a GST registrant. We are specifically talking here about the real small businesses, side hustles like maybe a car detailing business or a mom doing baked goods in the evenings to support her kids' dance and hockey activities.

These recommendations were both supported by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Both of these recommendations would have saved real money for Canadian businesses that are struggling right now.

I have travelled across the country and spoken to thousands of small business owners. Many of them right now, at a period when we are seeing more and more insolvencies, are struggling to pay their commercial rent. Their input costs have gone through the roof. Their employee taxes, CPP, EI and payroll taxes, have all gone up in the last number of years. There are additional days off: In certain provinces there has been the addition of mandatory sick days.

In many respects, small business owners say it has been a death by a thousand cuts, so in good faith, before the budget, I brought these proposals forward to the government, hoping it would support them, because it would simplify the tax code and life for small business owners in Canada. Unfortunately, it rejected these proposals.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business called the federal budget a “mega disappointment”, so I want to ask a straightforward question. My two specific proposals were, number one, increasing the small business deduction threshold from $500,000 to $700,000 and, number two, increasing the GST small supplier threshold from $30,000 to $60,000. Why did the government reject them?

We even have Liberals on record supporting these policies at the industry committee. Why would the government reject them? It would not have cost too much money. In fact, if we took even a portion of what we just gave Brazil, which was over $500 million, we could have afforded these measures.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to see you again. I commend you for your excellent work and for your diligence in the House.

I want to thank my colleague. I have no doubt about his commitment to supporting small businesses, and I am sure everyone in the House would agree. Small businesses are a source of pride for Canadians. One million businesses employ six million Canadians, so we are well aware of the importance of the economic contribution of small businesses to Canada's economic vitality.

Since this government took office, we have been doing everything we can to rise to the top of the ranks of G7 countries, to foster opportunities and create a favourable business environment, so that small businesses can thrive. What we are rolling out right now, particularly with budget 2026, are various initiatives and measures. Small businesses are not a monolith. While some are thriving and keen to export, we have concluded 20 trade agreements over the past year that are directly benefiting many of them. Others, and we recognize this, are facing significant challenges, particularly as a result of geopolitical uncertainty.

The productivity mega deduction is an exceptional measure. There is something about it that points to a new future for small businesses. The productivity mega deduction reduces the effective marginal tax rate on new business investment from 13% to 6.4%. This changes the business environment. It is the lowest rate among the world's major economies and less than half the rate in the United States. It is an unprecedented tax advantage that has been applauded by small businesses.

I believe that the name “mega deduction” is intended as a nod to the government's ambition and vision. In the riding that I have the honour of representing, it is going to benefit the Arhoma bakery on Ontario Street, which might be able to replace its coffee machine. A coffee machine can cost $50,000 these days. This deduction provides businesses with greater flexibility when structuring their financing. I am also thinking of ARA Robotics, also located in Hochelaga, where people are developing drone technology. There are really all sorts of potential applications, and the deduction will make businesses more productive and more competitive. It will foster innovation and, above all, help create value and jobs.

The idea is to make businesses more agile, but it is also to promote employee retention and knowledge retention. As we know, the future of small businesses depends heavily on their human resources and their ability to diversify their areas of operation. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business praised the mega deduction.

Budget 2026 includes various measures, as I mentioned. These are concrete measures. I would like to highlight the higher tax instalment thresholds. This may seem like a minor detail, but it is anything but. More than 180,000 businesses across the country have just had their administrative burdens eased. More than 180,000 businesses across the country will no longer have to file this type of form. Our goal is to free up entrepreneurs' time so they can focus on growing their businesses and continuing to represent the best of what Canada has to offer: talent and innovation.

[*English*]

Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her remarks, but she did not respond to my two very specific questions on two very specific policies.

I am not opposed to the mega deduction in the budget, but the reality is that the taxation burden held by small businesses right now is becoming increasingly hard to shoulder. Businesses have been hit with input cost increases and with payroll tax increases that have limited their ability to grow and limited their ability to invest in things like new equipment, even if they get a really good capital cost writeoff.

What we need to do in Canada, and what businesses are asking of the Government of Canada, is to lower their overall tax burden. I would like the member to comment on that. When can they expect lower taxes in Canada?

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his concern. He is clearly in regular contact with small business owners, and so are we on the government side of the House. Over the past several months, our government has demonstrated that it is agile. Whenever people have brought forward concrete proposals that could help Canadian businesses, we have considered them. I believe this is what we can look forward to in the future: working constructively across party lines to identify and implement additional measures, because this is not the end of the line. We want measures that can genuinely support small businesses in Canada.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 19, at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:31 p.m.)

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