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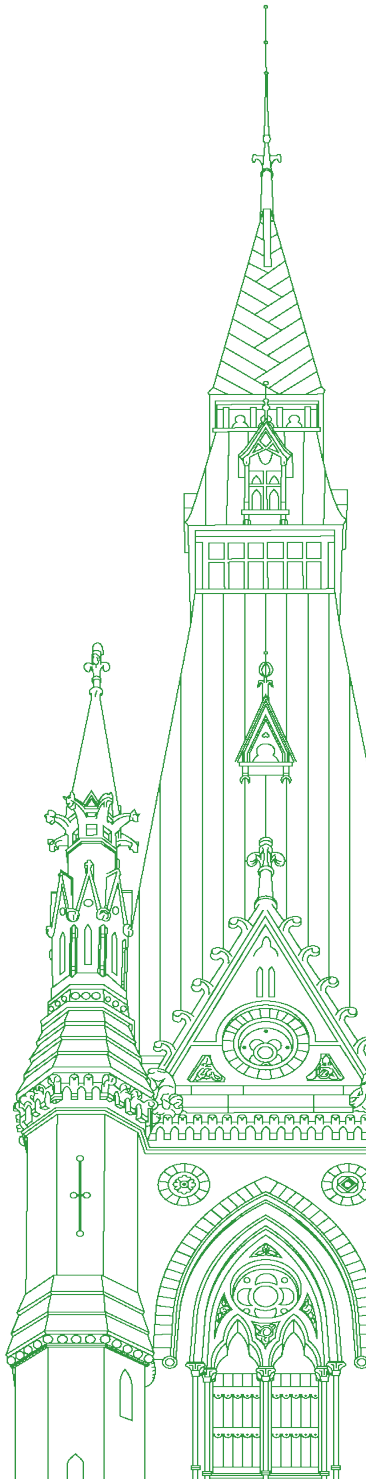

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 23, 2026

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1100)

[*English*]

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD PRICE TRANSPARENCY ACT

The House proceeded to consideration of Bill C-226, An Act respecting the development of a national framework to improve food price transparency, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Speaker: There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

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

An hon. member: On division.

(Motion agreed to)

Gurbux Saini moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise once again in the House to speak to Bill C-226, an act respecting the development of a national framework to improve food price transparency.

As we begin third reading debate on this important piece of legislation, before addressing the bill itself, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for their careful study of the legislation. I would also like to thank the many witnesses who appeared before the committee, including representatives from industry, consumer organizations, food security advocates and government agencies, for sharing their expertise and their perspective. Their testimony contributed meaningfully to our understanding of how greater food price transparency can benefit Canadians while ensuring that the future framework remains practical, balanced and collaborative.

When the House adopted Bill C-226 at second reading and referred it to the committee, members recognized that Canadians continue to face significant affordability pressures and that Parliament has a responsibility to explore practical measures that can help consumers make informed decisions. Throughout the committee's study, one message was heard repeatedly: Canadians want clear, accessible and reliable information when purchasing food for themselves and their family. That is exactly what Bill C-226 seeks to promote.

Canadians understand that food prices are influenced by many factors, many of which are beyond the grocery store itself. The years since the COVID-19 pandemic have been marked by significant economic instability and uncertainty. During the pandemic, public health restrictions disrupted consumption patterns and supply chains across the globe. As economies reopened, inflation surged to a level not seen in decades, increasing the cost of everyday necessities, including food, transportation, housing and energy.

Although inflation has since moderated, Canadians continue to feel the cumulative effects of these increases. Global events such as Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, instability in the Middle East, disruptions to international trade, rising transportation costs and higher energy prices have all contributed to continued pressure on food prices. This is precisely where Bill C-226 could make a meaningful contribution.

Let me also be very clear about what the legislation is and what it is not. Bill C-226 is one part of the broader effort to help Canadians navigate affordability challenges. Our government has already taken important steps to support Canadians facing rising costs, through measures such as the groceries and essentials benefit, the Canada disability benefit, ongoing investment in affordable housing, and the national food security strategy currently under development, and initiatives aimed at strengthening competition and fairness throughout Canada's food supply chain.

These measures address additional affordability from different angles. Some provide direct financial support, while others seek to strengthen the long-term resilience of our food system. Bill C-226 would complement these efforts by focusing on an area that is equally important: ensuring that Canadians have access to clear, consistent and understandable pricing information when making purchasing decisions for themselves and their family.

● (1105)

Transparency alone cannot solve affordability challenges. However, affordability measures and transparency are not competing priorities. They worked hand in hand. Canadians expect fairness, transparency and access to clear information when making purchasing decisions for themselves and their family. These expectations are reasonable and are at the heart of what Bill C-226 seeks to achieve. The bill is not about telling retailers what products should cost. Rather, it is based on a much simpler principle: Consumers should be able to clearly understand the prices they see and to compare products easily, consistently and fairly.

That principle guided the development of this legislation from the very beginning. For most Canadians, grocery shopping is not an academic exercise or an economics theory; it is a weekly reality. For many Canadians, that information matters. For seniors, students, newcomers and families living on a tight budget, even small differences in prices can add up over time and have a meaningful impact on household finances.

When consumers look at two products sitting side by side on a shelf, they should be able to understand which product offers the best value, without needing to pull out a calculator or perform complicated conversions in the middle of the grocery store, yet that is not always the case. Products are sold in different package sizes, measurements are presented in different formats, and package quantities can change over time, making meaningful comparisons more difficult than they should be. The consumer can easily be left comparing apples to oranges rather than making informed comparisons on equal terms.

Canadians have also become increasingly familiar with the practice commonly known as shrinkflation, where products become smaller while prices remain the same or even increase. According to Statistics Canada, between 2021 and 2023, nearly 30%, 29.6%, of all eligible grocery items tracked by the consumer price index experienced shrinkflation. Consumers may believe they are purchasing the same product they bought a year ago, only to discover that the quantity inside the package has changed. While manufacturers and retailers are free to adapt products to changing market conditions, consumers should be equipped with the tools necessary to identify those changes and make informed purchasing decisions.

Greater transparency allows Canadians to compare products based on value rather than on packaging alone. This is precisely why unit pricing matters. The purpose of this legislation is not to create unnecessary burdens or impose a one-size-fits-all solution across the country. One of the strengths of the bill is its collaborative approach.

Rather than imposing immediate national requirements, Bill C-226 calls for the development of a framework in consultation with provinces, territories, retailers, consumer groups and other stakeholders. This recognizes that consumer protection and retail prices involve provincial jurisdiction and that successful solutions must reflect regional realities and operational consideration. The bill is designed to create a collaborative approach rather than to impose a fixed national model.

● (1110)

Witnesses did not always agree on every aspect of the implementation, nor should they be expected to. However, what was noteworthy was the degree of agreement on the underlying principle. Representatives from the retail sector acknowledged that consumers find unit pricing useful and that many grocery retailers already use it because customers value it.

Consumer advocates emphasized the importance of helping Canadians better understand prices and identify value, while Canadian food security organizations stressed the pressures facing households and the importance of giving consumers tools that can assist them in managing limited budgets. In the end, while witnesses approached the issue from different perspectives, they shared a common belief that greater transparency benefits consumers and helps Canadians make more informed purchasing decisions.

At second reading, the House acknowledged the value of examining these ideas further. At committee, witnesses provided valuable insight into both the opportunities and the challenges associated with improving food price transparency. Now at third reading, we have an opportunity to move forward with legislation that is practical, balanced and consumer-focused.

Canadians work hard for the money they earn. They deserve to have confidence in the information they are provided when making purchasing decisions. They deserve greater transparency, clearer pricing information and a grocery marketplace that empowers them to make informed choices.

For these reasons, I am proud to be the sponsor of Bill C-226, and I encourage all hon. members to join me in supporting this legislation at third reading.

● (1115)

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments and the attempt to be transparent around food prices which, of course, we know, under the government, suffer from some of the highest inflation in the G7.

In the effort to be transparent, very often members on the Conservative side ask the government whether the Prime Minister's clean fuel regulations have any bearing on the price of food. Time and time, again we hear from the Liberals that that is an imaginary tax.

I would like to ask the member a very clear question. When a truck driver drives produce and he is subject to eight cents or nine cents in fuel regulation when he buys diesel, does that factor into the price of the produce that he is trucking around, yes or no?

Gurbux Saini: Madam Speaker, our government has done many things to bring affordability in line.

Our essentials and groceries benefit has given Canadians $1,900 per family. On top of that, beginning in 2027, they will get an additional 50% more, because we care for everyday Canadians. On gas taxes, farmers will save $275 on average. We invested $2 million—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It is time for more questions.

The hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt my colleague opposite while he is giving his long answer and reciting figures that we were not taking note of anyway because it is always the same thing. It is always the same kind of speech.

There is one thing I do not understand, and that is the Liberals' obsession with constantly introducing bills that interfere in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. The interference is not even subtle. Quebec already has a labelling act, Bill 72, that goes even further than Bill C-226. In committee, it was even recognized that this is a jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. The provinces already have the power to implement labelling standards, rules and laws to make the purchase of products like food clearer for consumers.

My question is simple: Do they not know that these are provincial jurisdictions, or is it just that they could not care less?

[*English*]

Gurbux Saini: Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to commend Quebec for bringing that legislation forward a few years back, which is helping Quebeckers. I want every Canadian in the country to have the same opportunity.

It is not a matter of forcing things onto any province. It is going to be a collaborative work, which will be done with the provinces, territories, retailers and consumers so they understand it.

The very prime example is if we compare Quebec's pricing to the rest of Canada, Quebec's pricing has always been cheaper. That tells me that this works, which is why I want every Canadian across the country to have the benefit that Quebec has. It is not a matter of interfering in any provincial jurisdiction.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague for bringing forward an important piece of legislation, as individuals from all regions of the country recognize that the issue of prices on food products needs to be addressed.

I liked when he made reference to the issue of shrinkage, for example, where it might give the impression that the price has stayed the same, but the quantity in the packaging has been reduced. The member is so right in bringing legislation forward to address an issue that affects Canadians in a very real and tangible way.

It is more of a comment than a question, which is to recognize that the member has done an outstanding job in bringing it forward.

Gurbux Saini: Madam Speaker, again, the legislation is a private member's bill, not a government bill. The issue is that, as a private member, when I was going house to house in the last election, that was the number one issue Canadians told—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Debate, the hon. member for Simcoe North.

● (1120)

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to see members on a Monday morning, and it is a great time to be back here with all of my friends here in Ottawa to chat about grocery store pricing. I would like to commend my hon. colleague for putting forward a bill that he thinks would help inform consumers. Based on the fact that the government has a majority of votes in the House, I give early congratulations, because I expect that he will receive a number of votes to pass this legislation through into the Senate, but unfortunately, probably not votes from Conservatives, but that is okay. The bill is going to pass anyway, so I wish the member early congratulations and thank him for his contributions to the grocery price issue facing Canadians.

I would like to wish a very happy birthday to a friend of mine, Campbell. It was her birthday last Wednesday, and I dedicate my speech here this morning to her.

This issue relates a bit to provincial jurisdiction, and thankfully, there was a recent Supreme Court decision in 2011 on the securities act. I happen to think that court made a few errors in its judgment. However, the court was very clear that the federal government has powers regarding commerce broadly, and it specifically said these powers are not sector-specific.

If the honourable member thinks that a province, like Quebec, has a great food price transparency bill, then I would submit it is for the other provinces in this country to take up that bill. In fact, the federal government could promote those standards across the country, but the federal government does not need a bill to tell a province what to do. A province should just do what a province has the jurisdiction to do, and if they fail to act, then those provincial politicians should be kicked to the curb, like every other politician who says one thing, does another and fails to act. We do not need the federal government to come and save the day when a province fails to act in an area of its jurisdiction.

When I go to the grocery store, I look at the tags that are already there today, and they price it out. I will take orange juice as an example. The price increases have been substantial and very devastating for those of us who like orange juice. I am a no-pulp person, meaning no offence to those who like extra pulp. My father is one of those who likes extra pulp. The juice says on the label the price per 100 millilitres. That transparency already exists today. We do not need additional regulations imposed by the federal government on jurisdictions that already have their own regulations that tend to work.

We have a very unique federation compared to other countries, but I often hear the argument that Canada is the only G7 country that does not have a national school food program or that Canada is the only G7 country that does not have a national framework for grocery store pricing. However, these other G7 countries are not set up like Canada. They do not have strong provincial governments with areas of their independent jurisdiction. We have to respect those, and if those politicians are not acting, then they should get new politicians in those provinces, so while I commend my honourable friend for putting forward this bill and trying to attack an issue, I think there are serious concerns about federal jurisdiction here.

Additionally, when we pass bills that require a minister to table a report in the House, it makes sense when it is an opposition member asking a minister to table information, because it is often difficult to get that information. However, when a member of the government tables legislation to require a minister to report to the House, on something the minister should already be doing, by the way, which is looking at grocery store prices across Canada, why could the member of the government not call the minister himself and say that his department should actually be doing much more on this? Why do we have to pass a piece of legislation to ask a minister to do a report on the state of grocery store prices in Canada?

● (1125)

I mean no offence to the member, but I would think that all members on the government side would have the minister's cell phone. They could just call and ask him to do the study. We do not have to pass a bill in this chamber to ask a minister to fulfill their obligations. We have the ability in this chamber to ask ministers questions. They could, on their own accord, if they thought it was a really good idea, produce a regular report to Canadians without the need to pass a bill requiring them to do so.

As I said before, on a principled basis, it is important for consumers to have more transparency. There is no question about that. I think a lot of that transparency already exists, but we should ask our governments to act squarely within the jurisdictions they hold, and federally, competition is the jurisdiction where the Government of Canada has the greatest lever. We need to create an environment where more competitors will come.

If we listened to the Prime Minister's lecture last week when he was in China, he said that in some circumstances, fewer competitors are actually better for competition, which is a very theoretical, academic proposition. In reality, that is often not the case.

Now, the Prime Minister was saying this in relation to telecom mergers, although he was trying to answer in abstract. He should be asked whether he believes the telecoms sector should have fewer participants.

However, if that is the thinking of the Prime Minister, Canadians might be led to believe that the Prime Minister supports more consolidation in some of these industries where there are already few competitors. In theory, if we could have a couple of small players join up together to become bigger, perhaps even in grocery, because there are so many costs associated with transportation and logistics, maybe that makes sense in a text book, but it probably does not make sense in practice. Frankly, I think there is a lot of research on this subject across the country, in multiple industries. When it comes to groceries, the biggest lever the government could pull is on competition. If we impose additional regulations that are potentially outside the government's federal jurisdiction on grocery stores, it actually might make it harder for new grocery entrants to come into the market. We should not use regulation to prevent additional competitors from coming into the market. We should use regulations to make it so that more competitors want to come in, and that is an area that is squarely within the federal government's jurisdiction.

As I mentioned before, I think the hon. member put forward a good-faith effort to improve price transparency for consumers. I think that much of that transparency already exists. If the government believes that Quebec has the right model, then the federal government could promote that model, but I do not think it needs to pass legislation to force provinces to do something. At the end of the day, if a province fails to act, we cannot just assume that the federal government is here to bail everybody out.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, if I may, I would like to start by doing something a bit special for a member of the Bloc Québécois: I would like to highlight the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching, which was awarded to seven teachers, including Martin Baron, a former teacher of mine whom I really liked and still do, for that matter. He would probably say that winning this award felt “wild” and that it was the kind of thing that could change a whole career. I am very proud of him for earning this Canadian recognition and honour, which is definitely well deserved.

If I may also be honest, I am feeling a bit hungry as I rise to speak today. It is too bad that we cannot bring food into the House because, if we could, I might have brought a chocolate-covered granola bar with me. Although I love chocolate, it is important to know that sometimes products labelled as chocolate are not actually made with real chocolate. For example, Quaker Dipps granola bars have a milk chocolate coating. For years, they were made with real chocolate, but in 2023, the company changed its recipe. The milk chocolate was replaced with a palm-oil-based chocolate coating. That is what the ingredients on the box say. Quaker said goodbye to chocolate and hello to a product that tries to pass itself off as chocolate. Why? Because it is cheaper for the company. The logo is the same and the box is almost identical, but the contents are not the same. The only change on the box is that instead of "chocolate", it now reads "chocolatey". The milk chocolate we love has disappeared.

This has to stop. We cannot continue to let companies mislead us. This is not an isolated incident. It happens every day in our grocery stores. The Bloc Québécois saw Bill C-226 as an opportunity to make a long-awaited change. We proposed requiring processors to label any changes in format or composition for the sake of transparency, of course, but also to be honest and upfront with consumers. The amendments that we proposed in committee were voted down by the Liberals, who would rather let consumers be deceived.

Today, we are debating Bill C-226, an act respecting the development of a national framework to improve food price transparency. It sounds good on paper, but let us look at what is actually in the bill to see whether the government is acting like those companies and just using pretty packaging to disguise content that leaves something to be desired.

We do not need to go very far to get an idea of what the system should look like. Quebec is already well ahead of Canada in this regard. Unit pricing is already mandatory in Quebec, but Quebec recently decided to go even further. For example, Quebec recently passed An Act to Protect Consumers Against Abusive Commercial Practices and to Offer Better Transparency with Respect to Prices and Credit, which states that when a food item is offered on sale, it is mandatory to post the regular price as well as the prices that apply to members of a loyalty program and to non-members. In Quebec, if two tubs of yogourt are on sale for $6, the consumer no longer has to wonder whether a single tub would cost $3, $3.50 or some other price. Once again, Quebec is at the forefront of consumer protection and is leading the way. Is anyone surprised? I certainly am not.

In my first speech on Bill C-226, I pointed out that the Bloc Québécois was opposing it because it interfered with an area of provincial jurisdiction. In our party, we do our homework and try to improve bills. My colleague can confirm that. We proposed a number of amendments to try to make this bill genuinely useful for consumers.

We proposed regulating shrinkflation, the way France, Brazil, and South Korea already do. For example, a consumer who is used to buying the same six-pack of energy bars might open the box one day and find only five. It is the same packaging, the same price and the same format, but the quantity has changed. This amendment was rejected.

We proposed requiring manufacturers to label any changes in format or composition. France already does this when it comes to format, but we wanted to be leaders when it comes to skimpflation, like the "chocolatey" granola bars with no actual chocolate. Our amendment was rejected. We proposed labelling foods as to their origin and the percentage of Canadian products they contain, as is done in Australia. That was rejected.

● (1130)

We proposed requiring retailers to disclose dynamic pricing, before it becomes widespread in our grocery stores. The European Union already requires this for personalized pricing. Our amendment was rejected.

We proposed funding consumer rights advocacy organizations, as Germany and the European Union do. It is also worth noting that the federal government abolished the Office of Consumer Affairs, which was responsible for funding these very organizations. Like Quebec's Office de la protection du consommateur, these organizations are wondering whether they will be able to properly fulfill their mandates in the wake of the new budget cuts. As members might guess, our amendment was rejected.

We proposed mandatory labelling of food products as to country of origin, traceability, and production methods, including genetic engineering, cloning, and organic cultivation. The European Union has been labelling genetically modified organisms since 2004, more than 20 years ago. Our amendment was rejected.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my intern, Darcy Eygun, who helped draft my speech. Darcy is 22 years old. How is it that, after 22 years, we still have not made any progress on labelling? The European Union has done it. Countries around the world have done it, yet here in Ottawa, it keeps being rejected time and time again. In my view, that is crazy, and Bill C-226 represents a missed opportunity.

That is not all. In committee, the Liberals gutted their own bill. Consumers will now have to wait up to two and a half years for nothing more than a report on consultations. There is no longer any requirement to develop a framework. Bill C-226 itself became a victim of shrinkflation. The packaging is the same, but unfortunately, there is less inside.

The best part is that the Liberals admitted that we are right. In committee, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, whom I commend, acknowledged that this bill is, at least to some extent, unnecessary. I will quote what he said: "For me, the Competition Act is already the national framework for business practices that can mislead consumers." I want to extend my sincere thanks to him. I agree with him completely. The federal framework already exists, and Quebec already has a framework too, so what exactly is the purpose of Bill C-226?

The member for Compton—Stanstead, whom I also commend, even added the following about establishing the framework: "We would likely look to Quebec for guidance, since Quebec is the only province that has this type of framework."

That raises the following question: If Quebec serves as a model for the national framework, how can the government justify refusing to exempt it? That is exactly what another of our amendments proposed. It is pretty obvious that it is not Canada that should be master of our destiny. However, the parliamentary secretary voted against our amendment. It was rejected. That is crazy, but oh well, at least we had fun. While we are wasting our time in committee on a bill that even the Liberals admit is not actually an agricultural bill, the real issues facing farmers in Quebec and Canada need to be addressed immediately. This is typical of the Liberal government's approach to agriculture. It wants a massive high-speed train to cut through the best farmland in Quebec and Ontario. It thinks we can wait and see later on what changes it will bring and whether it will be cost-effective.

The Bloc Québécois opposes the bill, which was adopted on division in committee. It is high time the government recognized that Quebec and the provinces of Canada are perfectly capable of making their own decisions in their own jurisdictions. We, the members of the Bloc Québécois, believe that the nation of Quebec and the Canadian provinces have their own specific jurisdictions. Ottawa is like a little brother who thinks he can fill his big brother's boots and tell everyone what to do. The government should read its own Constitution. In fact, today would be a great day to do that. Domestic marketing, retail sales and production, and consumer protection are Quebec's responsibility.

Since this bill is food-related, I have a simple suggestion: Ottawa should hoe its own row. It is nothing new for the federal government to take a measure that is already in place in Quebec and try to expand it across Canada. This federal reflex is a recurring centralist theme. It often puts Quebec at a disadvantage, since Quebec already has more mature policies in place. Ottawa is just paying the other provinces to catch up with Quebec. Even retailers told us in committee that the provinces' jurisdictions must be respected. Only in Ottawa—

● (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member's time has expired. I was signalling to him.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to listen to the debate. At the end of the day, with what the member is proposing, I would think members opposite would see the merit in voting for that bill. At the end of the day, what would it accomplish? It would provide what I believe Canadians are very sensitive to. Why would they oppose the federal government taking action and working collaboratively? They seem to be focused strictly on the issue of turf protection.

I was a provincial politician for many years, and we would often talk about issues that Ottawa was responsible for. It does not mean that the provincial legislature never, ever does anything that is federal responsibility. I would suggest there are issues on which we should all be working collaboratively. This is not about the federal and provincial governments. This is about real people wanting solutions. If one province is moving more proactively than other jurisdictions, what is wrong with the federal government, as has been suggested by the member, bringing forward a good piece of legislation saying the federal government should show some leadership on the issue, work collaboratively with provinces and other stakeholders and put in place a national framework? What is wrong with that?

Why do members opposite not start putting Canadians first, as opposed to their own political vested interests? That is what I am hearing from across the way, both from the unholy alliance of the Bloc and the Conservatives—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I will interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Can we allow each member to make his or her speech with respect?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, when looking at the content of the bill, what is the member trying to get across through this bill? We can think of it in terms of packages, where a consumer goes to a grocery store and sees package A that costs $4.50 for 900 grams. Then, beside it, there might be another package, or package B, which, let us say, costs $5.50 for 1,250 grams. Which one is actually cheaper? They would see that package A is cheaper if they were to take out a calculator and do the math, but let us say the cost of package B was upped by one dollar. It would then be vice versa in terms of which one is the better deal.

Is there a better way? Based on the discussions I have heard, Quebec has come up with a better way. Is there a role for Ottawa to play in this? The legislation we have before us would not force the private sector, the grocery stores or the provinces to do something they do not want to do. Instead, it would set up a framework. It says to the minister that we should develop a national framework, and that once this bill gets royal assent, to table it within 18 months.

What would take place in those 18 months? There would be a heightened sense of public awareness. Bureaucracies in different jurisdictions would be made more aware of the fact that there is a national study taking place.

How does that hurt? Did it hurt when Ottawa made the decision that it wanted to look into smoking as a cause of cancer? In fact, health care is a joint responsibility, even though many in the opposition would argue that Ottawa should not have anything to do with it other than just give money, but national studies took place.

I realize we are comparing apples and oranges, but at the end of the day, the issue of affordability is a very serious issue. This Prime Minister made it very clear that we are going to do what we can on the issue of affordability. Time and time again, as the federal government brings forward initiatives, we see the opposition party voting against them.

We even heard the member from Simcoe ridicule the national school food program. Seriously. We made it a permanent program. That was one of the first initiatives that this Prime Minister and every Liberal member of the government wanted to see. I believe it is an important program, just like the dental program. These are meant to provide support on the issue of affordability. The national benefit to deal with groceries and essentials is again dealing with issues of affordability, and time and time again we see the opposition voting against those types of initiatives.

On the current initiative, opposition members are going to vote against it. Shame on them. Quite frankly, what is wrong with the national government and the ministry acting and doing a study on the issue? Do they not think shrinkflation is a reality in Canada? Do they not think that we could make things a little simpler for consumers? They should talk to their constituents and ask them if they feel that Ottawa should play any role in it, without giving them a bias. What our constituents want is for politicians to work together collaboratively and serve them collectively. That is what this government does on an ongoing basis, and we should be encouraged when we get a private member's bill, such as the one we have before us today, that encourages politicians to do exactly what our constituents want us to do.

● (1145)

We should deal with the issue of affordability, transparency and more accountability, giving clearer and more reliable information. This would benefit the consumer and indirectly have an impact, I would argue, on the price of food. If I could be provided more time, I would love to expand upon that issue.

At the end of the day, it is a piece of legislation that not only requires that we conduct a study and produce a report within 18 months but also has a mechanism to ensure that five years after that report, we would get a further report on the tangible results of it. To me, that would assure accountability on the issue.

When I posed a question to my friend, I very much wanted him to provide a comment recognizing that these are the types of private members' bills that I believe all members of the House should get behind and support. The member is reflecting on what he is hearing from his constituents, and he has brought it forward in such a manner that it not only deals with an important issue at the local level for all of us but also incorporates the need to work collaboratively with other jurisdictions. The member is very much reflecting the interests of his constituents.

I, for one, know that the better the information we can provide at the consumer level, the better it is for all of us.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Madam Speaker, a shocking number of Canadians are hungry. They cannot afford the food in the grocery store. They cannot feed themselves or their families, and they are skipping meals. They are stretching every dollar and using food banks, and in many cases, they are using them on their way home from their full-time jobs.

The Liberals have made big promises, with the Prime Minister almost daring us to judge him by the prices in the grocery store. On the surface, there have been a lot of announcements with at least 37 separate food affordability commitments, programs, funding measures and promises from the current Liberal government so far. There have been new funds, expanded benefits, subsidies, tax breaks, financing programs, competition reviews, regulatory reforms and a national food security strategy.

Coming from a Prime Minister who said during the election campaign, “My experience in managing is that you have clear objectives, you work back, you track progress on a monthly basis and you hold people to account”, the volume of announcements compared to the lack of a timeline or deliverables on this file is telling. For all the plans, promises and programs, the government still has not told Canadians how much it expects grocery bills to fall or when. In the absence of results, the Liberals have blamed everything, except a decade of Liberal government, for high grocery prices: the Iran war, Trump's tariffs, global supply chain disruptions, climate change, the fall of the Canadian dollar, labour shortages, the Strait of Hormuz, grocery stores, inadequate food processing capacity and, of course, as my colleague just set out in his speech, Conservatives.

Now, along comes Bill C-226, and it raises real questions about whether the Liberal benches are even concentrating on the right things. Bill C-226 would require the Minister of Industry to consult provinces, develop a framework for national unit pricing standards and educate consumers. Why the Minister of Industry would need a bill to do what sounds an awful lot like her job is beyond me.

Let us look at this four-paragraph bill step by step.

Clause 1 of the bill, of course, was deleted at committee. Clause 2 literally says, when the bill refers to “Minister”, it “means the Minister of Industry”. Clause 3 says that the federal government has to work with the provinces to come up with Canada-wide rules for showing unit prices on grocery shelves, so shoppers can compare products. It then wants to teach Canadians how to use those unit prices.

I have good news for the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells. Unit pricing is hardly new. There are apps for that, a multitude of them. Health Canada's food guide explains it, and the federal government has its own website to teach people how to do it. At this point, I do not know a shopper who cannot do the math. At this point, toddlers learn how to do unit pricing sitting in their parents' grocery carts at the stores.

Clause 4 of the bill says that the minister would have to write a report on what the federal and provincial governments discuss within 18 months of the law coming into effect. It is not what they have achieved, what they have promised to do or even what they have learned, but what they have discussed.

Clause 5, of course, was deleted, and clause 6 would delay the act coming into force for a year after it receives royal assent.

Parliament would get a report about consultations, which the minister would have up to 30 months after royal assent just to prepare. If I were any more cynical, I would predict that we are going to spend more time debating the bill than the minister would spend acting on it.

Unit pricing is useful. That is why almost every major grocery chain, or I believe, every major grocery chain, already provides it in one form or another. That is why we have all those app tools. What would Bill C-226 really add to the exercise? Not a single store would be required to change a single price on a label, although they may have to redo all of their labels, and not a single grocery price would be required to come down because of this bill.

● (1150)

What makes this exercise more extraordinary is that government officials told the agriculture committee that unit pricing is already a part of the national food security strategy. It has been discussing it with the provinces since 2023. Industry Canada already publishes consumer guidance. Statistics Canada already operates a food price data hub.

Let us say that the minister would act on the bill. Where could the harm be, as my colleague said in his speech, if the government were to decide that it knows better than all the apps and the existing tools the market has developed to help shoppers know how expensive one product is relative to another? What if the federal government were to develop a new set of national standards for grocery shelf labels, say a Canada grocery price tag modernization initiative?

If new standards were to be imposed, grocery stores could face new costs for equipment, software, staffing and compliance. Large chains generally have computerized systems and already display unit prices. However, the smaller stores, particularly those in regional communities, often do not. These grocers are already struggling to compete with big chains and to provide the kind of competition we need in our grocery system. Putting them out of business or raising barriers to additional entry is not going to do anything for competition. Also, what I just said is not a guess. The government's own assistant deputy minister of industry testified at committee that smaller grocers had warned that implementation would cost them more, and the assistant deputy minister could not quantify the cost.

This is not a one-time problem. Grocery prices change constantly, as we all know. The Retail Council told committee that a typical supermarket stocks between 30,000 to 40,000 products and may change the prices of 1,000 to 3,000 items a week. Every new promotion, clearance discount, loyalty price or change in package size can mean recalculating and checking the corresponding unit price. A big chain can automate that. An independent grocer may need employees to do it by hand, which means time spent changing labels instead of helping customers, training and checking for errors. Potentially, there could be more compliance paperwork if the provinces were to turn these standards into regulations, and there could be possibly fewer short-term discounts if running a promotion becomes too much administrative trouble. Where would these extra costs end up? It would be the same place they always do, which is in the prices Canadians pay at the checkout. Instead of making groceries less expensive, the Liberals actually risk making them more expensive, ironically while making it easier for Canadians to see just how much more they are paying per unit.

Those of us representing coastal, rural and island communities are especially sensitive to these costs. Groceries already arrive on our shelves after long journeys that sometimes, or almost always, involve ferries and higher freight costs. If we spread a new fixed compliance expense over fewer sales, the cost per customer is greater.

Even the Competition Bureau, which supports unit price transparency, has cautioned governments to consider applying requirements only to large chains because of the burden on smaller independents. Representatives of the Daily Bread Food Bank acknowledged at committee that transparency in prices helps people identify less expensive options, but when pressed on whether that makes food itself more affordable, they agreed that it does not, which is the issue.

The bill before us would do nothing to lower energy, fertilizer, transportation or food-processing costs. It would do nothing about trade disruptions, barriers to competition or the distribution networks that disadvantage independent grocers. It addresses none of the things that actually drive grocery prices up.

I am not against clear labels. I am against pretending that a label is an answer to hunger. The bill is not an affordability plan. It is not even a fully baked meeting schedule. My constituents do not need the bill before us to tell them what they already know, which is that groceries cost too much. Let us work together to make them less expensive. Let us not send Canadians another bill for explaining the price.

● (1155)

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-226, legislation that would require the Minister of Industry to develop a national framework concerning grocery pricing, unit pricing and price transparency.

Let me begin by saying something I think every member of the House can agree on, which is that Canadians deserve to know what they are paying for at the grocery store. They deserve transparency. They deserve fair competition. They deserve to be able to feed their families without worrying about whether or not they can afford the next trip to the grocery store.

There is a very important question the legislation fails to answer. When Canadians walk into the grocery store, they see that the prices for milk, bread, meat, vegetables and other basic necessities have gone up. How would this bill help them afford those groceries? It would not. How would the federal framework put more money in the pockets of families? It would not. How would another round of consultation lower the price of the weekly grocery bill? The bill would not. How would a report, which the minister does not even have to table for 18 months, provide relief to a senior on a fixed income, a young family struggling with a mortgage or a student deciding which meals they can afford to skip? The answer is that this bill would not do any of those things.

Canadians are not confused by grocery prices; they are painfully aware of them. They see them every single time they are at the checkout counter. What Canadians are looking for is not another explanation of the affordability crisis. They are looking for a government that will actually do something about it. Unfortunately, after more than a decade of the Liberal government, Canadians have every reason to be frustrated.

The Prime Minister said that Canadians should judge him by the cost of groceries. I agree. Let us do exactly that.

According to Statistics Canada, grocery prices are now 31.9% higher than they were in 2020. Inflation remains above the Bank of Canada's target. Families are continuing to experience the cumulative effects of years of rising costs. That is not an abstract economic statement. That is the difference between the cost of a grocery bill that a family could once manage and one that now forces them to consider putting food in the shopping cart or—

● (1200)

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

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.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 2

BILL C-31—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.) moved:

> That in relation to Bill C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and
>
> *Government Orders*
>
> That fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at report stage and on the day allotted to the consideration at the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the "raise hand" function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

● (1205)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I very much recognize the need to pass the legislation. One of the things that is important, and I would ask the secretary of state to provide his comments on this, is in regard to the amount of legislation that the government has on its agenda. It is more than just the budget. I think of all the crime initiative legislation. It is a very heavy load. The Prime Minister is asking the House of Commons, along with the government, to pass as much legislation as we can. The Conservatives have made clear that they do not want this legislation passed but it is absolutely critical that it gets passed.

Could he can provide his thoughts on just why it is so important that we see the legislation passed, because we do have a very heavy legislative agenda to get across to support Canadians.

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, indeed, the hon. member is correct. We have a lot of legislation on the table. We have an ambitious agenda. We want to move forward for Canadians. We were elected in April 2025 with a mandate. That mandate was to build, to grow and to move legislation forward to strengthen our country. Yes, we make no apologies on this side of the House for moving forward. Our Prime Minister certainly has the world's respect with respect to economics and business. We want to continue to build our economy, grow our economy and make a Canada that is fair for everyone.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Madam Speaker, for those Canadians who are watching at home, what the Liberal government has just done in the House is move time allocation on its budget implementation act. The government is running massive deficits at this time, and the deficits come from the government's program spending and all of the other initiatives that it has.

If I can be so bold, even when the Assistant Deputy Speaker was reading out that this is a budget implementation act for budget 2025, I think she was a little caught off guard that we are at the 170th sitting of this place and the government is still trying to pass its budget from over a year ago.

We have actually had budget 2026 tabled in this place and we are still doing implementation legislation. This is on top of all the other legislation that the Liberals simply seem to be unable to get passed in this place because they cannot get agreement.

Why are they taking this heavy-handed approach when they could simply work with all of the parties in this place to get good legislation passed, to get good, balanced budgets passed and do what is right for Canadians, instead of the heavy-handed approach now that they have their ill-gotten majority?

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, we are privileged to be in the House. We are all privileged to be elected from coast to coast to coast to come in here and do work on behalf of Canadians. Let me say this. Before the privileged time I have had here, and I am in my 12th year, I was in the private sector. This was tabled in November 2025. If anybody is responsible for the delay, it is the party on the other side, which has not let us move forward with the work Canadians elected us—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Are we going to have order and respect for the hon. secretary of state while he is answering a question?

I recommend that the hon. member dress behind the curtain.

The hon. secretary of state.

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, I have to acknowledge the member putting his tie on in the House. There was a time when I really did not wear ties that often in here. That was then and this is now.

We have work to do on behalf of Canadians. Let me tell Canadians from coast to coast who are watching that this was tabled in November 2025. Canadians elected us to do work, Canadians elected us to build a strong economy, a strong Canada, and that is exactly what we are going to do, despite the delays.

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to our Liberal colleague tell us that this bill has been around for a year now. The problem is not the length of time that has passed since the bill was introduced. The problem is how the government is working to get us to pass it by forcing it down our throats. If we could have had real discussions about these bills, if we could have made amendments, if we could have turned them into bills that truly reflect what all Quebeckers and Canadians want, we would not be in this situation today. It could have been passed a long time ago. Unfortunately, the government does things only one way, and that is by bulldozing its way through. Now, the government is cutting off debate.

He mentioned the Canadians, and Quebeckers, who are watching. When they tune in, they must be embarrassed. They probably do not understand why the current government is unable to work with the opposition. Canadians elected a minority government, but after manufacturing a majority by getting members to cross the floor, that government is now misusing that majority to ram bills down our throats, even though they are not in the interests of either Quebeckers or Canadians.

● (1210)

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, from coast to coast to coast, our Prime Minister was elected to lead. He was elected to step back, retool and rebuild our economy. He was elected to grow it. Canadians had confidence in him. The last time I checked, I would say our Prime Minister's polling numbers in Quebec were very strong. I would argue that people from Quebec believe in what our Prime Minister is doing and are getting behind what our Prime Minister is doing. We have a job to do on behalf of Canadians. We are going to grow our economy. We are going to pivot. We are going to build. We are going to bring in trade. We are going to unlock investment while looking after the most vulnerable.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is abhorrent that the government has to push time allocation, limiting debate on a bill it put forward on November 4, 2025, which was over a year ago. It shows that the government really is not serious about doing work for Canadians. It is not even able to get its own government agenda forward.

We are talking about a budget from November 2025, when we have a current budget showing massive cuts in certain areas. I have had contact from people with Parks Canada, those who maintain those parks, who are concerned about their jobs every day because they do not know which ones are going to be cut. Huge numbers of them have received letters that their jobs could be changing or even possibly eliminated, yet the government is still trying to pass a budget from 2025, which was over a year ago.

Why has it taken this long?

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, here are the facts. BIA 1, the spring economic update, has moved forward. This is BIA 2. It is some bits and pieces that we need to get through. Why are they not through? Canadians who are watching today need to ask themselves that. Does the member think we delayed it? Does he think we do not want to move forward with the agenda Canadians elected us to do? Of course not. Those party opposite members need to look in the mirror. They know why we are standing here doing what we are doing today. It is because they are obstructing, delaying and will do anything they can to derail our agenda. We have a job to do for Canadians, and we will do it.

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I find this sort of thinking among the Liberals troubling. They believe that, just because they were elected in the last election, they have the right to do whatever they like. It is as though they believe that one person's popularity in one region or another gives them licence to do just about anything. Just because the current Prime Minister is popular in the polls, that does not give him the right to flout democracy and parliamentary principles.

It frightens me to see this because, as my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord said, there are processes in place. This is a democratic process, and Quebeckers and Canadians expect this process to be respected. Right now, the Liberal government is forcing legislation through Parliament to advance its own priorities while bypassing the proper procedures. That frightens me. Today we are talking about Bill C-31, but what will happen when we are dealing with something as consequential as Bill C-39?

I would like to hear from my colleague. Does he think that the fact that the Liberals have been elected as the government gives them the right to flout democratic principles and ram through whatever they want using time allocation, simply because they do not want to deal with the opposition?

● (1215)

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, that is the slowest bulldozer I have ever seen. The member is saying we are bulldozing legislation through. It has been a year. We need to move forward with the agenda. We need to move forward to build Canada. We need to continue to move.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Madam Speaker, do members know what has changed over the last years? I remember the days that the member, who was pointing out our colleague getting dressed, actually stood for something. He was the first one to call on the former prime minister to resign. He actually stood up for his constituents, and here he is now, hook, line and sinker, spewing the talking points of the government.

Here we are again with closure. The member likes to say that this side of the House has been stymying bills and holding up pieces of legislation. For a year, this piece of legislation has sat there and the government has done nothing with it, and now the Liberals are forcing it through at the 11th hour.

Not only has the member's attitude changed, but now he wears suits that are too small for him and his neck has disappeared. Why the change with my hon. colleague?

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, the member has my respect. I respect his passion. I would challenge that member to come out running with me any day or go to the gym with me any day. He says my suits are too small. He looks like he might be hiding something underneath his shirt. We can go back and forth with—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake.

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have heard the member say that this legislation was tabled in 2025. He wants to blame the Conservatives for not moving it along, when in fact it is the government that makes the calendar and the schedule. However, there was a private member's bill, Bill C-318, which the Liberals voted against and they then scooped. It was a bill that I put forward. They put it in a budget bill in 2024. That has passed, but it is still not law. This is proof that these Liberals do not care about scheduling. They do not care about organization of a calendar, let alone enacting legislation that has been passed in this place for well over two years. Would the member not agree his government just does not know how to manage a calendar?

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, I sat with that member on HUMA for the better part of a decade. We worked collaboratively. We worked together on many things, and sure, we will take good ideas anywhere we can get them.

Let us step back. This bill was tabled on November 4, 2025, a year ago. We have work to do on behalf of Canadians, and we are laser focused. We will get the work done that Canadians want us to do, which is to build our country, grow our economy and look after the most vulnerable.

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to know if my colleague recalls, in the spring of 2025, the countless hours we spent on the finance committee doing BIA 1. Our friends from the other side were filibustering, because they wanted to get something else on some other bill. We spent a whole lot of time on BIA 1, and we ran out of time to do BIA 2. I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Hon. Wayne Long: Mr. Speaker, I sat on committees for the better part of a decade. I know the partisanship and gamesmanship that go on on both sides, but this has come to a point where we need to move on with the agenda of the government. We need to move forward with government business. We are going to grow our economy. We are going to build our economy. We are going to diversify while looking after the most vulnerable. We make no apologies whatsoever for doing what we need to do to move our agenda forward, which Canadians elected us to do.

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Madam Speaker, our constituents and members of our communities depend on us to be their voice in this place when they have concerns with legislation. One of the things that the government consistently keeps doing on these bills that it rams through the House is move more and more powers into the executive and into the bureaucracy, where decisions can be made without hearing those voices.

I am wondering if the hon. member will explain why the government continues to reduce the representation that Canadians receive and their ability to speak to issues that they are concerned about in this bill, by continuing to ram these bills through and transfer powers to the executive.

● (1220)

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, it is kind of rich to hear from that side of the House about trying to ram through legislation. I would argue that Prime Minister Harper rammed through legislation at a historic level. He was a prime minister who gave his members a handbook on how to manipulate committees.

We have serious work to do on behalf of Canadians. The party opposite is not serious. It has been a year since this was tabled. We need to move forward.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, only a Conservative would get up and say we are ramming through legislation that was tabled over a year ago. I will pull the curtain back a bit, so the public can understand what really happens.

What happens is that we have discussions on an ongoing basis with the other parties about when we think we can pass legislation. We will sit down with them and say we think we can get the budget implementation act 2025 through later this week and ask what they think of that. All the different parties will contribute to that. The Conservatives always say they have a whole list of people who want to speak to it. They intentionally do this, because they want to put us in a position where we eventually get to the point where we literally have to, because there is no other choice, just so they can take their 30 minutes right now and grandstand, as they are.

This is all theatre. I hope the public realizes this is all Conservative theatre and gamesmanship that we are watching right now.

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, as my friend and colleague just said, we have work to do on behalf of Canadians. We were elected in April 2025 with a mandate and agenda to step back, pivot, grow, diversify our economy and bring down barriers so we can attract more investment to businesses and grow our economy. We also want to make sure, through great programs like the groceries and essentials benefit and others, that we are looking after the most vulnerable.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am dismayed to hear the Liberal parliamentary secretaries decry the other side as if it is only Conservatives who find the bulldozing of bills through this House offensive.

[*Translation*]

A Bloc Québécois member also used the word bulldozer. I did not know it was the same word in French, but that works.

[*English*]

There is bulldozing, yes, but the Liberals put this bill on pause and did not push it through for a period of time. The fact remains, though, that this bill contains reversals to the Pest Control Products Act regulations that should have gone through an environment or health committee. Being put in an omnibus budget bill, it went only through the finance committee, where any attempt to amend was frustrated, just as we are now watching with Bill C-39. That committee is still meeting as we speak, facing a wall of Liberal-whipped votes to vote down any new ideas.

I am dismayed. I object again to rushing this bill through, specifically with respect to the Pest Control Products Act, which will be weakened.

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, the member used to sit beside me in the back corner. I respect her very much. I respect her passion. I know she is not the leader of the Green Party now, but I want her to know that I absolutely respect her and what she has brought to this Parliament.

We will always have the health and safety of Canadians in our minds when we move forward. Our farmers generate products for Canadians. We want them to be vibrant and profitable, but we will always make sure we address health and safety concerns.

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, as our colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands was saying just a few seconds ago, there are things we need to be talking about. There are matters that deserve to be debated. The way the Liberals are going about this makes it impossible to do that. I heard the chief government whip blame his closure moves on the Conservatives. That is quite something. Let us just say that if I were a citizen watching this on TV, I certainly would not be proud of the way things are going in Parliament.

That said, some important issues still need to be debated. We should be talking about the financial situation facing seniors. My colleagues held a press conference this morning with seniors' groups about Bill C-261, which seeks to restore fairness for seniors. We should be able to debate that. We should also be able to debate the fact that the government refuses to increase health transfers, and instead has committed to reducing them, at a time when we are facing crises in health care throughout Quebec and Canada.

Decisions are being made by this government that need to be explained. Quebeckers and Canadians have the right to hear the questions and the answers. We take issue with the approach this government is taking by using closure, as it is doing on Bill C-31.

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, again, it has been over a year that we have been obstructed and delayed and not moved this legislation forward.

We were elected with a mandate to build our economy, grow Canada strong, diversify and look after the most vulnerable. We have a plan to build Canada strong. Budget 2025 is the first step, the spring economic update is the second step, and budget 2026 is the third step. The BIA 2 is legislation that we need to put through. The parties opposite have delayed that.

We need to do what we need to do today, because Canadians elected us. I want Canadians to look at this and realize that we have been obstructed for over a year and need to move forward.

Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite has said, it has taken a while.

I am going to put forward the argument that perhaps it is about the spending of the government that concerns are being raised all around this chamber. To illustrate my point, I am going to ask the member to count with me, and he is going to need more than the fingers on one hand.

I am going to ask him, from budget 2025, whether he knows the deficit from the operations part of that budget, added to the deficit from the "investment side", and added to that the amount of spending that is a deficit that is buried in the Crown corporations. Now, let us add that to budget 2026, which is being proposed.

Could the member give me just one final number? Those three that have been added to the operations deficit forecast, and by the way, I will let him cheat back the one point some odd billion dollars that the operating deficit came under in 2025, the operations deficit from 2026, plus the investment spending in budget 2026, plus Alto and the other Crown corporation spending that the government is burying through Crown corporations. Could the member add those six numbers for this House, and then perhaps comment on whether that might be a concern for Canadians?

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, this is coming from a party that, when it was in government, which was quite a while ago now, ran nine straight deficits. Sure, Conservatives will say they balanced it in year 10. They threw in the sale of GM stocks and other things to balance that budget, so they could look like strong fiscal managers, but Canadians know better than that.

We are balancing our operating budget a year ahead of schedule. The Prime Minister has worldwide respect. He has the economic and business credentials to grow a strong economy. We are going to invest in Canada. We are going to invest in Canadian businesses. We will unleash investments not seen in generations, and the economy will be the better for it.

Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I was not going to get up and ask a second question, but after the recent tirade by the chief government whip, I felt compelled to. His tirade was something about calling this whole process in the House of Commons, the democratic institution that underpins everything that we have and cherish, was simply theatre.

If he believes that, it actually shows the chief government whip's totalitarian tendencies. However, for the people who are watching at home, it costs over a half a billion dollars a year to run the House of Commons and to run the Senate, to run our democracy. We need to have that opportunity, as members of Parliament, on behalf of our constituents, to have this conversation, because we do not get to make decisions in the cabinet room, and we do not get to make decisions in the order in council process. The only place we can have any impact whatsoever is through the debates in the House of Commons.

Based on the arrogance, I would have to say, of the chief government whip, it means that by putting this time allocation motion forward, the chief government whip is basically saying that, because this is all theatre, nothing anybody says here matters. I wonder if the secretary of state shares that same perspective that the chief government whip has, where none of this matters and it is all just theatre. What a joke.

● (1230)

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, the member wants to talk about theatre. Let us talk about Friday and the theatre and theatrics of the Leader of the Opposition, walking outside the House of Commons with 18 stone-faced MPs behind him. People would have thought they were all going to a funeral. They stood there with stone faces while he read a speech that he clearly should have delivered in the House of Commons, because he referenced "Mr. Speaker" in it.

That was theatre. It was empty rhetoric, an empty parking lot press conference, not a plan to grow Canada. We are serious on this side about growing a strong economy for all Canadians.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, for the record, what I said was that this 30-minute period is theatre. The member should go back and, if he is going to quote me, at least have the decency to actually quote what I said.

Let us go back to the previous Conservative member, who was somehow trying to lecture Liberals on deficits. The secretary of state is absolutely correct. In the last 19 budgets introduced by Conservatives in the House of Commons, 16 ran deficits. Of the three that did not run deficits, two were on the heels of Paul Martin's surpluses, and one was in 2015, when they balanced the budget by slashing veteran services and selling off shares of GM at bargain prices in order to balance the budget.

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member.

[*Translation*]

Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to tell us a bit about his duty, the high office he holds as a member of the House. Is it not instead our job to use well-structured arguments to debate and try to convince those who initially oppose our ideas, rather than simply forcing the House to pass regulations or laws on the sole basis of having a majority, being the strongest and doing whatever we like?

Would my colleague not be prouder of his role as a member of Parliament if he managed to convince me or take some of my arguments into consideration to amend the bill and make it one that we—the Liberals, the Bloc and the Conservatives—can pass hand in hand? What are his thoughts on that?

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, I am proud. I am proud of what the government is bringing to Canada. I am proud of the Prime Minister and the incredible leadership he is showing, not only here but around the world, meeting with world leaders, signing trade agreements, building the economy, retooling, stepping back and diversifying.

We make no apologies for moving forward with the government's agenda. I would think that if we ask Canadians, if we ask people from Quebec, if we ask Canadians from coast to coast to coast, they stand behind the Prime Minister. They stand behind his plan. They stand behind the way we are retooling. We are going to reinvest in Canadians. We are going to reinvest in Canadian business. We are going to bring down barriers. We are going to bring down impediments to investment. We are doing the right thing to build our economy, not only for now but for generations to come.

Tamara Kronis: Madam Speaker, in my earlier question, I suggested that the government is once again ramming this through in order to transfer more powers to the executive and restrict the ability of our constituents to comment on legislation. In response, the government, which claims over and over again that it is a brand new government, went back 20 years or whatever it is to former prime minister Harper. I would like to know why the members believe they are a new government, but that everything we have done, even from 20 years ago, has to be considered. I am asking as a new member. I am wondering why I am being held to 20—

● (1235)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We have time for a very brief answer from the hon. secretary of state.

Hon. Wayne Long: Madam Speaker, it was in November 2025, not 2026, but 2025, that we tabled this. That side needs to look in the mirror and stand with us to help us build—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion.

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

[*English*]

Chris Warkentin: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

● (1320)

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

(Division No. 197)

YEAS

Members

Acan
Ali
Anand
Auguste
Baker
Battiste
Begum
Bendayan
Blois
Caley
Carr
Chagger
Chartrand
Chenette
Church
Connors
Coteau
Dandurand
d'Entremont
Desrochers
Dhillon
Duclos
Earle
El-Khoury
Fancy
Fergus
Fortier
Fraser
Fuhr
Gainey
Gerretsen
Gobeil
Grant
Guay
Hajdu
Harrison
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Jaczek
Joly
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lambropoulos
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Petitpas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rochefort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Schiefke
Shahnawaz
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sodhi
Sousa
Sudds
Thompson
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi– — 167

Al Soud
Alty
Anandasangaree
Bains
Bardeesy
Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Bittle
Brière
Carney
Casey
Chang
Chatel
Chi
Clark
Cormier
Dabrusin
Danko
Deschênes-Thériault
Dhaliwal
Diab
Duguid
Ehsassi
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fry
Gaheer
Gasparro
Gladu
Gould
Greaves
Gull-Masty
Hanley
Hepfner
Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
Jeneroux
Joseph
Kelloway
Klassen
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lauzon
Lavoie
Leitão
Long
Ma
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Martin
McKelvie
McKnight
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Solomon
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Yip
Zerucelli

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Anderson
Arnold
Baber
Aitchison
Allison
Anstey
Au
Barrett

Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	Berthold
Bexte	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Bonin	Bonk
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cobena
Cody	Cooper
Dancho	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
DeRidder	Deschênes
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)
Falk (Provencher)	Fortin
Garon	Gaudreau
Gazan	Genuis
Gill (Calgary Skyview)	Gill (Brampton West)
Gill (Calgary McKnight)	Gill (Windsor West)
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Groleau
Guglielmin	Gunn
Hallan	Hardy
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Jivani
Johns	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmiec
Konanz	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
Kuruc	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lawton
Lefebvre	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Mahal
Majumdar	Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Mantle	May
Mazier	McCauley
McKenzie	McLean (Calgary Centre)
McPherson	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morin	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Reynolds	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ross	Rowe
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shipley	Simard
Small	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stevenson
Strahl	Strauss
Stubbs	Thériault
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Warkentin	Waugh
Williamson	Zimmer– — 156

PAIRED

Members

Bailey	Baldinelli
Block	Champagne
Dalton	Dzerowicz
Fisher	Gallant
Idlout	Watchorn– — 10

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from November 4 consideration of Bill C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we resume our debate on Bill C-31, I thought I would mention an issue that has just recently come up in my area, where, on November 9, the workers at Millar Western Forest Products in the community of Quesnel woke up to find out that their operations were being closed indefinitely. Our riding and our region is forestry-dependent. We are probably one of the most forestry-dependent regions in our province, if not the most. Our communities are deeply integrated with forestry, and Quesnel is no different.

As a matter of fact, Quesnel is North America's most forestry-integrated community. Sadly, we have seen over the last decade, with the Liberal government's failure to secure a new softwood lumber agreement, coupled with the signs of the times, no fewer than 35 mill closures in our province. That is tens of thousands of forestry workers who are out of work.

Members can imagine the concern when, on November 9, the Quesnel community received the news that one of our major industry stakeholders is shuttering the doors and hundreds of jobs are going to be lost. Members can imagine the surprise. It was only less than 100 days previous that Millar Western Forest Products received a $100-million loan from the government. It was given a $100-million loan and 100 days later it is shuttering the doors.

There are tons of questions. We asked the finance minister for his response on this last week. He promised me that he would get back to me on this, because the contract terms are that the proponent has to provide an employment program for the next 24 months and must adhere to it. We have lots of questions.

I look forward to questions, and hopefully I have the answers.

● (1325)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government is very much concerned about the employees of many of the different sectors, particularly in regard to our forestry industry. That is one of the reasons we are doing what we can while we continue to have negotiations. The Prime Minister has been the prime minister for a year and a half. There have been 24-plus trade and economic agreements. We continue to push forward. We are not going to capitulate to the United States.

Does the member not see any sort of conflict when he says that $100 million is going toward supporting the company in terms of loans? It demonstrates to me that the government is listening and trying to do what it can. Is listening not what the government should do?

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, here is our concern. Millar Western Forest Products is owned by an American private equity firm, Atlas Holdings. Literally 100 days after receiving the funds, it is shutting the doors.

The agreement says, "Companies seeking support must provide an employment plan, laying out employment expectations over 24 months and will be required to adhere to that plan as a condition of the loan agreement." It is breaking that loan agreement. That is our concern.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the BC Brain Injury Leadership Summit is taking place in Victoria. I know that my colleague has been a huge champion when it comes to supporting people with brain injuries. I know that we would both like to be there. We know that research suggests that more than half of people experiencing homelessness have had a traumatic brain injury. For someone struggling with memory, help with completing a housing application or keeping track of rent can mean finding and keeping a home.

The budget invests in brain research, and the Brain Canada Foundation itself supports a national strategy. The strategy bill won unanimous support at second reading and reached report stage before the Liberals prorogued Parliament, but the Liberals left it out of this budget. This is something parliamentarians have been supporting unanimously, but the Liberals continue to ignore dealing with it. Maybe my colleague could speak about the importance of a brain injury strategy and of making sure we support people who have a brain injury.

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I really respect my hon. colleague and the work he has done with people who are struggling with brain injury. I am on record talking about my uncle who suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car accident and, after that brain injury, fell into the hands of the drug dealers and those who take advantage of those who have diminished faculties.

It is interesting that the member mentioned how the government, when it prorogued Parliament, scuttled his bill. The Liberals also scuttled my bill, Bill C-321, which concerned the violence against our first responders and our health care workers. It passed unanimously at the House and in the other House. The only thing that stopped it from receiving royal assent was the proroguing of our last Parliament.

It is shameful. Those bills need to come back. We need to make sure we get a national strategy on brain injury, as well as to make sure we are standing up for the people who stand up for us.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the issue, because I think it is important we recognize that the government is doing what it can to support the workers of Canada and industries. I use the example of Stelco. Stelco and the government have an agreement. Stelco tried to renege in part, and the government was able to continue to push the envelope to make sure those commitments were fulfilled.

Would the member opposite not agree that the government should move where it can to support the industry, as this government did with the jobs he is making reference to, and that the consequence of a violation of an agreement is something we should be onside with and something with regard to which we should try to work collaboratively to make sure there is a sense of accountability?

● (1330)

Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, what the Liberals have done is not helping. I just mentioned that the company, an American firm, took the $100 million and ran. Not only were 100 jobs lost in my riding, but attached to those jobs were the husbands and the spouses. We got a note back from the mayor this past weekend. It is not just the mill workers or the forestry workers who are out of work. There are 15 nurses who are now moving because their spouses were employed by those forestry workers. When we already have a health care crisis, our community is losing 15 nurses.

When we think about these job losses, we have to think about the multipliers. Three to five jobs are supported by one job that is lost. That is what we need to do. We do not need to spend more money on the Brazilian rainforest. We need to spend money on real, tangible results here at home.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-31, which we have been debating for some time. As a budget implementation bill, it covers all sorts of things. I will therefore focus my comments on divisions 16 and 17 of the bill. These divisions concern items which I have addressed in more detail over the course of my parliamentary work.

Division 16 of the bill aims to establish the Defence Investment Agency, a new agency mandated to handle defence procurement for the Government of Canada. It is interesting that we are talking about this bill today, because when Bill C-31 was tabled, the new Defence Investment Agency created under Bill C-31 was introduced to us as the ultimate answer to all of our defence procurement problems.

Now there is a new bill, namely Bill C-40, which is currently being studied in parliamentary committee. Essentially, this bill is suggesting that the provisions of Bill C-31 are completely misguided and that we should instead take an entirely different approach by creating a Crown corporation for defence procurement. I find that rather peculiar. Bill C-31 has not even been passed, yet there is already another bill stating that the previous bill is no good. However, at the time, it was the best solution going. Why should we believe that Bill C-40 is really the best solution? We have to take the Liberals at their word. Apparently they are always right, at least until they change their minds.

I hope that I will get a chance to come back to that, but I only have so much time, and I want to talk about division 17 of the bill. Division 17 seeks to amend the Canada Transportation Act. What the Liberals have decided to do is quite troubling, in my view. In early 2026, we learned that Air Canada had decided to implement a pilot project to offer its customers an alternate dispute resolution mechanism: an independent arbitrator. However, since the arbitrator is paid by Air Canada, one has to wonder how independent they really are. The independent arbitrator's job involves handling complaints. Air Canada announced this as a good idea, as good news that would result in better customer service. A few weeks after this wonderful announcement, we found out that Air Canada had been informed in advance of the government's intentions and what it planned to include in Bill C-31. What does Bill C-31 contain? It contains exactly the same thing, except that it completely strips the Canadian Transportation Agency of its powers.

The Canadian Transportation Agency is an independent arbitrator that has fought for many years to strengthen travellers' rights. Sadly, air passengers are constantly getting the short end of the stick from airlines, which too often fail to respect those rights. Instead of strengthening consumer rights, the government has decided to hand over responsibility for air travellers' rights to the airlines, letting them pick the arbitrator instead of using an independent, government-funded administrative tribunal. Personally, I find this situation mind-boggling: The arbitrator is operating under a blatant conflict of interest. The airline selects the arbitrator and pays the arbitrator. If the airline is unhappy with the first arbitrator, it can pick another.

What guarantees are there when it comes to French? There are almost none. In fact, the minister told us that everything would be fine, wonderful and perfect. However, since the Liberals decided to meddle in travellers' rights, things have actually gotten worse. Hundreds of thousands of complaints have been piling up at the Canadian Transportation Agency, and reforms were planned under the passenger bill of rights. This bill of rights was a failure from the start, under the leadership of Mr. Garneau at the time. It was a failure, but there were still some improvements; let us not be entirely negative about it. The problem is that the government has never been able to enforce it. Instead of focusing on enforcement, as the Canadian Transportation Agency is trying to do, the government is unfortunately just giving up the fight. It seems to me that this was quite clear from the testimony we heard from travellers' rights groups in committee. They proposed some solutions.

Former transport minister Omar Alghabra served in that role for a short time. The federal transport minister seems to change every year. I was the transport critic for seven years, and I think we had a new minister about once a year. That means seven transport ministers in seven years. Every time a new minister comes in, it provides a convenient excuse for putting off action, since they first need time to get up to speed on the file.

● (1335)

One of them took it seriously. It is rare for me to praise the work of a Liberal minister, but one minister promised that airlines would be forced to pay for the processing of complaints. There was to be a small deterrent fee to make them think twice and to send the message that if they bog down the system and fail to co-operate, it will cost them more, because they are the ones who will have to pay for complaints to be processed. We see that approach in other sectors, such as banking and telecommunications. Why was it not possible to do the same when it comes to air passenger rights? It is a reasonable question.

I said earlier that the Liberals are always right. I am sure members know that I was being sarcastic. It is even worse than that. I am not the only one who is saying that what the Liberals just did does not make any sense. We held press conferences with consumer advocacy groups, including Option consommateurs and Air Passenger Rights, regarding rights in the case of flight delays. These groups did not just convince me. They also convinced the Senate. In fact, the Senate said pretty much the same thing that I am saying today: that these amendments are simply unacceptable. I am not necessarily the biggest fan of the Senate, but if these advocacy groups can convince people who were, for the most part, appointed by Liberals, then the Liberals should be asking themselves some questions. If their own friends are telling them that their bill is no good, then they should at least listen to them.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, the Liberals rejected our proposal to split division 17 from the bill. We also worked hard in committee, even though these provisions were bundled together with a host of unrelated measures and ought to have been examined seriously by the appropriate committee with the appropriate witnesses. Instead, they were folded into the budget bill alongside a range of other issues with which members of the Standing Committee on Finance were not necessarily familiar. We could have focused on fixing a problem rather than on doing airlines a favour.

I find this very sad. We even raised a question of privilege in the House on whether the rights of members of Parliament had been breached during this process. How is it that an airline managed to implement the provisions of a bill before the bill was even introduced in the House? It seems to me that there was a serious problem. This is a truly problematic situation that actually highlights the strange way in which the other side of the House works to serve their cronies, big finance, and large corporations before addressing the needs of ordinary people. I find it sad to see the Liberals acting this way. I think it is a shame they have not paid an appropriate political price for their actions, and I hope people will gradually come to realize what the Liberals are doing, because, unfortunately, they are not working for ordinary people. Bill C-31 is a pretty telling example of this.

Unfortunately, we had to work like mad to deal with these measures and all of the others set out in the budget implementation bill. My colleague from Mirabel proposed several amendments inspired by witness testimony and the work that was done by me and other colleagues, such as my successor, the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, our new transport critic. We worked together to ensure that our amendments to Bill C-31 were based on the concerns expressed by travellers' groups and consumer advocacy groups.

We know that independent arbitrators will be paid by the airlines. If the arbitrators are not being chosen by the Canadian Transportation Agency, which is made up of public servants, then can we at least make sure that they are not being chosen by the airlines? Can we do that, at least? That would be the bare minimum. Unfortunately, our proposal was rejected.

We also proposed other amendments so that airlines could not unilaterally waste people's time. If a consumer was dissatisfied with an adjudicator's decision, there should at least be a mechanism for appealing it to the Canadian Transportation Agency, where there is genuine expertise and qualified staff who have built up knowledge and experience over time. That idea was also dismissed.

I see that I have only a little time left. To summarize, all the amendments we proposed to division 17 were turned down. I wonder if the Liberals even bothered to read them. I get the impression that they could not care less about consumers' rights or passengers' rights. It is truly a sad day for democracy when we see that, when real work is being done in Parliament, the members opposite do not even take things seriously and rubber-stamp everything, particularly when these orders come from the top.

I am really upset today to see how the Liberals are operating.

● (1340)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member's assessment that the government does not care. It has actually brought forward legislation on more than one occasion to protect the rights of passengers. Whether with respect to increasing fines or other initiatives, I believe it is in fact making a difference. Obviously there is concern with respect to the backlogs. That is the reason we put into place the independent third party resolution organization.

The member indicated that Air Canada seemed to be given advance notice of it and put it in its own system. I do not recall anyone from the Bloc or any Conservative standing up on any sort of privilege issue stating that was the case. The member said he did. I would be interested if he could share with the House what the Speaker's ruling on the matter was.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I did have the opportunity to raise the issue in the House. Unfortunately, the Chair found that there were not sufficient grounds to warrant a full investigation. I believe a full investigation would have been justified. Unfortunately, the Chair is not always perfect. That is what I am saying. That does not mean that the Chair does not do a good job in general, but I was quite disappointed in this case.

I think the member opposite should pay attention to the issue being raised today. He raised the issue of the so-called fines that were supposedly increased. It is all well and good to increase fines, but the problem is that if they are never enforced, nothing changes. In practice, the very fines he is talking about have never been imposed.

This whole thing is nothing but window dressing.

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his great speech here today.

I am hosting the honey on the Hill event tonight, and I am just wondering if the member will be able to make it to honey on the Hill tonight.

[*Translation*]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I did not quite understand my colleague's question. Perhaps he was commenting on the sound of my voice. We have been working hard lately, and after long hours here, it can sometimes take a toll. In my case, that is all it is.

That brings me to another point that I have not had the chance to raise so far. Among the reforms the Liberals chose to abandon was a proposal to create three categories of flight cancellations: cancellations for safety reasons, cancellations for safety reasons that the airline could have foreseen and cancellations that were beyond its control. It became apparent that unscrupulous airlines were classifying all cancellations and delays as being beyond their control, when in reality this was rarely the case.

The government had promised to abolish this practice, but unfortunately decided to ignore it and instead gave the airlines free rein.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères is always eloquent and to the point. The proof is that no one stands up to challenge him or dispute his remarks. I am looking over at the Liberal benches. Only the parliamentary secretary, true to form, rises to put forward a position that is, well, rather predictable. One has to wonder whether, as my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères suggested, some Liberal members have begun to notice that something is a little off in terms of how this government operates.

I would like to know whether my Bloc colleague agrees that we are starting to see a glimmer of hope. Perhaps, thanks to comments from the Bloc Québécois, especially when they are as well researched and articulate as those of my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, some Liberal colleagues are beginning to realize that, indeed, there may well be cause for reflection, and perhaps they will start to read the bills and measures the government is putting in place.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his question, which I think is highly pertinent.

The good news is that there is still a vote on Bill C-31. Now that the committee has completed its study of Bill C-31 and additional votes remain to be held, there is still a chance that some members across the way will listen to the speech I delivered today, hear the arguments I have put forward and choose to act in the public interest rather than in the interests of the wealthy.

The message has been sent. We will see what the outcome is when it comes time to vote.

● (1345)

[*English*]

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-31, the second implementation bill for the last budget.

Since the government introduced it, Canadians have already received budget 2026. That gives us fresh evidence with which to judge the financial judgment behind this bill and the powers it would place in the hands of Liberal ministers.

If Canadians want to know what this Liberal budget is really about, they should skip the cover and turn to annex 1, which tells us exactly who is picking up the tab. It is everyday Canadians who are not part of the Liberal club.

The cover says, “Masters of our destiny”, but it is rather misleading. The Prime Minister had one job: Save Canadians money on fuel, food and homes. Instead, he is asking them to finance a Liberal budget that reads like separate credit card statements. There is the operating account, the capital account and the cash Ottawa needs tucked away for transactions outside the deficit. The Liberal finance minister can choose which statement to hold up for the cameras, but Canadians are on the hook for the whole account. The honest title is more like “masters by debt”.

The government projects another $765 billion in net new debt over the next five years. That is roughly $44,000 for every Canadian household. About $289 billion comes from projected deficits, and roughly $476 billion more is tucked away in transactions outside the budgetary balance, including cash outlays for loans and financing for Crown corporations. However, it does not show Canadians when the money comes back and how we assess the return. These are simple questions a Liberal Prime Minister, borrowing in Canadians' names, should be able to answer.

The Liberal finance minister can tell us what this deficit is not. It is not lower than he forecasted in the spring. It is still projected at over $62 billion this year and next. Annual federal program expenses are projected to rise from about $543 billion this year to $600 billion by the end of the forecast. The Liberals want a medal, because their projected deficit came in slightly below their own spring forecast, despite it being roughly double the deficit left behind by Justin Trudeau.

That is like someone telling their spouse that they promise to spend no more than $200 at Costco, but they come home with a receipt for $300. They tell their spouse that they were about to spend $350, so thank goodness it was only $300, and then distract them by holding up the rotisserie chicken they got for $7.99. It does not change the fact that they spent well over their budget by $100.

I would offer the Liberal Prime Minister some advice from another central banker. Former Federal Reserve chair Ben Bernanke gave a straightforward example of a credible fiscal framework as “one on which the ratio of federal debt to GDP eventually stabilizes or declines”. That is because rising deficits and debt-to-GDP ratios cannot continue indefinitely.

The Liberal Prime Minister promised to bring debt down as a share of the economy. His budget projects federal debt to GDP rising from when he took office, to 40.4% in 2028-29. In comparison, the federal debt to GDP was only 31% in 2015, under the Harper government. Even if we took his own numbers at face value, the ratio ends higher than it is this year. An anchor earns its name when it holds in rough water, and this one does not hold any at all.

Reality is starting to catch up with the Liberal Prime Minister. Former Bank of Canada governor David Dodge explained the risk of excessive government deficits and borrowing. When interest rates keep pace with or outstrip the growth of the economy or of government revenues, he warned, “The burden of past debt will increase year after year, rather than being eroded.”

That warning matters, because interest is among the fastest-growing major expenses in the Liberal budget. It projects $60.2 billion in public debt charges this year, rising to $85.5 billion by 2030-31. Spread across Canadians, that is equivalent to almost $6,000 for a family of four this year and about $8,200 by the end of the forecast. By then, the Liberal government expects to spend almost $18 billion more on debt charges than on the Canada health transfer. The Liberals are spending more on interest payments than on 19 of the 21 federal government departments.

Let the Prime Minister put that number on the podium at his next affordability announcement. His creditors can count on being paid, but Canadians are still being told to be patient.

The Liberal politicians approving today's borrowing can enjoy today's political benefits; however, the young Canadians inheriting the obligation have to make room for it in tomorrow's budget. Every dollar committed to interest narrows their choices. How much of a young Canadian's future paycheque has the government already promised away? How much fiscal room to respond to future crises are we depriving from the next generation?

The Liberal Prime Minister calls this budget “Masters of our destiny”. It is starting to sound like he wants Canadians to be servants of our debt.

This brings me to an economic principle called the parable of the broken window. It asks us to judge policy and taxation by what is seen and what is unseen, the opportunity costs associated had the taxes not been levied and the money not been squandered. What is seen is that the cheque that spends taxpayer money is dressed up as an investment, with the ribbon-cutting ceremony and the minister looking at the camera in the hard hat.

● (1350)

What is unseen is what that same money, labour and time could have done somewhere else. For example, when the shopkeeper gets his window broken, sure, the glazier gets a job, and the people watching can see him put in the new pane, but what nobody sees is the purchase or investment the shopkeeper would have made to his business if he could have kept some of that money. At the end of the day, the shopkeeper has the same window he had that same morning. The unseen costs matter. The bad economist looks only at the immediate and visible effects: the announcements and ribbon-cutting ceremonies. The good economist counts for the long-term effects and the unseen opportunity costs.

Now, let us follow the Liberal corporate handout. Which Liberal insider got the cheque? Who else had a chance to compete? Would the company have built the project anyway?

The Liberal Prime Minister's track record keeps getting worse, whether it is the $2 billion for heat pump rebates for a Brookfield subsidiary or a $2.3-billion contract to his close friend at Telesat, which triggered a conflict of interest screen, or the B.C. condo developer bailout at the behest of Liberal Party donors. The company that got the taxpayer money can hire lobbyists, but the shop owner who helped pay for it gets to read about the deal after the fact, and the jobs that shop owner might have created never make it into the Liberal government's press releases. Canadians have the right to ask these questions and the right to follow the money.

This Liberal credit card budget makes it sound like the Liberals are the masters of our decline. As a former central banker himself, the Liberal Prime Minister should heed the advice of another central banker. Former Federal Reserve chair, Jerome Powell, made much of the same point about the U.S. debt. He warned about “spending more and more taxpayer dollars on servicing debt rather than investing in the things that we need”. That is the advice the Prime Minister should take.

The interest bill has first claim on the money a future Parliament needs to defend the country, deliver tax relief or get through a recession. There is a cost today as well. When deficit financing spending adds demand faster than the economy can add supply, it can put upward pressure on prices and leave interest rates higher than they otherwise would be.

A few years ago, Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem said that it would help if monetary and fiscal policy were “rowing in the same direction”. The Liberal Prime Minister used to sit on the central banker's side of that table. He knows exactly what happens when the government presses the accelerator while the Bank is trying to brake, except we are watching this play out in real time. We see that the Bank of Canada had already started tightening monetary policy by hiking interest rates last month, but at the same time, a massive debt-financed fiscal expansion is evident in the Liberal budget.

The Liberal Prime Minister's professional background makes it difficult to excuse this Liberal budget. When Justin Trudeau ran massive deficits, we could brush it off as mismanagement, but when this Liberal Prime Minister does it, we can call it deliberate destruction of our economy.

All the new programs, bureaucracies and new spending beg the question, for how long? Economists call it the ratchet effect. In an emergency, spending clicks up, the emergency passes and the new level becomes the starting point for the next budget. Then, path dependence sets in. Contracts get signed, offices get staffed and the people who are enriched by the program have every reason to fight for it to stay. Many times, numerous full-time, taxpayer-funded bureaucrats will stick around administering a program that is no longer needed or staffing an office that the government has neglected to close down. The lobbyists and consultants getting rich off these arrangements have every incentive to keep the gravy train going.

In Ottawa, a temporary program can be like a house guest who comes for the weekend, moves into the spare room and asks to have an addition built. The Liberals are more likely to give the guest a consulting contract to study the shortage of bedrooms. Conservatives will keep fighting for lower taxes and scrapping wasteful spending on consultants, foreign aid, health care, hotels for phony refugees, DEI spending and corporate handouts to Liberal insiders.

The Liberal Prime Minister says that we are the masters of our destiny. I think of a young Canadian who works full-time, puts money aside and wants to buy a home and raise a family here after doing everything right. The young person will have a budget of their own one day. How much of it has the government already spoken for? When the Liberals say masters of our destiny, we should ask who gets to sign the contract, which Liberal insiders get rich and whose children will still be paying when the Liberal ministers' photo ops are long gone. Conservatives will keep fighting for everyday Canadians while the Liberal Prime Minister dines at their expense at 30,000 feet.

● (1355)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we should recognize the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and recognize that we have the strongest credit rating in the world. We have a choice. We can invest in Canadians, invest in infrastructure, encourage investment, work collaboratively with provinces, indigenous people and many other stakeholders, and build a stronger, healthier Canadian economy that works for all Canadians, as the entire Liberal caucus is committed to doing. Why does the Conservative Party not recognize that investing in that fashion is good for Canada?

Vincent Ho: Madam Speaker, that Liberal member clearly was not listening to my speech. We cannot just dress everything up as investment. We are talking about adding $765 billion of net new spending over the next five years. That is put on the backs of taxpayers and on the backs of the next generation. This is what these Liberals are all about. They want to announce, announce, announce, but where are the results to show for it? There are absolutely no results. I talked to folks from my riding of Richmond Hill South, and we talked about the budget over the past couple of weeks. Not a single constituent in Richmond Hill South has said there is something in it for them, because there is absolutely nothing for them. The only people getting rich are the Liberal club members and the corporate insiders whose backs the Liberal Prime Minister likes to scratch.

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his very wise and discerning remarks.

Something that hit me, which perhaps he can elaborate it on, is that over the last 11 years, what has been the government's response to the building of new pipelines? Has it been energy infrastructure investment? When referring to our oil and our gas here in Canada, did the Liberals not call it dirty oil and dirty gas for 11 years? Was it not the Liberal government that doubled our national debt in their time in office in the last 11 years? Is it not the current government that has made 500 announcements, yet zero approvals?

I wonder if the hon. member would like to comment on that.

Vincent Ho: Madam Speaker, that is the thing. They created all these problems. The Liberal approach was not to get out of the way and fix those problems; it was to continue to add more bureaucracy, continue to regulate, continue to legislate and not look themselves in the mirror and recognize that they themselves are the problem and that they need to get out of the way.

There are currently over 500 projects across the country that are looking for federal government approval. It is absolutely disgraceful. It is absolutely unacceptable to see the amount of gatekeeping the Liberal government is putting up. The Liberals should get out of the way so Canadians can finally prosper.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when it comes to the budget, we have always been clear: We want to build a Canadian economy that works for everyone

This means supporting the various groups that make up Canadian society. I am thinking in particular of the investments we are making to support indigenous peoples so they can participate in various economic projects, those we have made to support multiculturalism, gender equality programs, and funding for official-language minority communities, particularly francophone communities.

I would like to hear my hon. colleague's thoughts on this. Why are these investments so important, and why must we support all groups that make up the Canadian population?

[*English*]

Vincent Ho: Mr. Speaker, that Liberal member talked a big game about the investments the Liberal government is making. I will actually recognize some of the investments the Liberal government is making. How about the $8 million for gender-just rice in Vietnam? How about spending $8 million for affordable housing in the Dominican Republic? How about supporting electric vehicles for $5 million but in Senegal? The big one that came up recently is the over half a billion dollars for a rainforest in a country that has a larger GDP than Canada. Those are the kinds of Liberal investments the Liberal government is making. It is absolutely out of touch. Canadians are out of money. It is time for the Liberal government to look itself in the mirror, get out of the way and get its spending under control.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*English*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am calling on all members of the House to stand together in opposition to the Quebecor-Telus takeover and for the federal government to soundly reject it. I am also calling on the Liberals to make clear that they will maintain the moratorium on spectrum licence transfers.

Telus supports thousands of skilled jobs and contributes to our innovation economy and infrastructure. Rejecting this proposal is about protecting consumers, preserving good jobs, maintaining competition and defending B.C.'s economic interests. Contrary to the Prime Minister's twisted logic, the telecoms oligopoly cannot become even more concentrated. Canadians are already paying too much for telecom services. We should not be paving the way for even higher prices and fewer options.

I am calling on the Prime Minister to put public interest ahead of the corporate class by maintaining the spectrum licence moratorium and oppose this proposed takeover. I further urge all members of Parliament, especially B.C. MPs across party lines, to stand together to oppose this takeover.

Statements by Members

GLACE BAY FIRE

Mike Kelloway (Sydney—Glace Bay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my thoughts are with everyone affected by the devastating fire and building collapse in my hometown of Glace Bay on November 18.

To those who have been injured or displaced from their homes, please know that our entire community is thinking of them. I also want to recognize Pizza 67, the local business affected by this tragedy, whose owners and employees have suffered losses and are now facing an uncertain road ahead. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the firefighters, paramedics, police officers and all first responders who have been working tirelessly at the scene. Their courage, dedication and commitment to protecting others is so deeply appreciated.

One thing we know about Cape Bretoners is that when tragedy strikes, people come together. Neighbours help neighbours, communities rally around those in need and no one is left to face difficult times alone. I know that same compassion and generosity will be there for the people of Glace Bay in the days and weeks ahead.

Everyone impacted by this tragedy is not alone. The people of Glace Bay, the people of Cape Breton and the people of Canada are standing with them.

* * *

CANADIAN CADET PROGRAM

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Liberals told Canada's cadets to stand down, not from corps training but everything else. They cancelled band, mess dinners and competitions. The list goes on.

I spent the weekend with cadets learning, leading, laughing and looking after one another. There were no phones, just fun and friendship. I got an earful from angry parents and spent time with a fabulous community trying its best to backfill on the fly. By all means, the minister should review the program. The ministry's own data puts lifetime social value at up to $40 for every dollar invested. The same data warns that cutting hands-on activities disengages youth, yet that is exactly what is being suspended until March.

The minister should look at the data. He will learn the cadet program should grow, not shrink. The navy response to a mistake is simple. It is to belay the order. The command our cadets should hear from the minister is, “As you were. Carry on.”

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S HISTORY AWARDS

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a proud Acadian, I would like to highlight an outstanding double recognition for Nova Scotia: two recipients of the 2026 Governor General's History Awards, the highest Canadian honours in the field of history.

First, I want to congratulate L'Acadie de Chezzetcook, which won the award for excellence in community programming for its “La marche du souvenir” project. This honour is much more than an award; it is a testament to the strength of a community determined to preserve its history and keep its memory alive. It serves as a reminder of the importance of passing on Acadian heritage and recognizing the Acadian communities' contribution to our Canadian identity.

[*English*]

Congratulations as well to Jonathan Grant of Northumberland Regional High School in Westville recognized for excellence in teaching Canadian history. These awards celebrate the dedication of individuals and communities that work tirelessly to preserve our history and share our heritage. On behalf of all my colleagues from Nova Scotia, I extend my warmest congratulations to both recipients and everyone who contributed to these outstanding achievements.

* * *

ATTACK IN HAMILTON

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a direct message from Captain Ken Kunkel:

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for the outpouring of love you have given me, my wife, son and daughter during this very difficult time for us. Your words of inspiration and your generous donations mean the world to us and have greatly assisted with our recovery and the planning of the expenses ahead of us. We are truly grateful for your thoughtfulness.... I am currently paralyzed from the waist down and still in the hospital. I am in continual pain and taking different pain medications for pain management.... In spite of this, I remain hopeful and positive, especially after receiving your best wishes, that continue to inspire me.”

When I spoke with Ken on the phone, he was in tears. He was not in tears because of his pain. He was in tears because of all the love he has received from Canadians. To Ken and his family from everyone in this House, we are all behind them, praying for them and rooting for his recovery.

* * *

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

BROME-MISSISQUOI COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Louis Villeneuve (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of talk lately about the need for affordable housing. I am proud to tell the House that the Territoires solidaires team has addressed this issue by creating the Brome-Missisquoi Community Land Trust.

The idea is simple: to protect land and buildings from real estate speculation and preserve them permanently for the benefit of the community. This team wants the people who live in our towns and villages to be able to stay there without fear of falling victim to skyrocketing housing prices. It creates and preserves affordable housing, protects natural environments, and ensures that these assets remain accessible to future generations.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Samuel Gervais and Élise Cabanac. They showed me the tools their team is developing so that other communities across Quebec and Canada can set up similar projects. I urge our municipalities and local partners to support this initiative to bring hope to our communities.

* * *

[*English*]

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES IN CALGARY MIDNAPORE

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the holidays are such a lovely time of year and my beautiful community of Calgary Midnapore shows up. Constituents can see Light up Legacy, meet the big guy during Santa days in Chaparral, and then go bowling with him in Fairview. They can hop on a horse-drawn carriage from the Cornerstone Music Cafe to the Christmas market in Deer Run, and then take their little ones to a Queensland party just for them. They can choose to design beautiful Christmas cards at the Kingsland workshop, make crafts in Willow Ridge, visit the Merry Mid-Sun Market or ice skate on Lake Bonavista.

Whether people are searching for some last-minute gifts in the busy shops of Township and Willow Park Village or singing joyful Christmas carols at one of the many beautiful churches across the riding, the wonder of this season is all around Calgary Midnapore.

May the good news of Jesus' birth fill every home and every heart this Christmas.

* * *

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's non-profit sector is essential to the well-being of our communities, thanks to its 10 million volunteers. In Prince Edward Island, non-profits contribute 10% to our GDP, and account for 4% of our total employment. These organizations are the lifeblood of our society and our economy. Non-profits support families, address poverty, bring people together and help ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

United Way Maritimes is developing its first strategic plan to invest $100 million by 2031. Its work brings governments, businesses, community organizations and individuals together to create lasting change.

It is time that we formally recognize the people who make this work possible by establishing a national non-profit day of appreciation.

I thank the staff, volunteers, donors and community partners across this sector for the difference they make every day.

THE BUDGET

Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' costly credit card budget should be renamed “mastered by our debt” because, under the current Liberals, Canada is facing a never-ending cycle of debt accumulation. The Prime Minister is doing his best to hide this debt using creative bookkeeping, but people smarter than him are on to the shell game. The Parliamentary Budget Office has issued a series of scathing reports on the consequences of this out-of-control spending.

What is the result? More debt and more interest on the debt. Debt-servicing costs alone are going to cost $2,000 per Canadian per year, or $8,000 for a family of four. This is money that is going to the government's bankers and bondholders and not into our bank accounts. Imagine what families could do with $8,000 per year extra.

This budget is not a budget for prosperity. It is a plan for never-ending debt, and Canadian families are going to be paying the price for a long time.

* * *

● (1410)

[*Translation*]

MARIE-ÉLAINE THIBERT

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker,

When finally we have
The country we've deserved
And have been fighting for
Throughout our history
Québécois, tomorrow,
We'll be sovereign at last
Masters in our own home
Je me souviens

Nobody has the right
To try to make us think
That we're not big enough
That our strength is wanting
That we should close our eyes
That the past is long dead
Our love for one another
Will be that much stronger!

Let our French resonate
Let our songs ring out
Let our children cherish
Our own creations...

Whether we're from afar
Or born just down the street
All our colours combine
To paint Quebec's portrait
And our hands give it shape
And our hearts are in tune
Dreaming isn't enough
Just take the leap

For all the Patriots
Who sacrificed it all...

I thank Marie-Élaine Thibert for this song which won her the 2026 Patriot of the Year award from the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste and I congratulate her for carrying the torch of Quebec independence so proudly.

* * *

[*English*]

WORLD FISHERIES DAY

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 21 marked World Fisheries Day, a chance to recognize the men and women who make their living from the sea and help sustain coastal communities across the country. On Nova Scotia's south shore, our big day comes next Monday, weather permitting, with the start of lobster season in lobster fishing areas 33 and 34, a tradition that we proudly call “dumping day”. As Canada's largest lobster fishery prepares to begin, more than 1,400 boats and thousands of harvesters and families are getting ready for the season at hand. Before the first traps are set, communities gather for the blessing of the fleet, praying for a safe and successful season.

This week, I am very proud to sponsor World Fisheries Day on Parliament Hill with the Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation, representing more than 14,000 independent harvesters across this country. May every crew heading out this week have a calm, safe and successful voyage.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food bank visits have reached a record high in Canada, increasing by 117% since 2019. I can tell the House first-hand that the families in Abbotsford—South Langley are feeling this pressure. In 2022, Archway Food Bank served approximately 3,500 people each month. Today the number has climbed to over 6,200 people, with children making up 37% of that number. These are not just statistics; these are real people. These are real families struggling to put dinner on the table.

I would like to thank the incredible staff and volunteers at Archway Food Bank, along with many other local organizations that work tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure they can support our communities. However, food banks were never supposed to be a solution to Canada's affordability crisis. After a decade of reckless spending, it is time for the Liberals to get out of the way so we can come in and bring change for all Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAYMOND LAFLAMME

Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier—Gloucester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to Raymond Laflamme, who passed away on November 6.

[*English*]

Raymond began his career at the House of Commons as a page at age 16. He went on to dedicate nearly 29 years to the federal public service, retiring in 2002. Throughout his career, he was known for his professionalism, dedication and deep respect for his colleagues. He was a respected leader and a source of inspiration to all who had the privilege of working alongside him. Beyond his professional life, Raymond served on the board of directors of his condominium community. He took great pride in helping his neighbours feel safe and comfortable at home.

Today my thoughts are with his partner, Patrice, with whom he shared 38 years of his life, and with Sofia, for whom he was a true father figure.

[*Translation*]

To his family and to all those who mourn his passing, I offer my sincere condolences.

May his memory remain an inspiration to us all.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADIAN CADET PROGRAM

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “To learn—To serve—To advance” is the Air Cadet motto. I know it because I spent five years in the cadet program. As a kid who grew up below the poverty line, I know first-hand the importance of this program and its lifelong benefits. It gave me new opportunities that I never would have imagined. I learned about personal responsibility and how to iron my shirts, polish my shoes and tie a tie properly. I learned about teamwork and leadership, and more importantly, I made lifelong friends whom I still have today. Five of those friends served with the Canadian Armed Forces.

Today's cadets are tomorrow's recruits and leaders. National Defence's own study found that every dollar spent on cadets returns $40 to the Canadian economy. The Liberals say they are spending billions of dollars to rebuild our Canadian Armed Forces. At the same time, they have grounded the Snowbirds, and now they are threatening to cut funding to the cadets.

Thanks to Conservatives and parents, the Liberals were forced to restore funding to the cadets.

* * *

● (1415)

NOVA SCOTIA LIBERAL PARTY

Shannon Miedema (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, Nova Scotians made history. For the first time, our province's oldest political party, the only one with uninterrupted representation in the legislature since Confederation, elected a woman as its leader. I had the incredible privilege of witnessing this historic moment in person at the 2026 Nova Scotia Liberal Party leadership convention.

Over the past few months, two incredible women shared their visions and worked hard to earn the trust of Nova Scotians. I thank both candidates for their positive campaigns and commitment to our province. May this milestone show the next generation of women that there is a place for them at every level of leadership. As many of my role models have said, when you add women, you change politics for the better.

I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Becky Druhan, the next leader of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party.

* * *

IMMIGRATION

Costas Menegakis (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is one of the most diverse areas in Canada, built by generations of newcomers who came here seeking opportunity, security and a fair shot at success. For decades, Canada's immigration system worked because it was orderly, fair and tied to our capacity to welcome newcomers with available homes, health care and jobs.

Today, the Liberal government's reckless mismanagement has broken that consensus, straining public services in York region and leaving both newcomers and long-time residents struggling to get ahead. However, instead of listening to Canadians, the Liberal government's latest budget doubles down, paving the way for a massive, record-breaking total of 662,000 new permanent residents next year alone, pushing our housing, hospitals and infrastructure well past the breaking point.

Conservative will fix the broken system, bringing back a common-sense immigration policy that matches arrivals to housing and infrastructure, protects vulnerable newcomers and puts Canadians first.

* * *

CONGRATULATIONS

Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the story of Canada has been written by its people.

In 1972, Vasilik “Vasa” Karpouzis, came to this country at 16 years old. The very next day, she was working in a factory in Etobicoke, and she has not stopped since. Her dedication of course has been first and foremost to her family. She has raised, along with her husband Paul, also known as Pavlos, three outstanding children: George, Stephanie and Doris. When Doris was diagnosed with brain cancer in the early 2000s, her mother helped to ensure her full recovery. This past October, she was celebrated at Seneca Polytechnic, her employer for no less than 40 years, for her outstanding contributions on the job.

As I say, this country is the story of its citizens. We have an outstanding one in Vasilik Karpouzis, and, of course, Pavlos as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, an 87-year old man was recently found dead in the washroom of a Terrebonne hospital after going all night without seeing a doctor. The president of the Association des spécialistes en médecine d'urgence du Québec called the situation a “nightmare” and complained about the shortage of staff and resources.

How does the Prime Minister intend to take in a record number of permanent residents when our hospitals have no resources?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is well aware of our plan. The Conservatives should support our immigration levels plan, because it focuses on admitting permanent residents who live, work and already pay taxes in Canada, which helps relieve the pressure on our infrastructures.

At the same time, we have reserved 5,000 spaces for doctors and health care workers employed under the express entry system.

● (1420)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to increase permanent immigration to the highest level in our country's history. It would be 40% higher than the highest year Justin Trudeau was in power, and the vast majority of them are not already here, in addition to temporary residents.

We have a motion stating that, in order to ensure housing, wages, health care, jobs and other social services keep pace with the population growth, the House should reject the Prime Minister's plan to increase permanent immigration to a record level.

Will they support this—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is completely false.

The majority of the new permanent immigrants Canada will welcome next year are already settled here. These people live here. These people pay taxes here. These people are learning French here.

They are not actually newcomers. At the same time, as I have already said, we have a stable and predictable plan in place to manage immigration.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CBC reported that Stacey Ross, age 55, died waiting about 12 hours for care at a Winnipeg emergency department. A review into the death of Stacey Ross found that there was a shortage of treatment spaces the day she died.

Our emergency rooms are overflowing, six million Canadians do not have a doctor, and the Prime Minister wants to increase permanent immigration to record levels. Conservatives have a motion that says, "that in order to ensure housing, wages, health care, jobs and other social services keep pace with the population growth, the House reject the Prime Minister's plan to increase permanent immigration next year to the highest level on record."

Will the Prime Minister support our motion?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives' claim is true and they really care about health care and they really care about Canadians, why did they, last week, vote against the $5-billion investment in hospitals?

As I said, our plan is predictable. It is stable. It is controlling our immigration system. We work in parallel with provinces and territories, which, by the way, under the Constitution, have joint responsibility for immigration. These are "up to" numbers. The provinces and territories decide whether or not they need them. We are working with local communities to ensure that we meet their local needs.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, premiers keep saying the numbers are too high and they cannot care for all of the newcomers arriving.

Canadians deserve jobs, homes and health care. All are in short supply after a decade of Liberal record immigration. Six million Canadians have no doctor. Referrals to specialists take 68% longer since the Liberals have been in power. People are dying while on waiting lists. Now the Prime Minister wants a record number of permanent residents, the highest by far in Canadian history.

Will the Prime Minister stand up and tell us whether he will vote for our motion to get immigration under control or will he take accountability for his failures?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, immigration is under control. In fact, what we are doing is plotting a course very carefully with corporations, with provinces and territories, with small businesses and with rural and remote regions, like the one I live in, to make sure that, as we bring in new people, as we make people who are working in businesses day in and day out permanent, they are adding to the capacity to grow Canada strong. That is what a responsible government does.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned working with corporations, and there it is. This is not about helping immigrants. This is about supplying low-cost labour and higher rents for private equity landlords.

This is about profiting corporate insiders at the expense of the working class in Canada, just like they have done for a decade. Worse than that, the Prime Minister is not only overwhelming our system with massive and record-breaking immigration that we cannot absorb, but also refusing to stand in the House and be accountable for it.

Will he stop the arrogance, stand here right now and explain how we will absorb these record numbers?

● (1425)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember a time when the Conservative Party of Canada understood that we need to work with businesses, that we need to work with provinces and territories and that we, indeed, need to work with the difference in realities across the country.

I come from a rural and remote area. That is why we work with the Province of Ontario, and all provinces, to make sure that we get this balance right, so we are controlling our immigration numbers, bringing down the number of temporary residents and making sure we have the people in place. Just ask the Canadian Construction Association, which I met with last week, about one of their limiting factors. It is people.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we want to work with businesses, through slow taxes and less red tape, to create jobs. What we do not want is to work with corporate power brokers, like the $2.3 billion for the Prime Minister's buddy at Telesat, or to support oligopolies, in his terms, which would drive up prices, or mass Liberal immigration, which is designed to drive wages down and rent up.

We want an economy that stands up for the hard-working, law-abiding Canadians who have been falling behind for a decade.

Why does the Prime Minister not want to stand with those people as well?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the news is out for tradespeople. In fact, we have now started the process to make sure that every skilled tradesperson who gets their Red Seal gets their $5,000 completion bonus. Tomorrow, I will be standing with Canada's Building Trades Unions to make that announcement and make sure that all tradespeople who have received the Red Seal, or will receive the Red Seal, are going to get that bonus. That is what it looks like to stand with working people, to make sure that we are there as people are getting the training, participating in the workforce and building Canada strong. The Conservative Party has, I think, forgotten how to build up a strong country.

[*Translation*]

LABOUR

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are continuing their strong-arm tactics with Bill C-39. After forcing the Legislative Committee on Bill C-39 to sit until midnight all weekend so that they could weaken environmental laws and undermine indigenous rights, today the Liberals are slashing workers' rights. They are going to restrict the right to strike, a measure that has been criticized by unions and that does not exist anywhere else in the G7.

The Liberals are calling this "building Canada strong", but if their strong Canada is built on the backs of workers, are they surprised that Quebeckers are not interested?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is built on collective agreements that were successfully negotiated at the bargaining table. Bill C-39 is specifically designed to help and support the parties involved in labour disputes prevent strikes and lockouts and to ensure that we have lasting collective agreements and good working conditions in all the key sectors of the Canadian economy.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the government claimed to be tackling climate change at COP31, here is what the government was doing back home with Bill C-39.

The government voted against amendments that would have protected endangered species. It voted against amendments that would have stopped oil projects in marine protected areas. It voted against amendments that would have ensured that environmental impact assessments applied to pipelines and nuclear projects.

With governments like Canada's, is it really any wonder that COP31 was a failure?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc Québécois is playing fast and loose with the truth about what is in Bill C-39.

We will, of course, maintain all of Canada's levels and standards, which are among the highest in the world. We will continue to uphold our environmental standards while creating opportunities, including in energy and renewable technology in Canada, so we can make sure our young people and workers have job opportunities.

* * *

JUSTICE

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-39 already gives this government the power to override environmental laws and fast-track environmental assessments. Now, by refusing to include a sunset clause, the Liberals are also ensuring that every future government will be able to do the same.

We tabled an amendment demanding that the act be subject to a vote every five years. The Liberals rejected it. They want to abuse their power today and forever. They want to turn the exception into the rule.

Why reject something as reasonable as a sunset clause?

● (1430)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois seems surprised to learn that we do not agree with its views on the economy and on what building a strong Canada means. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Here in the House, we pass laws that do not expire. We pass laws that we believe will provide job opportunities for our young people and create exciting projects, like renewable energy projects in Quebec.

The Bloc Québécois should support this wholeheartedly.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are shocked by the immigration levels proposed in the budget. The Prime Minister wants 650,000 new permanent residents, plus hundreds of thousands of new temporary residents, but six million Canadians do not have a family doctor, and there are not enough hospital beds. New housing starts are less than half of what the Prime Minister promised, and youth unemployment is almost 14%.

At a time when Canada is short on homes, doctors and jobs, why do Liberals want record immigration?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as was reported by my colleagues, the Minister of Jobs and Families and the Minister of Immigration, most of the people who we are proposing to admit as permanent residents this year are already in Canada, are already practising their professions and are already paying taxes. Their children are already enrolled in school.

[*Translation*]

Those who are in Quebec are learning French.

[*English*]

What we do not understand is why these Conservatives, who know much better than what they are spouting off here in Parliament, are taking liberties—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Oshawa.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with last year's special measure, the Prime Minister is on track to grant up to 660,000 new permanent residents, plus hundreds of thousands of temporary residents. Only 70,000 of those are for Hong Kong and Ukrainian applicants, already in Canada, who were promised status years ago, and another 5,000 are reserved for licensed physicians.

With Canadians already facing long wait times for essential medical care, exactly which CT scan wait-list does the Prime Minister expect them to join?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our growth in this country is the lowest it has been in over 100 years. That is because, over the last year, we have taken actions to control the level of immigration, but people who are working and paying taxes in this country deserve an opportunity to continue to work and contribute to Canada. Recent immigrant numbers only make up about 3% of the total population.

Do they really believe that those are the people clogging up our hospitals? No, they are the ones working in our hospitals.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not need hundreds of thousands of new permanent residents, plus hundreds of thousands of new temporary residents next year, to keep his promise to only 70,000 people already living here. He is doing it because corporate lobbyists want cheap labour. That holds down wages for newcomers and long-time residents alike. Every one of them needs health care. Across Ontario right now, emergency rooms are overflowing.

Where are these 585,000 new permanent residents coming from, and in which overcrowded emergency room are they going to have to wait?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Conservatives do not understand, and what they like to try to miscommunicate to the public, is that these levels are new people entering the country. They are not. These are people who are working hard. They are the very PSWs and nurses who are working in our hospitals. It is important that we retain them, keep them in Canada, so they can continue to contribute to our country.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister said that there are 660,000 permanent resident spots for people who are already here, but there are only about 70,000 Hong Kong and Ukrainian applicants already in Canada who were promised status, and only about 5,000 spots for licensed physicians, so 660,000 minus 75,000 equals 585,000, or a city about the size of Quebec City.

Who exactly are those 585,000 additional permanent resident spots going to, and what overcrowded emergency room should they go to for care?

● (1435)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition continues to be confused about the immigration levels and the challenges with health care and housing. I will just say that, on the housing side of things, we are seeing average rents down for 25 months in a row. We have focused on building rental housing across Canada, and it is working. We are seeing unprecedented levels of construction with rental housing, and that is bringing the rents down. We are also making it possible for new Canadians and first-time homebuyers to buy homes more affordably with the GST break. These are actions that are getting people into housing. We are going to continue and scale that up.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to explain what is going on here. The Prime Minister does not want Canadians to do the real math on what hundreds of thousands of new permanent residents and hundreds of thousands of new temporary residents mean for Canadian health care, housing and jobs. It is why they are cooking the books and hiding data, and they are doing this because their corporate lobbyist friends want cheap labour, which holds down wages for Canadians and newcomers alike.

Who wrote this immigration plan, the families waiting for a doctor or the lobbyists wanting cheap labour?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our plan is not about increasing arrivals, as the other side keeps indicating. It is about retaining those same people who are in the country, largely caring for our people. If someone goes to an ER across this country, chances are they are going to get a nurse taking care of them. They are going to get a personal support worker taking care of them, an ER doctor who is an immigrant or a specialist who is an immigrant.

Canada's population has grown at the slowest rate since World War I. Under the Conservatives, it grew by twice that rate, so—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by burying a record figure of 654,000 new permanent residents in the annexes to his budget, the Prime Minister is worsening the health services emergency affecting every region of Quebec.

While nearly 80% of newcomers settle in Montreal and overwhelm our hospitals, the Canadian Institute for Health Information confirms that rural and remote areas have no more than 1.1 family doctors left per 1,000 residents.

Why are the federal Liberal members from Quebec abandoning our regions by supporting this Prime Minister's plan?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, where should I begin?

First, they should be familiar with the 1991 Canada-Quebec accord, which established that Quebec sets its own immigration levels.

Second, if they travel around the regions of Quebec, they should be hearing the same thing that we are hearing: There are severe labour shortages all over Quebec. The Commission de la construction du Québec expects that 80,000 new workers will be needed over the next five years, because we are building Quebec.

I have a question for him: Since the measures he mentioned affect people who are already living in Quebec, who does he think should be sent home? Is it the personal support worker in Laval? Is it the worker or welder in Saguenay? Who?

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will respond to my colleague by saying that we agree with controlled economic immigration. However, this government's loss of control over the past 11 years is the reason for the problems currently plaguing Quebec's health care system. People do not have a family doctor because uncontrolled immigration created a problem.

Our motion, which will be debated tomorrow, states that in order to ensure that housing, wages, health care, jobs and other social services keep pace with the population growth, the House should reject the Prime Minister's plan to increase permanent immigration next year to the highest levels in history.

Will the Prime Minister give his members, particularly those from Quebec, a free vote on this motion tomorrow?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to control, I would like to remind the member of a few numbers.

The number of temporary foreign workers has been cut by 57%, asylum seekers by 68% and foreign students by 71% in order to reduce Canada's temporary population.

The measures he is referring to apply to people who are already living in Canada with their temporary status hanging over their heads like the sword of Damocles. We want to give these people the chance to help build Canada in the long term.

I would once again remind him that it might be time for him to open his history books and take a look at the Canada-Quebec accord, which gives Quebec full power over its immigration thresholds.

* * *

PENSIONS

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, representatives of retirees were on the Hill today.

The Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, the Association québécoise des retraités des secteurs public et parapublic, the Association des retraitées et retraités de l'éducation et des autres services publics du Québec, the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées, and the Organisation des retraités des Métallos stood united in calling on the government to pass the Bloc Québécois's Bill C-261 to increase OAS benefits for seniors aged 65 to 74.

They urged the Liberals to put an end to the two categories of seniors that they created. These organizations all agree that all seniors deserve equal support to address the rising cost of living. They all want the government to end this age-based discrimination.

Will the government finally listen to seniors and pass this Bloc Québécois bill?

● (1440)

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are living longer and our retirement income system is facing increasing pressure. Every month, about 7.9 million Canadians receive OAS and the GIS, which provides financial support for low-income seniors.

Claude DeBellefeuille (Vallée-du-Haut-Saint-Laurent, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all seniors are facing the same steep rise in the cost of living: rising grocery bills, rising rent, rising municipal taxes, rising gas prices, rising transport costs, and the list goes on. However, the federal government has abandoned seniors aged 65 to 74.

The government says it does not have money to help them, but they can see that it can scrounge up $40 billion for a pipeline in western Canada.

Should the government not help seniors instead of oil companies?

Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the most robust retirement systems in the world.

[*English*]

There is a higher OAS rate for adults age 75 and older, and this is a targeted, evidence-based measure. It recognizes and responds to the distinct needs of older adults. Through benefits like the guaranteed income supplement, the earnings exemption and greater contributions for seniors, we are helping older people manage periods of heightened financial vulnerability with dignity.

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THE BUDGET

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from one of Canada's most reputable think tanks, the C.D. Howe Institute, Don Drummond and Bill Robson wrote this about the budget:

> We give the federal budget a 'D'

They also said:

> Canadians needed a bold change of direction. The 2026 federal budget does not deliver. From format and timing, through populist gimmicks instead of fundamental reforms of spending, revenues and fiscal discipline, to failures of transparency, it falls badly short.

Would the government comment?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservative Party, despite their cherry-picking a quote or an article.

Let us look at the economic fundamentals. We have the best net debt-to-GDP in the G7 and one of the fastest-growing economies in the G7. Exports to non-U.S. markets are up 56% since 2024, and we are ranked number one in the G7 for overall tax competitiveness.

On this side of the House, we have a plan to build a strong economy for all Canadians.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the economic fundamentals for this country's young people. The share of unemployed young men aged 20 to 24 has jumped to 27%, the highest level since 1983. For women, it is even worse. It is 28%, the highest level since at least 1976.

Instead of setting up a parallel government in the billions of dollars over the next five years, why did the budget not focus on young people and their unemployment levels in this country?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague. In fact, he is in the right role as finance critic for the Conservative Party.

He neglects an important point, which he knows very well, and that is that youth unemployment is primarily driven by hesitation in the business environment that we are faced with. When firms see an environment with a tariff war that has been imposed on us, there is a hesitation when it comes to hiring.

That is why we are behind young people with a skills training agenda for 100,000 jobs in the upcoming years, with a massive investment by this government to ensure that that agenda unfolds appropriately. Conservatives never mention—

● (1445)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thornhill.

* * *

HOUSING

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the housing minister got reamed out by the Parliamentary Budget Officer for delivering on less than half of the 500,000 homes he promised. Now he claims that he never had responsibility for it in the first place and could not do anything about it.

If the housing minister in Canada cannot build homes in Canada, then what does he do here?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a 10-year goal for building housing across Canada. We are in uncertain times. The opposition never, ever accepts the fact that we have a trade war, that we have unjustified and illegal tariffs from the United States or that we have wars overseas. All of these things impact the housing market. The housing market builds 96% of the housing in Canada. The members opposite could take a lesson from the building industry and realize that we are acting, cutting taxes and red—

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauce.

* * *

FINANCE

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, the banker is worse than the drama teacher. That is quite an achievement; it surely takes the cake. He is telling us to expect a record deficit of $765 billion in debt over the next five years and a generational debt that has been charged straight to our children's and grandchildren's credit cards.

At a time when families are having to tighten their belts, why is the Prime Minister refusing to do the same with Canadians' money?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my colleague takes a close look at the budget, as well as the reaction to it here at home and abroad, he will see that Canada has the strongest fiscal position in the G7. That gives us the capacity to invest, because a confident country invests in its future, but it also invests in affordability.

My colleague mentioned tightening belts. I can only imagine how much tighter Canadians' belts would be if the Conservatives were in government, given that they voted against tax cuts, against the Canada child benefit, against the Canadian dental care plan and against the national school food program.

Those are all measures that directly help their constituents and ours.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we definitely would not send $560 million to the Amazon, that is for sure.

The Prime Minister is splitting the expenses across three credit cards to make them seem smaller, but that does not change the facts. He is borrowing money, and Canadians are the ones who will be on the hook. The Liberal government's top priority should have been to save money and help families save on gas, groceries and rent.

When will the Prime Minister stop making Canadians pay the price for his irresponsibility? When will he stop spending money that we do not have?

Hon. Joël Lightbound (Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement and Quebec Lieutenant, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we partly agree on the importance of governments being there to ensure affordability and to help people, especially considering what Quebeckers and Canadians are going through these days.

I just want to note that the member for Beauce voted against having 21,515 children in his own riding receive more than $86 million through the Canada child benefit. That is an average of $3,500 per child. That is direct assistance to families, and that is not even counting the 32,630 Canada dental care plan recipients he might meet while touring the villages and towns in his riding.

Those are all measures that he voted against.

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a mom whose son spent four years in cadets, I know first-hand what this program gives to our young people. It builds discipline, confidence, lifelong friendships and a sense of service that stays with them. I want to give a shout-out to the 27 Air Cadet Squadron, my local cadet program. Participation is up 59% in three years, and families in London West and across the country want to know that their kids can keep working, training and growing together.

Can the Minister of National Defence tell the House what the government is doing to keep our cadet programs strong?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have heard the concerns raised by cadets, junior Canadian Rangers, their families and communities across Canada. We remain committed to the program's continued growth and success.

The member is right. Participation has increased by 59% over the past three years, reflecting the strong value these programs provide to young Canadians. In response to this growth, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have now reviewed funding allocations and confirmed additional funding to support planned activities for the remainder of this fiscal year. Ensuring that these programs have the resources they need while maintaining a core mandate of Canada's safety and security remains a priority.

● (1450)

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals do not get any credit for cutting a youth program and then putting back its funding. The Liberals are cutting the military's operational budget. Part-time reservists are seeing their training reduced, and full-time reservists are being laid off. Our operational readiness is being undermined.

The Liberals are famous for their creative accounting, but these budget cuts are real. The Prime Minister's 10% cut of the defence operating budget is costing our military even more than Trudeau's three-year, $2.7-billion cut. The amount needed to restore reserve programs is pennies compared to the $560 million the government is wasting on the Brazilian rainforest.

Why will the Liberals not restore funding for our reserves?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a party that funded 1% of GDP for our defence. It is unbelievable.

We will provide an additional $250 million over five years to expand Canada's skills training through the CAF, $27 million of which have recently gone to the cadets. All parliamentarians, including those who are screaming, have an opportunity to demonstrate their support for the cadet program by supporting supplementary estimates (B), which includes funding to help sustain program activities and support continued participation.

We are committed to providing young Canadians with the opportunities, the skills and the experience of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals claim they support our armed forces while cutting the very programs that invest in their future. Only Liberals have considered it a success to cut youth programs. Thanks to parents and Conservatives, the defence minister was forced to back down on the Liberals' cuts to our cadet and junior ranger programs. These prime ministerial cuts to the military's operational budget are weakening the armed forces' readiness by reducing training days at our armouries and laying off full-time reservists, forcing them to apply for EI.

Will the defence minister reverse his misguided decisions and ensure that all reserve units right across Canada are fully funded?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they are the 1% club. Here they go.

They are going to have an opportunity very soon. The member can stand up and pull his caucus together, and maybe they will actually support supplementary estimates (B), which they refused to do last year. They should do it this year, so we can make sure the funding that he calls for is actually present for our cadets, for our reservists, for our regular members, for the equipment, for rebuilding 33 bases and so much more.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two boys walked into a cadet hall in Langford, B.C., shy and unsure. A few years later, they stood at attention at an annual ceremonial review as confident young adults with pride on their faces. Their parents watched them receive promotions. Those boys were my sons. On the parade square, cadets represent the best of who we are as Canadians. Thanks to pressure from Conservatives and parents across Canada, the minister just reinstated cadet training.

How much extra beyond what was already budgeted is being spent, why has the cost per cadet now jumped significantly, and when will he release a full report on his mismanagement of the cadet program?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): I am not sure which way he wants it, Mr. Speaker. I would say congratulations to his sons for their service. They are a great role model for so many thousands of Canadians.

Enrolment is up 59%. That is a good thing. There is an 83% increase in young female cadets. That is a positive thing. The member has an opportunity. He should stand up and tell his constituents that when it comes time to vote for the money, he will be there.

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a military can have state-of-the-art tanks, ships and planes. However, without well-trained soldiers, sailors and aviators, it will be ineffective on operations. Given that our reserve forces are essential for recruiting into the regular forces and considering the Liberal government left $1.3 billion in defence funding unspent last year according to its own public accounts, will the minister, as he did for the cadets, reverse course and fully fund all cancelled reserve training and class B contracts for the remainder of the fiscal year?

● (1455)

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the member as well, whom I have known for some time, will he stand up in the House and vote for the supplementary estimates (B)? Stand up, tell your constituents that you will support over 2% of GDP for NATO spending. Mr. Speaker, have him do it.

The Speaker: That is through the Chair, obviously.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière.

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 11, young cadets across the country turned out to honour those who served and died to protect our freedom. Those cadets included 775 Thetford Mines Kiwanis squadron, 544 Lotbinière squadron, 1937 Lac-Mégantic Cadet Corps and 940 Plessisville Army Cadet Corps. These young people are learning the meaning of respect, discipline and community service.

As their reward, the Liberals considered suspending activities essential to their training. Following pressure from parents, cadets and Conservative members, the minister reversed his decision.

What was the reason for disappointing all of Canada's young cadets for so long?

Hon. David McGuinty (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member will get his chance to rise in the House next week and vote in favour of the funding. He is talking out of both sides of his mouth. That keeps happening on the other side of the House. All parliamentarians will have a chance to support the cadet program by supporting the supplementary estimates. His chance is coming.

Will he take it?

* * *

[*English*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the industry minister loves to selectively quote what I had to say about her so-called jobs guarantee in the Stellantis contract, so let me be very clear. It is not worth the paper it is written on, because if it were, the industry minister would have sued almost a year ago when she served a notice of default because it violated her so-called jobs guarantee.

I am going to give her a chance right now. If she is so confident in her jobs guarantee that it is going to protect the jobs of those Stellantis workers, if she does not get every single one of those jobs back in Brampton as a result of her jobs guarantee, will she resign?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really feel my colleague is very much on the defensive now. The reality is, at this point, that he never mentions the impact of American tariffs on auto workers. He never links what is happening with the Trump tariffs and Stellantis. Basically, he cannot defend or pretend to defend an industry when he cannot even acknowledge its biggest threat.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will take that as a no, she is not that confident in her so-called jobs guarantee and she will not resign when she does not get any of the jobs back.

What is interesting, which she did not mention, is that in fact Stellantis has now said the loud thing outside: that it is the industrial carbon tax that has cost it $1 billion and that is why it is closing the Stellantis plant.

The minister will not resign because she cannot keep the jobs guarantee. Will she at least do something to keep those jobs? Will she stand up right now and say that she is cancelling the industrial carbon tax to save the jobs of those Stellantis workers in Brampton, yes or no?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has done it again and again. He is never able to mention the American tariffs. Why is he so scared? Is he supporting President Trump and his tariffs against our automakers, our auto workers? Why is he not seeing what is obvious to all Canadians across this country: 25% tariffs against automakers and auto workers, including Stellantis?

We will make sure we put pressure on Stellantis. Of course, if it does not protect the jobs, we will get our money back.

* * *

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in another stunning example of the Prime Minister's using the levers and powers of his office to splash hard-earned tax dollars at well-connected Liberal insiders and family members, last week, the carbon credit company of the artificial intelligence minister's brother, Jordan Solomon, got $2.2 million on the same day the Prime Minister committed to buy credits for 19 projects. We cannot make this stuff up. The Liberals are not even hiding any more the amount of self-dealing that is going on. We have gone from art dealing to self-dealing.

Why are hard-earned tax dollars being used to grease the palms of well-connected Liberal insiders and family members with the Prime Minister's carbon credit schemes?

● (1500)

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, Ecostrat is a long-standing delivery partner of NRCan. NRCan has been working with Ecostrat since 2018. We continue to work with it to implement the specific recommendations of the industry task force.

The project was assessed by the department officials according to terms and conditions of the forest innovation program. It was appropriately disbursed.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that sounded convincing, did it not?

The Prime Minister is aligning public policy, using hard-earned Canadian tax dollars, to limit private risk. The carbon credit scheme the Prime Minister is pushing will cost businesses, and eventually Canadian families, billions of dollars more while raising the value of companies and funds that well-connected Liberal friends, insiders and family members own. Since their manufactured majority, the level of self-dealing for Liberal friends and insiders has exploded like it is on steroids.

Why is this self-dealing happening, while the people the Prime Minister is governing over are suffering?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a delivery partner NRCan has been working with since 2018. This was a specific recommendation of the forest industry task force, a task force that represented all stakeholders. This is what we did in response to that task force. This is how we are going to reform our forest products industry.

We hope they will vote for the $6.5 billion we have targeted to support the forestry industry.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the international Francophonie is an important asset for Canada, both in supporting francophone communities here at home and in advancing our interests abroad. With 93 member states and governments internationally and more than 320 million French speakers worldwide, the Francophonie provides Canada with a unique sphere of influence.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell us about the efforts our government is making to strengthen Canada's role within the international Francophonie?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the French language lies at the heart of our identity and our francophone communities.

Last week, we attended the Francophonie summit in Cambodia, where we celebrated our francophone communities, Quebeckers, Acadians and Franco-Canadians.

In 2028, Canada will host the Francophonie summit. We are masters in our own home.

* * *

[*English*]

HOUSING

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister promised to double homebuilding to 500,000 homes a year, but the latest numbers tell a different story. Home sales are down 10.6%, residential homebuilding permits are down 5.8% and housing starts are down 3%. The government's own housing agency projects that housing starts will drop to just 200,000 units. Under the Liberal government, Canada is turning into a generation of renters.

Is the Liberal Prime Minister ever going to deliver the homes he promised, or does he stand by his appointed housing chief's statement that the dream of home ownership is overglorified and regressive?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there are challenges to the housing market across Canada. Housing starts are down from last year being in the top five of all time. This year we have seen increases in a number of different cities, from Chilliwack, up 32%; to Gatineau, up 24%; Winnipeg, up 23%; and St. John's, up 36%, just as examples. Our focus, first and foremost, is on making sure vulnerable Canadians are housed. That is why we have an unprecedented commitment to ending homelessness and tripling non-market housing. We are focused on building the housing market strong going forward.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nevertheless, housing affordability continues to decline in Canada. Ratehub's October report shows that housing affordability has gotten worse in every major market in the country. That means that federal housing spending is up, affordability is down and the government, by the minister's own admission, is far behind its target of doubling housing to 500,000 homes a year, which he conveniently now omits and refuses to reaffirm.

If his strategy is so good, why is housing affordability so bad today and was so much better in the past?

● (1505)

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the Conservatives seem to be ignoring the fact that rents are down for 25 months in a row. Home prices are down an average of roughly 20% across the country. Prices are down, and rents are down. That means housing is getting more affordable in Canada.

We have to keep building housing as aggressively as we can. We know that is our goal. We are focused on vulnerable Canadians first and foremost. The other side of the House could actually support our initiatives on affordable housing if it actually cared about it.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. Young Canadians do not want to be a generation of permanent renters. They want to own a home. However, we have seen this movie before. It is like terrible rerun after terrible rerun. Let me just run through it: the national housing strategy, the reaching home strategy, the Canada housing benefit, the rapid housing initiative, the affordable housing fund, the apartment construction loan program, the affordable housing innovation fund, the housing accelerator fund, Canada builds, and now Build Canada Homes.

How should we believe anything will be any different?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly the member opposite has taken the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. It is too much.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Gregor Robertson: Mr. Speaker, the members opposite indeed have voted against all of these initiatives that are delivering housing. They have no plan for housing. They do not care about housing. They do not care about affordable housing. That is very clear in terms of their budget votes and votes against those initiatives, which are delivering: rents down for 25 months in a row and savings for first-time homebuyers right across Canada.

* * *

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Inuit children deserve access to the services they need, closer to home and grounded in the realities of their communities.

Can the Minister of Indigenous Services update the House on how a recent announcement will put Inuit in charge of delivering those services and give families the certainty that support will be there when they need it?

Hon. Mandy Gull-Masty (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was so proud to announce the co-developed national framework pirutsiagutiit, the Inuit-led program that will replace the Inuit child first initiative. This budget proposes $575 million over five years to put the national framework into action and supports ITK and the four Inuit treaty partners and organizations that will take on the delivery of this essential program. It will not only help ensure Inuit children and families can access the supports, but they will receive these supports led by Inuit people for Inuit people.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ruth lives in Yellowknife. Her bill to top up her heating oil tank with 659 litres of heating oil cost $1,771. That will last her family about two weeks in winter. In March, the Prime Minister said, “Affordability is the best it has been in over a decade.” Well, heating oil has gone from 98¢ a litre 10 years ago to $2.30 a litre today.

Does the Prime Minister think spending almost $1,000 a week to stay warm in Northwest Territories is affordable?

Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the most important investments for the Northwest Territories was made in budget 2026, which was the investment of over $3 billion for the Mackenzie Valley highway that will connect people, unlock opportunities and create good-paying jobs. The government is proud to support the Northwest Territories, and I encourage the colleagues opposite to vote in favour of it.

* * *

LABOUR

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal attack on collective bargaining is now threatening Canada's international trade commitments. European unions warn that Bill C-39 could violate CETA, our trade agreement with Europe. The European Federation of Public Service Unions says the conditions under which CETA was signed are "fundamentally being altered" and workers' rights are "weakened". This is not what Canada promised Europe.

Why are the Liberals risking our trade relationships to strip Canadian workers of their rights, and will they withdraw these dangerous provisions from Bill C-39?

● (1510)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, Bill C-39 would strengthen Canada's federal labour framework in three important ways. First, it sets the table for stronger collective bargaining, earlier negotiations, better mediation and more opportunities to reach agreements earlier. Second, it would be greater certainty and transparency for unions and employers. It would put clear safeguards around government intervention that would protect the right to strike. Third, it would strengthen workers' protections, wage protections and first collective agreements protected when contracts change hands. This means better tools for workers and their employers.

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 responses to 13 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, entitled "Navigating Border Challenges and Customs Clearance Practices in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Maritime Corridor".

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

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, entitled "Canada's Operational Capability to Manage the Removal of Foreign Nationals with Criminal Records".

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

[*English*]

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have a supplementary opinion for both of those studies.

First, on Canada's ability to remove foreign nationals with a criminal record, I would like to begin by thanking all the witnesses who appeared before committee for their valuable testimony.

The committee heard that approximately 33,000 individuals remain subject to outstanding warrants, while serious gaps in security screening and deportation enforcement continue to raise concerns about public safety. The report falls short of addressing the legislative loopholes and enforcement failures that allow these problems to persist.

Administrative improvements alone are not enough. That is why Conservatives call for stronger security screening, proactive enforcement of outstanding deportation orders and legislative reforms to ensure immigration consequences are never used to justify reduced criminal sentences. The safety and security of Canadians must always come first.

For the second study, the role of the CBSA in the H2O highway corridor and port clearance practices, our supplementary opinion is also being tabled.

The committee heard serious concerns about gaps in border security, organized crime and inadequate frontline enforcement along the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence maritime corridor. Despite promising 1,000 new border officers, at the time, the Minister of Public Safety could not identify officers deployed to the front lines when questioned in committee, and attrition due to a toxic workplace culture continues to be a problem.

The Liberals continue to ignore the enforcement failures and legislative weakness that put Canadian communities at risk. Instead of strengthening our justice system, the Liberals have weakened penalties for serious drug and firearms offences, voted against tougher sentences for repeat vehicle theft and failed to address critical security gaps at our ports.

Securing our borders takes more than funding announcements and empty promises. That is why Conservatives are calling for more frontline officers, stronger port security, better information sharing and tougher penalties for organized criminals.

● (1515)

HEALTH

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Health, entitled "A Better Match: Aligning Immigration Policy, Health Care Capacity and Pathways for Internationally Educated Health Professionals".

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

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have a supplementary report. I would like to thank all of the witnesses who shed light on more issues in our health care that we know need to be fixed immediately.

Our Conservative members welcome much of the health committee's report, particularly its recognition that immigration policy must be better aligned with health care capacity and that unnecessary barriers prevent qualified, internationally trained professionals from practising in Canada. Conservatives have known for years that unchecked immigration would strain our health care system. It is encouraging to see what we already knew now being reflected in this report, but we believe the report does not go far enough. We need more medical training and resident opportunities, especially for Canadians who studied medicine abroad and want to return home. Currently, very few of our IEHPs see a place for themselves in Canada due, in part, to administrative hurdles and failures of accommodation.

We also want to review the foreign-sponsored medical training programs to ensure they do not limit opportunities for Canadian doctors. At present, a portion of training capacity is dedicated to foreign students who have no intention of remaining in Canada. Working with the provinces, we should establish consistent, merit-based competency assessments that maintain high standards while removing unnecessary barriers. This would help ensure Canadians can draw on the expertise of qualified medical professionals in a more timely fashion.

Finally, we believe taxpayers deserve greater transparency and accountability for federal supplementary health benefits provided to unsuccessful asylum claimants. Our priorities are simple: train more Canadian doctors, bring qualified professionals home, ensure responsible spending and get Canadians the timely health care they deserve.

[*Translation*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Alexis Deschênes (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine—Listuguj, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and great pleasure to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled "Toward the opening of new softshell clam fishing sites in the Gulf of St. Lawrence". In this report, the committee recommends opening new softshell clam fishing sites in eastern Quebec, in response to the strong public demand for this.

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

* * *

[*English*]

COMPETITION ACT

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-297, An Act to amend the Competition Act (automated personalized pricing).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to protect Canadians from the exploitative and predatory practice of surveillance pricing. For generations, prices changed because of supply and demand, inventory production costs or promotions. Now, powerful technology companies are building a marketplace where the price can change because of what they know about people, their income, spending habits, browsing history, location and digital behaviour. As the leader of the NDP, Avi Lewis, said, "it's downright creepy." It has become another tool for corporate gouging, plain and simple. This bill establishes a simple principle: Someone's personal data should not become a licence to charge them more.

We are living through an era of extraordinary technological concentration that has profound democratic implications. A handful of technology companies control enormous amounts of data, infrastructure and artificial intelligence. They have built business models around watching, predicting and influencing consumer behaviour. Surveillance pricing takes that model one step further. The algorithm watches people, profiles them and then sets its price. Two Canadians can look at the same product at the same time and receive different prices because an automated system has calculated what each is willing and able to pay. That is not innovation and the public will not accept it. It is technology being used to tilt the marketplace against the consumer.

This legislation will effectively ban surveillance pricing by making it reviewable under the Competition Act when it results in materially different prices without fair disclosure. Canadians believe strongly in fairness and consumer rights. The price of a product should not depend on how much a corporation knows about consumers from snooping in their data. As AI becomes more powerful, democratic governments must ensure that technology serves the public interest, not powerful technology oligarchies.

I urge all members of the House to stand on the side of everyday Canadians by supporting this legislation.

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

* * *

● (1520)

INSTRUCTION TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC) moved:

> That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights that, during its consideration of Bill C-41, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying) and to make related amendments to other Acts, the committee be granted the power to divide the bill into two pieces of legislation:
>
> (a) Bill C-41A, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying) and the Criminal Code, containing subclause 4(2) and clauses 9, 10 and 14; and
>
> (b) Bill C-41B, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (advance requests for medical assistance in dying) and to make related amendments to other Acts, containing the remaining provisions of Bill C-41.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Elgin—St. Thomas—London South. Today, I am speaking in support of my motion to do something that the government should have done on its own, which is divide Bill C-41, a bill that would do two very distinct things, into two separate pieces of legislation.

Bill C-41 is the Liberal government's latest medical assistance in dying legislation, and it would do two very distinct things. One is it would stop the forthcoming expansion of MAID for people with only a mental illness as a sole underlying condition. The second is that it would introduce a new expansion to MAID, which is the addition of advance requests for people who cannot contemporaneously consent to receiving MAID. As we heard in the second reading debate until the Liberal government cut off debate, there is a range of perspectives and opinions. The justice minister himself has said that this is a complex and personal issue and that people have a great deal of conviction on both sides of it. That is why, when we are dealing with a matter of life and death, we should never rush forward without doing our proper duty as parliamentarians, which is to very rigorously scrutinize, debate and study legislation.

To wind back a bit as to how we got here, the Liberal government previously put in the expansion of MAID for people with mental illness with a sunset clause, a coming-into-force date originally set for 2023. The rationalization for this was that it would give time for provinces and the health care system to get ready. The more time went on, the more apparent it became that readiness could not exist for something that was fundamentally wrong. That deadline was extended twice and, as it stands right now, mental illness will be a criterion for MAID as of March of next year. There is an urgency to dealing with the mental illness expansion, given that Parliament has now understood that this expansion should not take place.

I was proud to serve on the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, in which Liberal and Conservative members were able to come together on this very complicated issue and support a single recommendation, which was that this expansion not proceed. That was a very important display of unanimity on this issue. The fact that Liberal and Conservative members shared that belief was something we thought the government would respond to without partisanship and politics. We had expected the government to simply support the bill from my colleague from Cloverdale—Langley City, Bill C-218, which would have very simply and neatly stopped the mental health expansion.

Instead, the Liberals rejected that bill. With the exception of two members, they voted as a bloc against this piece of legislation and promised new legislation, which ended up becoming Bill C-41. This is important, because what the government and Liberal members have done is to say that because there is this looming deadline on the mental health expansion, we must pass the entirety of Bill C-41 right now. That is true only because of the way the Liberal government cynically politicized this issue instead of dealing with the mental health expansion on its own and dealing with advance requests on their own.

All of us on the Conservative benches, and I say this representing a party that I am quite proud has free votes on matters of conscience, unlike the Liberal Party, have differing opinions on various aspects of MAID, but all of us were united in stopping the mental health expansion. We committed publicly and privately to the Liberal government that we would pass a bill to stop the mental health expansion immediately. We would pass it at all stages, send it on to the Senate and eliminate the urgency of that ticking clock for the March deadline, so that we could deal properly and thoughtfully with advance requests.

The justice minister has said repeatedly that he will not do that, but in doing so, he is taking away the right of individual Liberal members who feel that there would be a value in splitting this bill to have their say.

I am moving this motion to give all members of the House, including Liberal members, the opportunity to vote on whether they believe the bill should be split into two parts. This motion will instruct the justice committee, on which I sit and in which, in a matter of minutes, the discussion of Bill C-41 will once again come up, to consider splitting the bill into these two parts, so we can deal with stopping the mental health expansion on its own and then have not a steamrolled debate but a proper study and scrutiny of advance requests.

● (1525)

At committee we have already heard a range of perspectives. The number of people asking for the bill to be split is growing, and it is coming from people on both sides of the issue.

The problem, when we have a bill that does two very distinct things, is that when people vote, it is not even clear to Canadians precisely what their member of Parliament was voting on. There were members in the House who voted for Bill C-41 despite opposing advance requests, because they felt so strongly about stopping the mental health expansion. There are members on the other side of this as well, who may oppose stopping the mental health expansion but support advance requests.

It would be very important for members of Parliament to have a clear question, in this case a clear pair of questions, so that members could freely vote their conscience on these two distinct issues and clearly vote the will of their constituents, and also so that Canadians know precisely what was at issue in the vote.

Now, many organizations have come forward and said they support the approach that I am putting forward in this motion. Inclusion Canada, which represents people with disabilities in this country, has publicly called on the government to remove advance requests from Bill C-41 and to not tie that aspect of the bill with the three clauses, and that is all we are dealing with, three clauses in a 12-page bill, that deal with stopping the mental health expansion. As Inclusion Canada CEO Krista Carr said, “Support for that decision must not be tied to accepting advance requests.”

My Bloc Québécois colleague from Montcalm and I disagree on a number of aspects of MAID, but he has been very clear in his advocacy, saying:

> The bill before us today is really two bills in one.... Later, at third reading, we can discuss whether it is appropriate to split the vote or even split the bill. However, for now, it seems to me that it would have been wise for everyone to agree to hold separate votes at second reading. The reason is that mental illness raises a distinct set of issues, while advance requests raise a different set of issues altogether. In my opinion, there should have been two separate bills.

I agree with my Bloc colleague from Montcalm. My motion will achieve precisely that.

Even from the Liberals, there has been support for this approach. The Liberal member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, who did a very good job as the co-chair on the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying and was a physician by training before becoming a parliamentarian, has publicly called for the bill to be split into two as well. The member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River says that he would have preferred to see the votes on mental illness and advance requests separated.

I do not know where my colleagues from the NDP and the Greens stand on this question, but I can say that, from a Liberal member, from Conservatives and from the Bloc Québécois, the vast majority of MPs represented, we have the belief that these votes should be split and, beyond that, that the bill itself should be split into two.

There is no reason that we should effectively be bound to an arbitrary timeline on the question of advance requests because of a legislated timeline that exists on the expansion to people with mental health issues as a sole underlying criterion.

I have shared in the House, in committee and in the media, but I will share again, that the stopping of the mental health expansion is an incredibly important issue. We heard testimony from physicians before the special joint committee, and I suspect we will hear them before the justice committee as well, about the inability to assess with a high degree of certainty the question of irremediability in the case of someone who is suffering from a mental illness. Make no mistake, it is suffering. Mental illness is incredibly real, and I speak from personal experience, but we cannot know in the same way with mental illness as we do with physical illness what the prognosis is or what the trajectory of one's condition will be.

For that reason, to offer someone death instead of treatment, hope and recovery not only is wrong but flies in the face of medical understanding and psychiatric understanding about the very nature of mental illness. I say this as someone who was nearly successful 16 years ago in taking my own life and someone who would have availed myself of MAID had it been available to me back then, in my darkest days, because of my battle with mental illness. However, I got better. I am here today because I lived. I am here today because I got through that, and I appreciate the support from Liberal colleagues on that.

Again, I appreciate that the Liberals have come around to what Conservatives were warning about years ago, which is the importance of not proceeding with MAID for people with mental illness.

● (1530)

My question to them is why we cannot just dispense with that now. Why can we not just expedite it, get it to the Senate and let the Senate pass it through? As was done with the extensions back in 2023 and 2024, why can we not just proceed with that approach and deal with advance requests separately?

I want to share one of the other perspectives that has come about on this issue, and that is from John Ivison of the National Post. John Ivison is not an opponent of MAID. He wrote in a column a few days ago that he is a supporter of MAID, but he says this is still an issue that we cannot understate the seriousness of and the importance of getting right. Mr. Ivison wrote, “This is clearly a bill that requires some sober second thought before being rammed through Parliament.” He said, “On advance requests, I don't know what to think.... What I do know is that this is a subject that justifies more than a day of parliamentary debate.” He closed by saying, “The government should split Bill C-41 into two parts.”

I am not saying that the Liberal government has to do what this motion asks it to do because of what John Ivison says, because of what I say, because of what the member for Montcalm says or because of what the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River says, but I am asking the Liberal government to listen to the logic and to listen to the reason in this.

Why would we not want to take the time to get something this important right?

Everyone agrees. The justice minister has said that this is a life-and-death issue and that this is an important issue, yet there is the idea that we must deal with this immediately and that this bill is so urgent that it justified invoking closure to shut down debate after just one day. That argument and that approach is justified only because of the looming March deadline for the mental health expansion. The justice minister has acknowledged, and justice officials acknowledged at committee last week, that there is no court decision that is compelling advance requests. There is no legal reason that forces the government to do this. There is no legislative timeline. This is a policy choice.

The government has chosen to proceed with advance requests. This is a choice. Members of Parliament will get to vote on that choice of whether they agree or disagree after the committee process is done, but the lack of clarity in what a vote stands for, which we saw at second reading, will still be there at third reading. It will still be there when parliamentarians on the justice committee go through this bill.

I say this fully knowing that my colleagues, despite differing perspectives on the core issues, are all in agreement that this bill should be split. We are all in agreement that we should be able to vote to stop the mental health expansion expeditiously to meet the deadline, and also vote on the question of advance requests separately. We as Conservatives will, as we always do, have a free vote on this fundamental matter of conscience.

I note that the seconder of my motion today voted differently from me on Bill C-41, and that is fine. Despite having different perspectives on different aspects of this legislation, we agree that it is legislative malpractice to lump these two things into one single piece of legislation.

In the last few days I have been receiving phone calls and emails from people in my riding, and also people outside of my riding, who have strong opinions on this issue. The majority of them have been saying that they oppose Bill C-41 and that they oppose advance requests, but more than that, they are saying that they believe there should be clarity and simplicity to the two questions put to MPs.

One of them I want to share is an email I received from a woman. I do not have permission to use her name, but it is a genuine email. She is someone who supports MAID for mental illness, so she and I disagree on this question, but she believes that “Bill C-41 should be split into two separate pieces of legislation. Bundling them together detracts from the critical conversation surrounding MAID for mental illness by shifting the spotlight onto advance request directives”, so people on both sides of this issue can understand the value in segregating out these two questions.

I have to ask why the government has been so allergic to this common-sense multipartisan proposal. The only thing that I can think of is that they are not confident about where the conversation in Canada would land on advance requests.

● (1535)

One thing we saw in the mental health aspect of this was that perspectives shifted over time. The Liberal government's perspective shifted on this, just as it shifted on advance request. Justin Trudeau, people may recall, actively rejected expanding MAID to include advance request in one of the Liberals' last go-rounds on MAID legislation, and now the Liberals say that this is an urgent issue they want to see the system expand to. The Liberal government, at one point, was actively in favour of allowing people with only a mental illness to access MAID. Now it has changed that perspective and is now opposing this expansion. I am sincerely grateful that it has come around on this issue.

That, in and of itself, proves that time is not the enemy here; time actually allows for clarity. It allows for the proper testimony we need to hear from the experts on this. There has not been, contrary to the claims of the justice minister, the level of scrutiny and debate on advance requests that the Liberals are claiming. In fact, in one of the previous studies on this, they spent just 11 hours, a cursory glance, on advance requests. One of the previous comprehensive studies on this argued against advance requests in the end.

The government is making a policy choice, which is its prerogative, but can there not be some humility from the Liberal government in accepting that it has had this issue wrong in the past, that rushing things has not been helpful?

Rushing matters of life and death is not conducive to good policy. It is not conducive to having a result that comes out of this place that has legitimacy in the eyes of Canadians. I say this fully aware of the fact that I can only speak as a member of the House of Commons. The Senate will also need to have its own crack at this legislation.

Yes, the timeline is a legitimate force, but the timeline we are dealing with, the March deadline, applies only to the mental health aspect. There may be a political one, but there is no legislative or legal reason by which advance requests need to be married to mental illness. There is no legislative or legal reason with which advance requests need to be dealt with with any degree of urgency, and certainly, urgency to the extent that we do not allow proper debate and proper scrutiny.

This is something that, if my motion is adopted, would empower the justice committee to do what the Liberal government should have done from the outset, which is split Bill C-41 into two, and allow the three sentences dealing with the mental health expansion to pass.

I think I speak on behalf of all of my colleagues in saying that we can have it out by the time we adjourn today. That way, we can have the proper and correct opportunity to do our work on what the government acknowledges is a complex, conviction-filled subject, which is the question of advance requests.

I would be remiss to not point out that even in the couple of days the justice committee has been studying this, we have already heard testimony about the concerning implications surrounding the safeguards, or lack of safeguards, in the bill as it stands right now and the way that the government claims the bill is far more stringent than it actually is. I know that when this came up in the House in the past, we heard accusations from the government that Conservatives were misinforming when the government was actually misquoting or, I should say, leaving out key pieces of context, from its own bill. That alone should prove that we should not rush this. This is far too important to rush, and people on both sides of the issue can recognize that.

I hope that all members in this chamber will support this very simple, very clear motion so we can do our real work as members of Parliament.

● (1540)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find that the member is wrong on a number of points.

At the end of the day, this legislation is, in fact, imperative to see passed, and it is not only from a court perspective. Take a look at the advancement in the area that the province of Quebec has done. Also, the Premier of Saskatchewan says he wants to move forward on advance requests for the people of Saskatchewan.

At the end of the day, when it came to the vote on Bill C-41, every member of the Liberals, the Bloc, the Green Party and the NDP voted to see it go to committee, and we had three dozen Conservatives who wanted to see the bill go to committee.

This has been a discussion on a debate for years now. Why will the member not recognize that reality?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, the member is trying to put a positive spin on the fact the Liberals did not allow their members to vote freely on this bill as the Conservatives did. That is the reason the Liberals voted in a bloc. I already quoted one of the Liberal members, in fact, one of the most qualified to speak on MAID in that caucus, who said exactly what my motion says, which is that this bill should be split into two separate parts.

[*Translation*]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I understand that we have conflicting values. We have discussed this at length. That said, when we look at what has been done and what is being done in Quebec, we hear the following question repeated time and again: Can Quebec be granted the legal authority to implement the framework it has chosen for itself? I believe that, when religious beliefs are set aside, all parliamentarians share a respect for human dignity.

What does my colleague say to those who are simply asking to be allowed to manage these matters as they see fit?

[*English*]

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I missed the nuance of the question with the translation. I believe the colleague was asking about letting people do what they wish.

Ultimately, it is the federal government, through the Criminal Code, that sets out the parameters, safeguards and eligibility criteria. When that policy, obligation and onus fall onto federal lawmakers in the Criminal Code, we need to get that right. Provinces have a role to play in the administration of health care. However, we are talking about something that in the law right now, in statute in Canada, is an exemption to homicide. That is the way it is legally set out in the Criminal Code. Therefore, this is not an insignificant or trivial thing that we should just rush on, as the Liberals are trying to force us to do.

● (1545)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what I find amazing is that the advance request is, in fact, part of Bill C-41 because there is a need for it to be in it. It is completely within our rules to have it, because it is a very serious issue that has been broached through that legislation and, at the end of the day, has wide support here in the House of Commons and outside the House of Commons to the degree in which we have had provincial advancement on the issue.

Will the member recognize that even provinces have had the opportunity to contribute and there are provinces that want to see it move forward?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, it is a little rich that the member says that advance requests are part of the bill. It is a 12-page bill. All but three sentences are about advance requests. It is the mental health piece that was tacked on to this unrelated bill and could be dealt with separately.

We heard from Department of Justice officials at committee on Thursday that they have no idea how many people in Quebec have made an advance request, how many have been granted one and how many MAIDs on the basis of an advance request have been done in Quebec. Therefore, the idea that provinces are actively sharing information with the government is undermined by the government officials who testified at committee.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for bringing forward this motion to split the bill. That was the essence of my speech on this bill when I rose to speak on it.

On the one hand, I think I can speak on behalf of most members of this House that everybody would agree with the first part of the bill. Unfortunately, what the government fails to realize is that the first part of the bill is correcting the headlong rush that the government had on MAID expansion and MAID access. Here we are fixing that problem while at the same time it cannot be satisfied with fixing the problem, but has to add in a whole new dimension of access to MAID without going through the proper process, without ensuring that we get it right and without making sure that the guardrails we need to have in place are in place.

I, for the life of me, cannot figure out why the government would behave in such a way when there is general consensus in the House for the first part of the bill.

Based on the mistakes and the track record the government has, and I want to thank the member for what he is doing, can he possibly rationalize why the government seems to want to divide Canadians with this piece of legislation and bring up these divisive issues at this time?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I wish the Liberals would spend less time dividing Canadians and more time dividing the bill. It is that easy. This is not something that needs to be dealt with in an omnibus fashion, as the Liberals have presented Bill C-41.

My colleague was very eloquent in the way he described what is happening here. The reason the mental health expansion was delayed twice, and now the government has signalled it is ultimately walking away from, is because it got it wrong. I am glad it has changed its mind, but that proves the point here that these things should not be rushed.

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is probably the fourth time the government has introduced this bill, and it has always come short on making it right. We always make some good suggestions, and this is one of them, to make the bill the bill that is needed by Canadians for Canadians.

Why is it important to split the bill? Why is this the attempt to make this bill as perfect as it should be?

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, we heard in second reading debate, what little of it we were permitted to have, members of Parliament, and notably the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, say that we need to pass Bill C-41 immediately because the mental health expansion has a deadline coming in March. That to me says we need to pass the halt to the mental health expansion immediately. That has nothing to do with advance requests. We have had witnesses, who I know will be coming to committee, who I have had some conversations and dialogues with, and some of them do not even have opinions on one aspect of the bill. They only have an opinion or expertise on another, which proves the point that, even experts in the medical field are seeing these as two separate issues.

Why are we as members of Parliament supposed to take a different approach than that?

● (1550)

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as for the substantive issue, in short, the bill would decriminalize advance consent. Among the provinces, at this time, only Quebec has already implemented such a system. Quebec gave the matter a great deal of thought and adopted advance consent.

Is my colleague trying to interfere in an area of jurisdiction belonging to Quebec and the provinces in order to prevent Quebec from having its own system, even though it already has one?

[*English*]

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, the Criminal Code is federal jurisdiction.

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's efforts to address what I would say is the scourge of MAID. I know we have different levels of support on either side of the House, but my concern is that we are setting world records, with 16,499 cases in 2024 alone. I know my dad was offered MAID when he did not solicit it.

Do we need a thorough discussion on MAID, especially when we talk about splitting the bill? I think it needs to be thorough, and I ask the member if he thinks likewise.

Andrew Lawton: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for what he shared, although I am sorry he and his family went through that.

Sadly, we have heard other examples of that. I mentioned at committee, to the justice minister, a few cases where we have seen the safeguards for MAID, which are supposed to be in effect, now not working. There was one individual who was denied in Ontario. His medical situation did not change, but he was accepted and ultimately given MAID in British Columbia. Someone in my own community of St. Thomas was assessed in the parking lot of a Tim Hortons, and even though the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario found that the protocols were not followed, the penalty was effectively a slap on the wrist.

If existing safeguards are not working, why do we expect that we would be ready for an expansion on an expedited timeline?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a joint parliamentary group of senators and House of Commons representatives who came up with a number of recommendations back in 2023. One of those recommendations was to have advance requests. Even one of the Conservative members sitting on the benches today supported that recommendation. The discussions around the issue have been ongoing for years now. When we take a look at the actual vote, as I said, every Liberal, every New Democrat, every member of the Bloc, and even the Green member and the three dozen Conservatives all voted in favour of Bill C-41. The Province of Quebec has already taken actions on it. Another province has given clear indication that it would like to move forward with respect to it. It just seems to be the Conservative right, the far right, once again wanting to play games on such an important issue of life. I find it unfortunate.

Having said that, I move:

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): 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.

Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

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

● (1635)

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

(Division No. 198)

YEAS

Members

Acan
Ali
Anand
Auguste
Baker
Battiste
Begum
Bendayan
Blois
Caley
Carr
Chagger
Chartrand
Chenette
Church
Connors
Coteau
Dandurand
d'Entremont
Desrochers
Dhillon
Duclos
Ehsassi
Eyolfson
Fanjoy
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fry
Al Soud
Alty
Anandasangaree
Bains
Bardeesy
Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Bittle
Brière
Carney
Casey
Chang
Chatel
Chi
Clark
Cormier
Dabrusin
Danko
Deschênes-Thériault
Dhaliwal
Diab
Earle
El-Khoury
Fancy
Fergus
Fortier
Fraser
Fuhr
Gaheer
Gasparro
Gladu
Gould
Greaves
Gull-Masty
Hanley
Hepfner
Hodgson
Housefather
Iacono
Jeneroux
Joseph
Kelloway
Klassen
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Lauzon
Lavoie
Leitão
Long
Ma
MacDonald (Cardigan)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Martin
McKelvie
McKnight
Ménard
Michel
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Nguyen
Ntumba
Olszewski
Osborne
Powlowski
Ramsay
Robertson
Romanado
Sahota
Sarai
Sawatzky
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Solomon
St-Pierre
Tesser Derksen
Turnbull
van Koeverden
Villeneuve
Yip
Zerucelli
Gainey
Gerretsen
Gobeil
Grant
Guay
Hajdu
Harrison
Hirtle
Hogan
Hussen
Jaczek
Joly
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lambropoulos
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lattanzio
Lavack
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
Mendès
Miedema
Mingarelli
Myles
Nathan
Noormohamed
Oliphant
O'Rourke
Petitpas Taylor
Provost
Rana
Rochefort
Royer
Saini
Sari
Schiefke
Shahnawaz
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sodhi
Sousa
Sudds
Thompson
Valdez
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Zahid
Zuberi– — 166

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Anderson
Arnold
Baber
Barrett
Beaulieu
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bonk
Bragdon
Brunelle-Duceppe
Aitchison
Allison
Anstey
Au
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Bexte
Blanchet
Bonin
Borrelli
Brassard
Calkins

Caputo	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cobena	Cody
Cooper	Dancho
Davidson	Davies (Niagara South)
Dawson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	DeRidder
Deschênes	Diotte
Doherty	Dowdall
Duncan	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)	Falk (Provencher)
Fortin	Garon
Gaudreau	Gazan
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Groleau	Guglielmin
Gunn	Hallan
Hardy	Ho
Hoback	Holman
Jackson	Jansen
Johns	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmiec
Konanz	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
Kuruc	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lawton
Lefebvre	Lemire
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Mahal
Majumdar	Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)
Mantle	May
Mazier	McCauley
McKenzie	McLean (Calgary Centre)
McPherson	Melillo
Moore	Morin
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perron
Poilievre	Redekopp
Rempel Garner	Reynolds
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Rowe
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shipley	Simard
Small	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stevenson
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Viersen	Vis
Warkentin	Waugh
Williamson	Zimmer– — 150

PAIRED

Members

Bailey	Baldinelli
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)	Block
Champagne	Dalton
Dzerowicz	Fisher
Gallant	Idlout
Plamondon	Watchorn– — 12

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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 Brandon—Souris, the Economy; the hon. member for Riding Mountain, Health; and the hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot, the Economy.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Karim Bardeesy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Taiaiako'n—Parkdale—High Park in support of Bill C-31, the budget implementation act, and to speak more generally about the measures in budgets 2025 and 2026, which are building a stronger Canada, creating more affordability for people in our community, making historic investments in culture and creators, making historic investments in housing, and also building the sovereignty of our country and building up the economy of our ridings locally and the benefits that come from those kinds of investments.

From the very beginning, the government was focused on ensuring that the affordability challenge was one that we met head-on. One of our first measures was to bring in a reduction in income taxes for the lowest-income tax bracket, and we then moved very quickly on a number of measures. I just want to summarize a few of them in budget 2026.

First, building on the Canada groceries and essentials benefit is a 50% one-time increase, so that families in our ridings will be receiving up to $2,570 in 2027. There is an increase to the Canada workers benefit, providing up to $3,143 to a family or $1,859 to a single person; and the creation of the Canada caregiver credit, now fully refundable, giving up to $1,260 to eligible caregivers and building on the investments we made to make the disability tax credit more accessible and create some pre-qualification measures.

This builds on the whole set of social policy architecture that we have created and built on over the years, including the national school food program; the national child care program, which continues to make it more affordable to have and raise a family in Taiaiako'n—Parkdale—High Park; the Canada child benefit; and measures that are more specific to certain working groups, like the PSW tax credit.

All these measures are working to bring affordability to our communities, measures that people in our communities have been asking for, measures that we are addressing head-on. There are actually some good measures in Bill C-31 that I want to draw attention to when it comes to affordability, including the availability of automated federal benefits. Our government is making historic efforts to bring in automated tax filing for millions of Canadians starting in the 2027 tax year.

Bill C-31 also includes the prohibition on non-compete clauses, which makes it easier for people to go from job to job. It also creates measures to have travel complaints resolved more easily, something that we know is important for people in our ridings across Canada, giving them access to the kind of resolution they need for their concerns around travel.

There are a number of other measures that we have been bringing forward. I want to draw specific attention to some of the measures and how they affect Taiaiako'n—Parkdale—High Park. Housing with health care supports attached is one of the key ways that we are going to be tackling the homelessness challenge in our country and in our communities in west Toronto. We have some wonderful examples of projects that are either built or are under construction now, which have been a real model, not only for our community, not only for Toronto, but across Canada.

Last year, we had the pleasure of bringing some ministers to Dunn House, which is a project run by the University Health Network in association with West Neighbourhood House, United Way Greater Toronto, Fred Victor and the welcoming communities in South Parkdale and Dunn Avenue in particular.

That project has changed lives. It is 51 units for people who were previously homeless or unhoused, facing addictions, mental health challenges and other kinds of challenges. When we build housing with health care attached, we know it changes lives. We know, for instance, Dunn House has already reduced emergency room visits by 52% and hospital stays by 79% among residents. That means more dignity. It means more safety. It means the opportunity to build a better life.

Dunn House has catalyzed a movement across Canada. The government, in 2025, put a $1-billion commitment into supportive housing. In the 2026 budget, inspired by the work that happened at Dunn House and that is being replicated elsewhere, it is now the centrepiece of our commitment as a government to work with provincial, territorial, municipal and indigenous partners across the whole continuum of care, to work with communities and institutions with a vow to eliminate homelessness within 10 years in Canada.

We cannot have that kind of commitment without the kind of public investment that the government has made. We cannot have that kind of commitment without the example of what happened and what is happening in Parkdale, not only with Dunn House but now with the 11 Brock Avenue project, which is under construction, run by the Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre and also Spring House, which will be just around the corner from Dunn House in South Parkdale and is another project of the University Health Network.

● (1640)

Housing and housing affordability, though, do not just come from supportive housing. They also come from the whole range of housing that we need to be building in our community. Again, in South Parkdale, we have been funding, of late, major housing projects focused on affordability and on families. The Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust project has recently been funded, which is going to create 175 units on Queen Street West as part of a larger project called the Parkdale Hub. These units will be not only for single people but for families, family-sized units, with a whole set of amenities attached to that new project. It is really exciting news in Parkdale.

Just this Friday, I had the pleasure to announce the funding, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Build Canada Homes, of Phoenix Place, known as Green Phoenix II. This is a wonderful project on the site of the former Parkdale United Church, on an adjacent property. Fifty years ago this month, a very far-seeing congregation and minister in Parkdale decided to give up their church building, allow it to be demolished and have a tower apartment building built in its stead. The congregation moved to the first floor of that apartment building, where it is still actively worshipping and contributing to the community. There are over 100 housing units in that particular property.

The congregation, the Phoenix Place management, under its indefatigable leadership, patiently waited for a second adjacent property to be available. With our support, they have now broken ground on Green Phoenix II, which will bring 92 affordable units to that south part of Parkdale. In all, our investments, just in the Parkdale area, total 414 new rental units. That is how to tackle the homelessness challenge. That is how to make housing more affordable, project by project, brick by brick, unit by unit, life changed by life changed.

These are not abstract investments. They are tangible results that will change people's lives. When I hear from the other side that the pace of housing is not going to their pace, I say they should come to Parkdale to see the housing we are building, the lives that are being changed, the positivity, productivity and community spirit that bind people from different incomes in that beautiful corner of west Toronto that I am so honoured to have the chance to represent.

Another important part of this budget was around our major investments in culture and creators. We cannot have Canadian sovereignty or a nation without its storytellers and cultural creators, whether it is artists, authors, filmmakers, musicians, sculptors, painters, dancers or others. In my riding of Taiaiako'n—Parkdale—High Park, we are so blessed to have so many creators in each of those fields. A couple of months ago, I brought together a community of different creators for a round table to get some advice on what we need to be doing together. It was on the kinds of challenges they were facing, challenges around being able to make their art in a context where they could make a living doing their art and the challenges they were facing getting some of their projects financed. I am very pleased to report to them now that in this budget, we have listened and acted.

We invested another $200 million in the CBC, something I was very active in campaigning on in this election, to have a strong sense of national unity, a strong sense of connectivity to each other from coast to coast to coast and the ability to create art and media that we can then sell into a system where we need a strong CBC. In fact, we have made that investment, with an extra $200 million in this budget.

We also heard from creators who are just starting their careers. Some of them have second jobs. Some of them are trying to make their art in digital forms, in places and ways in which the remuneration is still being figured out. I am so pleased that in this budget we have a measure, the Canadian creator credit, which would allow up to $45,000 of artist-related income to be accumulated tax-free. This kind of investment and confidence is what it means when the government says it has Canadians' backs. Up to $45,000 of potential artists' incomes tax-free changes lives. It allows young people considering a career in the arts to make that jump, that leap and that investment.

I cannot talk about culture or creation without pointing out the Canada strong pass and a major investment in this budget that would make that Canada strong pass available into 2027 and access to Canada's national museums permanently free for those under 25 years old. These are the kinds of investments that build Canada strong and that are especially appealing to people in my beautiful corner of west Toronto that I am so privileged to represent.

● (1645)

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member opposite just happened to mention the Canada strong pass. I was recently contacted by constituents in my riding of Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies. Hundreds of Parks Canada employees received notices that their jobs could be at risk or their job positions changed or altered because of cuts in this year's budget. Those Parks Canada employees are extremely worried, and I am worried about the ability of the parks department to maintain the protection and conservation of our parks, plus the safety of everyone who travels through there, including parks employees driving to work.

The member mentioned the Canada strong pass, free passage to the parks, which would reduce income levels in the parks at the same time as they are cutting the budget. I would ask him to respond to those constituents.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Environment, I believe, has conveyed to the House, notices do not necessarily mean layoffs. I also would like to reflect on the very positive moves we have made as a government in the past few years, such as the creation of the Rouge Park as a national park, Canada's urban national park. I know my constituents are very appreciative of the opportunity to access national parks and I believe that will continue to be the case under this budget.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about culture in his speech.

One of the Bloc Québécois's requests was to restore the tax on foreign digital platforms, which would bring in $7.2 billion over five years. It was set to go ahead, but the government gave in to a simple message from Mr. Trump on Truth Social. We got nothing in return. We are still dealing with the tariffs. We got nothing in return, and that $7.2 billion could have been put into a fund dedicated to the cultural and media sectors.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament, I am a firm believer in digital sovereignty.

In response to my colleague's remarks, I would say that we have invested $600 million in the cultural sector to replace the revenues he referred to. We have also invested $200 million in CBC/Radio-Canada. We have provided several other grants to journalists, museums, writers and the Canada Council for the Arts.

As I see it, we have provided strong support for the sector, and we will always defend francophone culture, whether in free trade agreements or in other ways.

[*English*]

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member and I both share Toronto as our home base. I wanted to ask about some of the housing measures that are in the budget. The member spoke about the great examples that are happening locally in Taiaiako'n—Parkdale—High Park.

Could the member share a bit about how that scales up to the national conversation?

Karim Bardeesy: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I share a lot of facets of our ridings that have aspects in common. This scales up in the sense that we are able to have investments in the skilled workforce that is building some of these projects, whether in my riding of Taiaiako'n—Parkdale—High Park or in Spadina—Harbourfront. It creates that kind of confidence that, yes, we can have a life in our beautiful corner of west Toronto, as a renter, as a future buyer, as someone who can have that good life and be confident that we can stay there. Having that kind of confidence and having those kinds of investments in the built form means we have an industry that continues to be working, especially as we have some softness in the condominium market. Having public involvement through these investments and partnership with private developers creates the opportunities to do what we are doing and scale it nationally.

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to speak about the amendments before the House and the broader concerns related to Bill C-31 at report stage. The central principle is that government power must be matched by accountability. Bill C-31 is a 364-clause omnibus bill containing deep concerns. Therefore, the work of the committee deserves our attention, but first, I want to address the elephant in the room.

In the last couple of weeks, a new budget was released. One of the big flags that keeps coming up in the House is GDP. The government keeps repeating the same lines about Canada having the lowest net GDP ratio in the G7. Canadians then see the OECD calculations, which puts Canada seventh-highest among the 40 advanced economies with the worst debt-to-GDP ratio. The two contradictory statements are jarring. I like the way my colleague for Edmonton West explained the discrepancy in the public accounts committee: “When the government talks about their net GDP, they count the CPP [and QPP] money as an asset, but they don't count the liabilities—what they owe to grandma and grandpa.... They don't count the obligations, but they count the assets.” They also include pension funds for Government of Canada employees as an asset without considering the future liability of those employee pensions.

Let us pick up on that. Imagine a person telling the bank that they have $500,000 in savings, but conveniently forgetting to mention their $500,000 mortgage. Suddenly, they are doing great financially. Who knew balancing the books was that easy? Not only is the government misleading Canadians with our starting point over the next five years, but the Prime Minister will inflate the cost of fuel, food and homes by continued spending and adding a whopping $765 billion in new debt.

The Prime Minister is growing spending in this budget by an eye-watering $150 billion, but here is the kicker. The single biggest item of spending growth is the interest being carried for the national debt in the amount of $60.2 billion. Instead of improving our health care, building infrastructure, protecting our seniors and incentivizing our youth through employment training, we are handing over wads of money in interest to the Prime Minister's favourite folks: bondholders and bankers.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Office's analysis of budget 2026, every Canadian carries an equivalent share of Canada's debt at $32,693. Consider that before a newborn baby takes its first breath, that is the amount that that child owes. Last year, my colleague for York—Durham referenced having his first baby girl, and how Canada had handed her over a credit card bill of $30,000 even before she could take her first steps. Today, that cost has grown $2,600 more. We are being mastered by debt, which is sabotaging our destiny, and this mismanagement will hurt our children and grandchildren.

When Bill C-31 grants Liberal ministers sweeping discretionary powers in key sectors, including taxation, defence procurement, air transportation, and mining and natural resources in the north, meaning significant decisions can be made behind closed doors with insufficient transparency and parliamentary oversight, the eyebrows of every Canadian should be raised. Canadians deserve a government accountable to Canadians. Concentrating more power in the hands of ministers without clear safeguards or proper scrutiny will not provide that. For example, with defence procurement, there are sole-source contracts bypassing competition, provisions that include giving the minister new powers with up to $1 billion in procurement prerogative, and a lack of safeguards relating to making loans and advance payments, including non-military residential housing.

We will expand on some of those points in just a bit, but there are some big questions. When the Defence Investment Agency was created, we questioned how adding another layer of bureaucracy and red tape would improve procurement. That question has yet to be answered. The agency has yet to deliver a single new piece of equipment to the Canadian Armed Forces; not even one. Our military continues to experience equipment shortages.

As my colleague for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford in B.C. pointed out, a fundamental problem is that Canada has no national security strategy to guide its defence priorities. Without that strategic foundation, defence procurement lacks clear direction, leaving both the defence investment strategy and the Defence Investment Agency without a coherent framework to guide their decisions. That, along with the defence cuts of $2 billion from 2021 to 2025, left us with only 42% of our aircraft ready to fly and only 51% of land vehicles ready for use. Less than half our military fleet is actually operational.

● (1655)

A system of checks and balances would have competitive processes in place. It would embrace transparency, making sure that the best purchases are being transacted and should be central in procuring the best for our military. Sadly, that is not the case in this bill.

We want the very best for the men and women who serve our country in uniform. They deserve the equipment, technology and capabilities they need, not yesterday's solutions or tomorrow's promises. Investing in their present and future, perhaps more than simply spending money quickly, requires transparency, accountability and competitive procurement to ensure taxpayers get value and our military gets what it needs. The question is not whether Canada can afford to equip our soldiers with the right equipment, but whether we can afford the consequences of not buying the right equipment due to a procurement process that is ineffective, demands no answers and holds no one accountable.

We have reason to be skeptical. There is precedent here. Just two months ago, in September, it was revealed that none of the mismanaged green slush fund has been or will be recovered to taxpayers. The minister even said that not doing so demonstrated sound financial stewardship of public funds. Go figure. We need only look back to 2024 to see why that claim deserves scrutiny. The Auditor General found that $123 million in contracts had been awarded improperly. Of that, $59 million went to projects that should have never even received funding, $76 million went to projects linked to Liberal appointees and $12 million went to projects that were both ineligible and subject to conflicts of interest. In total, the Auditor General identified 90 instances where conflict of interest rules were not followed. These are not minor administrative oversights, but serious ethical failures of oversight and accountability in the awarding of public money. Accountability should not be perceived as an obstacle. It is what ensures that public money is spent in the public interest. Transparency is not red tape. Efficiency also means doing something right the first time in a timely fashion.

We can all agree that Canada needs faster defence procurement. That is a given. However, Canadians should never have to choose between getting equipment quickly and knowing who spent their money, how it was spent and whether they got value for it. An example of this is the Saab GlobalEye aircraft. The Liberal government signed a non-binding agreement to acquire six of these aircraft. It is essentially a sole-source contract. It is intending to purchase an aircraft that has crew limitation, meaning the crew is restricted by onboard operators and crew stations. It cannot act as a massive battle management hub during complex operations. It cannot do aerial refuelling, which is essential for remaining airborne and on station during active operations. It has gaps in NORAD and F-35 interoperability. Finally, it has radar blind spots where it can only produce 300° coverage, leaving 30° blind spots over the tail and nose.

I provide this as an important example of why military equipment procurement requires transparency and competition. It must be thoroughly evaluated to ensure it is the right equipment, safe, compatible and operationally suitable. The obvious question is this: How would a Crown corporation ensure appropriate testing and approval?

Buying stuff is not the challenge, ask anyone who likes shopping, but buying the right stuff is more involved. Our top priority needs to be getting the right equipment for the right job from the right vendor. Bill C-31, even with the proposed amendments, contains many questions that lead us back to transparency, accountability and taxpayer value. Liberals have proven time and again that these concepts are foreign to them. Conservatives have been pushing for clear safeguards and Canadians deserve that.

● (1700)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been generations since we have seen a Prime Minister and a government move as quickly as we have seen with respect to military procurement. One just needs to look at the budget, where we are not only hitting 2% of the GDP, but exceeding it. The establishment of a Crown corporation is a responsible way of having that arm's-length professional grouping of individuals able to advance the objectives of equipping our men and women in the CAF.

Would the member not agree that Crown corporations can be exceptionally effective, as we have seen in many different areas, at both federal and provincial levels?

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for his service to Canadians in our military, and I want to recognize his service.

We have seen time and time again how often Crown corporations are ineffective, they lack accountability and the government continually has to subsidize them. As the previous speaker mentioned, another $200 million had to go to a Crown corporation whose actual mandate and functionality is in question by many Canadians. That, again, is a good example of how Crown corporations are not accountable and are not effective in producing the results that Canadians expect, especially when they are loaded with Liberal appointees.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for his speech.

There are several measures in Bill C-31 that would open the door to increased government powers and less transparency. For example, this bill would limit who can file a complaint with the procurement ombudsman and what complaints he can review.

What does my colleague think about that?

● (1705)

[*English*]

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the member from the Bloc that Bill C-31 has some glaring deficiencies in it. We have looked at the Defence Investment Agency as well. Bill C-31 would give a minister unilateral powers to make billion-dollar decisions without accountability and without having to come back to Parliament for a decision. That is something we have seen abused in previous Parliaments and also with the current government. When Liberals are given that kind of authority, they, for whatever reason, seem to defer to abusing that power and authority.

There also would not be a proper venue for people who do have a legitimate complaint to come back and register their complaint.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague from Manitoba highlighted many very important issues when it comes to this piece of legislation, but I want to highlight that this is a budget implementation act for budget 2025. This is weeks after budget 2026 has actually been adopted in this place, and I am wondering about the years that he has been a member of Parliament.

I can say that I have been here for a number of years. In all the time I have been here, I have never seen a budget implementation act for a budget for the previous year come after the budget of that particular year. I am going to ask my colleague if he thinks this is just actual incompetence at managing the House's affairs, if it is that the Liberals simply just do not know what the right thing to do is, or if it is possibly both.

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, as of this coming Wednesday, I will have had the privilege of spending the last 13 years in the House with my friend and colleague, the member for Ponoka—Didsbury, and I have thoroughly enjoyed his wise counsel.

It is very ironic that we are still debating an implementation act from budget 2025 when we have already accepted budget 2026 in the House. It has been tabled, and we are beginning to debate that.

I wonder, too, why it has taken so long for the Liberals to actually get to the point of pursuing the implementation of a budget from a year ago. I have thought about that. What the Liberals do, and I have seen it in the past, is take a whole bunch of garbage and throw it at the wall, and then they see what sticks and know what they want to work with. It seems to me as though the implementation act we are debating today is reminiscent of that kind of behaviour. This is maybe something that did not stick that they want to advance, but why have they waited a year to do it? I just do not know.

Hon. Adam van Koeverden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is often said that if someone would like to know a government's priorities, they ought to read its budget rather than its speeches. Over the last couple of years, it has been an undeniable truth that sport is among the current government's top priorities, and we are making investments to back that up.

Before I get to the numbers from the spring economic update and budget 2026, I would like to take every member of the House back to a few special Canadian moments in time, moments when we all remember exactly where we were, where we were watching, who we were with and what it felt like to cheer Canada on.

I am thinking of Alexandre Bilodeau's winning the first Olympic gold on Canadian soil; Christine Sinclair's becoming the greatest international goal scorer of all time in the sport of soccer; cheering on Isabelle, Ivanie and Valérie as they defended their Olympic gold medal in Milano Cortina; or perhaps Sidney Crosby's scoring that golden goal at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games. How about Brian McKeever's winning a historic 20 Paralympic medals in cross-country skiing at the Paralympics, or our friend Benoît Huot's winning his 20 Paralympic medals of different colours in Paralympic swimming?

These are the people who carry our flag and make us proud. Canada's women's rugby team was no exception to that, as it defeated England's Red Roses not once but twice, ending one of the toughest unbeaten streaks in international rugby. How about team Canada at the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup, when Canadians rallied behind Ismaël Koné in the game against Qatar and eventually watched our men's national team make history by reaching the round of 16 for the very first time and just recently becoming a 25 top-ranked team in the world for the first time in our country's history?

[*Translation*]

It is undeniable that sport has the power and potential to shape lives and connect people in ways that nothing else can.

[*English*]

Whether someone plays on a local sports team, cheers on their favourite athletes or volunteers at a community centre, sport has a way of bringing us all together. It is all about places where people can build community and connection. Sport is one of our most powerful tools for social connection. When done well, these partnerships are built on trust, teamwork, access and belonging. A Canada that comes together through sport is truly a country united, *un Canada fort* and a Canada that can stand up to anything or anyone together. From playground to podium, we are all building Canada strong for all.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

We need sport now more than ever. Sport brings us together, strengthens our national identity and constitutes an expression of our sovereignty.

[*English*]

Sport is also an economic engine, driving growth, tourism, jobs and investment in local businesses and infrastructure. Sport delivers for Canadians, communities and country. When it comes to sport, the current government is delivering for Canadians.

Let us get to the numbers. As I said, budgets tell us more about a government's priorities than this speech ever could. Budget 2025, followed by the spring economic update, committed a historic $1 billion to Canadian sport, the largest investment of its kind in our nation's history. We have delivered Canada's year of sport with $195 million invested in national team training facilities, with $129 million just since June invested across projects and programs that deliver in Canadian communities every single day.

[*Translation*]

This funding serves a clear purpose, namely to strengthen the Canadian sport system, from playground to podium, through five pillars: build, protect, participate, perform and host.

[*English*]

We boosted the athlete assistance program and reduced or eliminated national team fees so elite athletes can focus more on representing the maple leaf on the world stage and less on making ends meet.

We are increasing funding for safe sport and acting across the system to address long-standing fragmentation and gaps in safety, governance and accountability. We invested in infrastructure, such as Calgary's historic Olympic Oval, which is not just the fastest ice on earth but, for many Calgary kids learning to skate, the first ice. We are building a new home for basketball in this country with 32,000 hours a year dedicated to community play. We announced support for a state-of-the-art, high-performance athletic centre in Bolton for Olympians, Paralympians and the kids who dream of being just like them.

[*Translation*]

We increased funding for the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Sport Institute Network so that Canada's high performance athletes have access to world-class training and recovery services, including equipment and accessible facilities.

[*English*]

We ensured that sport organizations received immediate funding so they have all the necessary tools to achieve their ambitions and the goal of making sure that more kids can participate. We have invested in indigenous sport programs in Inuit, first nation and Métis communities across the country. With Canadian Tire's Jumpstart charities, we have built free-to-use community soccer pitches in Toronto and Surrey, with plans for 20 more for access right across the country.

Of course, we have welcomed the world. Canada is and continues to be the best sport-hosting nation on planet earth. From the UCI Road World Championships in Montreal and the IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships here in Ottawa to the largest and most successful FIFA World Cup in history, 2026 has undeniably been Canada's year of sport, but this is only the beginning, and that is because of the historic and generational investments that our government is making in the Canadian sports system. We have ushered in a new era of sport, and we are ready to welcome Canada 160.

Through budget 2026, we are truly going from playground to podium. Starting with a generational investment of an additional $1.5 billion for sports facilities, half for ice rinks and the other half for community centres, this investment means phones put aside and friendships made, indoor tracks to train on throughout the winter, domes on our turfs, court space, pool time, ice time, quality time and less screen time.

[*Translation*]

That also means outdoor spaces where people can be active and enjoy the summer, as well as more community tournaments and international-level competitions.

[*English*]

They will be modern, fully accessible spaces for people of all abilities, not just buttons to open doors but fully accessible facilities, and of course it means getting everyone out on the ice. I cannot think of anything more Canadian than that. I am grateful to have seen first-hand the impact this kind of funding has on communities, both in my own constituency of Burlington North—Milton West and through the many communities I have had the privilege of visiting over the last year and a half.

Just last week, I was in the Winnipeg community of Kildonan, out on the ice with a group of young people who were skating for the first time in their life. Those kids were experiencing something pretty special. Some might even call it magical. Skates were tied up tight, helmets were on, and for some, a hockey stick was in hand. We also slid around on our bellies on the ice, but we were all taking part in steps on the ice and discovering the joy of sport.

Budget 2026 is all about being the masters of our own destiny, and it is also about creating opportunity, creating conditions for Canadians to thrive. I can tell the House that those kids in Kildonan took that opportunity on. They grasped the chance, and they were absolutely thriving.

Another investment, as safe sport underpins absolutely everything we do, is that in budget 2026, we announced that we are renewing our commitment to the Canadian safe sport program with an additional $16 million to prevent and address maltreatment in sport. I thank Sport Integrity Canada for its leadership in implementing these new programs, and every sport organization for undertaking these important changes.

I speak to sport ministers from peer nations around the world every week, and they are inspired by what we have achieved. However, this work is not over. It is not a checkbox. It requires intentional and continuous steps. With budget 2026, we have the backing, and we will keep going.

As my colleagues, ministers from other departments, including the Minister of Finance, have highlighted, budget 2026 strengthens our commitment in partnerships with first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. There is $50 billion in proposed investments to advance this work. As we heard through the truth and reconciliation calls to action 87 through 91, sport is a big part of advancing reconciliation.

Budget 2026 also announced that we will be investing an additional $16 million over the next four years to support indigenous-led sport and recreation. This adds onto our other investments we have made this year, including a $3-million increase to the sport for social development in indigenous communities program, which brings the total investment for this year over $14 million.

We have also increased our federal contributions and investments in the revitalization of the North American Indigenous Games to $6.2 million, which I had the privilege of announcing this past weekend alongside Norway House Cree Nation; the Southern Chiefs Organization; the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Chief Woodhouse Nepinak; and Premier Wab Kinew, as well as the founder of the games, Chief Dr. Wilton Littlechild.

Canada is a country that loves to win, and we are good at it. Since 2010, Canada's Olympic and Paralympic athletes have collectively brought home almost 400 medals. That is outstanding. I congratulate each and every one of them.

Now we have expanded that mandate. Canadians know that a successful sport system is measured in more than just the weight of gold. Canada's sporting priorities and expectations have grown over the last two decades. Canada's sport system must meet this moment, and we will do just that. Our government is focused on five priorities to support this vision: building, protecting, participating, performing and hosting.

Through budget 2026, we have a $2.5-billion responsibility to use sport for nation building, reconciliation, health, achievement, developing leaders, forming friendships and creating connections. This is a new era for sport in Canada, a moment for change, because talent is everywhere in our country, and opportunity should be too.

● (1715)

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the secretary of state for highlighting very well some of the incredible achievements Canadians have had in sports over the years. It makes me proud to be Canadian when we have that success.

He spent most of his speech very much focused on sport. Bill C-31 is very much focused on the Defence Investment Agency; however, I want to use a sport analogy. It is great that we are spending all sorts of money on great sports facilities, but we are not paying for the coaches, the upkeep of those facilities, the necessary refrigerant, etc.

The fascinating thing I am finding with Bill C-31, and even in the budget, is that, despite the incredible investment in defence procurement, the government is actually making a $908-million cut to the operating and maintenance budget of the Canadian Armed Forces. Does that make sense to the secretary of state?

Hon. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, a fantastic member of Parliament and a friend of mine who has also made me very proud for his service to this country. When I say that athletes are our greatest ambassadors, of course, the men and women in uniform in service to this country, when deployed overseas, are unparalleled, and unmistakably, are our top ambassadors. I thank him for his incredible service.

He is correct. When we build infrastructure, it requires an investment as well for management, upkeep and sustainability. That is why I am proud that budget 2026 follows on the spring economic update with a parallel investment, the $755 million that I referenced for the sport program for the people and the $1.5 billion for the infrastructure, and that is for the places. He is correct. We need to do both.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I almost rose on a point of order because the content of my colleague's speech should have been about last year's budget, since that is what we are discussing today with Bill C-31. However, in his speech, the Secretary of State for Sport spoke a lot about the measures in this year's budget, the one that was passed last week. That means there is a disconnect, and it is not in the spirit of the House, but let us act in good faith. What is the motto of the Olympics? It is “faster, higher, stronger”. Not only is the government not moving fast, but it is not flying high either, and the results are not strong. I would like to hear my colleague share his thoughts on that.

● (1720)

Hon. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. That is not a mistake on my part. That is my priority as the Secretary of State for Sport. Budget 2025 includes some good investments in sports. The 2026 spring economic update does too, and so does budget 2026. I made an announcement to that effect just six weeks ago.

My colleague believes that the government is not moving fast enough. If the member would like to discuss his ideas for the government to move faster, that is what I am here for.

[*English*]

Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the secretary of state could give me his favourite team for this Saturday. The Vanier Cup will be played in Quebec City. It is at the Stade Telus, and it is the Western Mustangs against the Montréal Carabins.

It has been over 40 years since I played in Toronto, and the Vanier Cup has been one of the biggest thrills of my life. If the secretary of state would like to wager, I would like to know what team he will be cheering for.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Of course, the Chair takes no point in this, but go Western.

The hon. secretary of state.

Hon. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I did not know that my hon. colleague played in the Vanier Cup.

The closest I ever came to the Vanier Cup was watching one time as my Marauders were getting trounced by the Laval Rouge et Or. I was not my best self that day, and there is some media to back that up, so I will avoid prognosticating on this weekend's match and say good luck to my friend's favourite team, and Mr. Speaker, to your favourite team as well.

U Sports is a fantastic institution in this country, and I wish all the athletes the best. I hope the best team wins.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order to ask for unanimous consent to read off the questions on the orders of the day.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

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, I thank colleagues on all sides.

If the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1526, 1527, 1528, 1529, 1530, 1531, 1532, 1533, 1534, 1535, 1536, 1537, 1538, 1539, 1540, 1541, 1542, 1543, 1544, 1545, 1546, 1547 and 1548 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in electronic format immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is it the pleasure of the House that the aforementioned questions be made orders for return and that they be tabled immediately?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to another budget implementation bill, this time for budget 2025. For the people tuning in, I want to point out that there is a bit of a time lag here, since it is now 2026.

Once again, civil society has also raised concerns about this bill. Despite the serious concerns raised by passengers' rights groups, environmental groups, health care groups and many other stakeholders, the government decided to reject all the amendments tabled by the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party. These amendments simply sought to mitigate some of the biggest sticking points in the bill. Rather than trying to make changes to the opposition amendments to remove the parts the government considered problematic, it simply rejected them outright.

First, I will briefly explain our position, and then I will talk a little more about a few things that are in this bill. Lastly, I will talk about the measures that did not make it into the bill.

First of all, Bill C-31 fails to address several of what the Bloc Québécois and Quebec consider the most pressing needs. Neither the bill nor the latest economic update address the current tariff crisis following Donald Trump's imposition of new 25% tariffs on all products containing steel and aluminum. It bears repeating that one-quarter of Quebec's exports to the United States are affected by these new tariffs, making Quebec the province hardest hit by the tariff war.

Bill C-31 also contains a series of measures proposed in budget 2025 and in the 2026 economic update that have yet to be implemented. Despite the bill's importance, there is every indication that the opposition will not be able to properly study it in committee and that the government is standing in our way. Without the ability to properly examine such a far-reaching bill, the Bloc Québécois cannot simply write the government a blank cheque, especially given the concerns we continue to have. This is not a matter of obstructing for the sake of obstruction.

Second, the bill further expands subsidies to the oil industry and now allows hydrogen produced from methane to be classified as clean hydrogen, whereas in Quebec, hydrogen must be produced from renewable resources to be classified as clean.

I will give another example. Several measures set out in Bill C-31 open the door to increased government powers and less transparency. For example, this bill would limit who can file a complaint with the procurement ombud and what complaints he can review. As we can see, the federal government has a clear pattern of undermining transparency.

The government also wants to allow private firms to handle air passenger complaints in order to reduce the backlog, which raises a lot of questions. The Bloc Québécois wants this part of the bill to be examined by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. The government is trying to shirk its responsibilities, which is another pattern we have been seeing.

Some of the proposed changes would weaken pesticide control, which is a major concern for the public. The government is dismissing these concerns out of hand, since it thinks that economic interests take precedence over public health. That is extremely alarming.

Here is another example. For the Canadian exploration expense deduction, the government is now making expenditures incurred to determine the inherent characteristics of an oil or natural gas deposit eligible for the deduction. In the case of the Bay du Nord development project, these expenses could be significant, since the testing required to assess the quality of the deposit will be very costly. At this point, we have not received the government's rationale for this new support for the oil industry. This is another step backwards when it comes to the environment.

I would like to say a few words about the global minimum tax, which should, in theory, help recover more revenue for the Canadian government. The United States under Donald Trump is strongly opposed to it, which could jeopardize the implementation of this initiative. Furthermore, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, sets the minimum tax at 15%, but only when consolidated revenues exceed 750 million euros. Canada could, in theory, recover the difference between the tax paid and the 15% threshold. We should recall that, when it comes to tax fairness, Canada can do a lot more, particularly at a time when the international trend is moving toward greater attention to the issue.

One thing might interest some businesses back home, like Prinoth: The other budget 2026 implementation bill and the latest economic update include a division that enacts the defence investment agency act. The Liberals announced this agency some time ago, and that commitment was reiterated in the economic update. Defence procurement responsibilities are currently shared between Public Services and Procurement Canada and the Department of National Defence. The process is exceedingly slow and inefficient. There are still many loose ends to tie up, and we are still looking for answers on a number of fronts.

However, the facts speak for themselves. According to a 2023 internal report by the Department of National Defence, 55% of aircraft were unserviceable, compared with 54% of naval vessels and 46% of army equipment. The agency should therefore speed up procurement, yet it is by no means entirely independent. Politics is one of the reasons why the procurement process is so slow. We will therefore need to continue scrutinizing the implementation of this agency.

● (1725)

Third, like the economic update, this bill does not address any of the Bloc Québécois's requests to deal with the new challenges facing the public and it does not even address Donald Trump's new tariffs. The Bloc Québécois proposed 11 key measures that would enable the government to really help Quebeckers who are affected by the rising cost of living and Donald Trump's tariffs, while recovering enough revenue to do so at virtually no cost.

First, by eliminating the various oil subsidies, the government could recover $25.7 billion over five years, while supporting the energy transition. Second, by establishing a wage subsidy program for sectors affected by the U.S. tariffs as Quebec companies are calling for, the government could really help them weather this crisis. The Bloc Québécois originally suggested this idea during the pandemic and people really liked it.

The Bloc Québécois also proposed establishing a $5.5-billion fund beginning in 2026-27 to support sectors affected by the U.S. tariffs, particularly our aluminum processing sector, which has been hard hit by a new 25% tax on any product containing Canadian aluminum or steel. It is becoming urgent that we take action. Many companies are now on the verge of bankruptcy because of this new tariff calculation, and that is why the government needs to establish an emergency fund for wage subsidies in the sectors affected by this new calculation.

We need to get back to reforming employment insurance and within a certain timeline. As the Bloc Québécois labour critic and vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, this is a bill I will be following closely. This comprehensive reform of employment insurance is a priority for our party. I would like to pay tribute to my former colleague Louise Chabot, who cared deeply about this issue. The Bloc Québécois is committed to carrying on the legacy of our dear Louise. Employment insurance has been plagued by problems for years, particularly when it comes to the spring gap that penalizes thousands of workers in seasonal industries. The Bloc Québécois and the Interprovincial Employment Insurance Alliance recently called on the federal government to relaunch the long-promised reform of Employment Insurance, which still has not materialized despite repeated Liberal commitments made during every election campaign since 2015.

Quebeckers also need to be reimbursed for the election giveaway that the Liberal Party of Canada gave to people in the rest of Canada during the last election campaign and misleadingly presented as a carbon tax rebate, at a cost of $814 million. Our media also needs to be supported through three key measures representing $387 million in expenditures over five years and generating an additional $7.2 billion in revenue over the same period, because more can and should be done, notwithstanding the measures recently announced in the 2026 budget.

The government could also restore the digital services tax. The government gave in to Donald Trump after the President posted a single message on Truth Social, and as everyone knows, we got nothing in return. That measure would bring in $7.2 billion over five years, and the government could put the money recovered into a fund dedicated to the cultural and media sectors. The journalism labour tax credit could be extended to electronic media such as radio and television—$350 million over five years—as Quebec did in its last budget. The federal government should also inject $37 million over five years into the independent local news fund, or ILNF, for francophone media outlets, whose share of funding fell from 26% to 14% following the CRTC's decision to include 15 English-language stations in the Corus group as beneficiaries of the fund.

The health transfer escalator must be locked in at 6% annually. That amounts to $14 billion over five years, and it is essential. The Government of Quebec called for this ahead of the last budget. The federal government is setting the annual escalator at 5%, but that will fall to at least 3% in 2028-29. It is worth noting that the federal share of health care funding has declined from 35% to just 22% in recent years. The Bloc Québécois wants to close that gap and restore Ottawa's contribution to at least 35% of provincial health care costs.

Old age security benefits for seniors aged 65 to 74 should also be increased to match those available to seniors aged 75 and over. I would urge all members of the House to support Bill C-261 when it comes to a vote next week, as it is specifically intended to correct this inequity. The federal government has effectively created two classes of seniors, and that is simply unfair. We must also increase the Canada public transit fund by $500 million a year. Despite repeated requests from our communities, the government has chosen to cut the Canada public transit fund by $5 billion over 10 years, further undermining efforts to combat climate change.

We also need to provide greater support for the forestry industry by offsetting, on a monthly basis, 50% of the anti-dumping and countervailing duties paid by Canadian forestry producers in the United States, thereby restoring liquidity to those companies immediately. The forestry industry is important to Quebec. The government must also reimburse the Government of Quebec to the tune of $733 million for the influx of asylum seekers. Finally, the government must reverse the closure of the research centres run by the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food. It is only $171 million over five years, but we need it. Agriculture is crucial in Shefford.

In conclusion, we simply act on our principles, which are essentially this: When something is good for Quebec, we will vote for it, and when it does not align with our interests, we will vote against it. We are here to defend the interests of the people back home.

● (1730)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of good things in the budget when we look at the 2025 piece of legislation. I hope the member will vote in favour of it.

Having said that, I must say I am somewhat impressed by the member and the way she presented so much detail on a whole pile of different issues. The one that caught my interest is when she made reference to passenger rights. I know the Bloc has raised this issue in the past. What I would like to get from the member is a clear indication. When we think of passenger rights, the government has done a number of things, whether it is penalties, fines or so forth. We will also now have an independent arbitrator, or operating organization, for passengers established through this particular piece of legislation.

Could the hon. member provide her thoughts on that specific issue, and tell us whether she supports it?

● (1735)

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments about my speech, but if he had really been listening, he would have heard my thoughts on the matter.

The process is indeed being outsourced, but we still have concerns about that approach. We would like to have the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities study it further to identify its real impact on travellers' rights. This government has a tendency to assume that, because a function is handed over to an external body, everything will work out fine simply because it is supposedly independent. In reality, things are more complicated than that.

The government's role is to be accountable to the public and, therefore, accountable to the House.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this has not been properly examined in committee.

In my colleague's opinion, why are the Liberals putting obstacles in the way of its further examination? What are they afraid of?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my colleague for her question in French. I am deeply grateful to her, and I congratulate her on her efforts.

As I said, this government has a habit of not wanting to get to the bottom of things. It wants to move too quickly on the critical aspects of Bill C-39 and Bill C-5. It is not letting us do our job properly as parliamentarians and it is not giving us the time we need to do our work.

That is exactly what is happening with this bill. The government is trying to move too quickly and is refusing to address some of our requests. As I said, one example would be having certain provisions dealing with passenger rights studied by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, so that we can actually do our job, which is to propose improvements to those parts of the bill that are not in the public interest.

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is like my colleague believes this is *Back to the Future*. We are talking about measures that were taken in the past.

In that case, why would we not take this opportunity? We could talk about the fact that Quebeckers were supposed to get a rebate for the carbon tax they paid, so they were not exempt from it after all. We could talk about the money that was supposed to go to Quebec because of Roxham Road, which has still not been paid. We can go back even further, to the ice storm, when Ottawa's share was supposed to be returned to Quebeckers, but that never happened.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on those measures. How is it that we are talking about the 2025 budget statement today?

Andréanne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, before I answer my colleague's question, I would like to clarify my response to the previous one. I truly believe that we cannot give the government a blank cheque. I do not know what the government expects, but by trying to rush this through, that is exactly what it is asking us to do. We are not prepared to do that. We do not trust them enough to give them that blank cheque.

To answer my colleague's question, this could be *Back to the Future*, or it could just as easily be *Groundhog Day*, because here we are in 2026 and some of these issues still have not been resolved. It is unacceptable that the Government of Quebec has to remind the federal government that it has still not been reimbursed for the costs it incurred in caring for asylum seekers who arrived through Roxham Road. We have been raising this issue for months, including in the lead-up to the 2026 budget.

He gave a very good example. The fact that we are forced to discuss this sort of measure again makes me feel as though I am in *Back to the Future* or *Groundhog Day*.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will probably start by picking up on some of the answers my colleague gave to the questions she was just asked.

We are debating a budget implementation bill, which should have contained only measures to implement the budget, not a bunch of other things. In fact, the budget itself should also have contained only budget measures. That is often not the case. We saw this happen with the previous budget, and it looks like we can expect the same thing with the next budget implementation bill.

I will go into a bit more detail about Bill C-31, a huge implementation bill that is 352 pages long. There are many things in there that are not even remotely related to the budget it is supposed to be implementing. This is clearly a reflection of the government's tendency to create catch-all bills containing tons of different things. It then gives us less time to them in depth. The bills are not necessarily studied by the right committee. The process is rushed. The government then accuses us of voting against the little measures that are good, while the rest is, in some cases, completely unacceptable and appalling.

Among the measures that were included in the implementation bill but that could have been the subject of entirely separate bills is the reform of the process for handling air travel complaints. These are changes to consumer rights and remedies that have no direct or obvious budgetary implications. We would have preferred this section to be the subject of a separate bill so that it could also be studied by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure, and Communities. Later on, I will come back to the specific amendments that the Bloc Québécois submitted in an effort to improve that portion of Bill C-31, which were dismissed out of hand and defeated by the government. There was not even an attempt to amend them to make them potentially more acceptable. No, the government has a majority now, so it does whatever it wants in committee. It does not even care about Parliament's interest in improving things.

The same thing goes for the part of Bill C-31 creating the Defence Investment Agency, which has now been rendered obsolete because Bill C-40, which we are debating in the House, establishes a Crown corporation for defence procurement. If Bill C-40 was the right vehicle for creating an entity to manage defence procurement, why would it not have worked just as well for the Defence Investment Agency? Why was it absolutely necessary to include it in a budget implementation bill? I think that to ask the question is to answer it indirectly.

Another thing in Bill C-31 that has absolutely nothing to do with budget implementation is the regulatory changes concerning pesticides. These are matters relating to public health and environmental regulations. Why were they included in a budget implementation bill? This is yet another example of the government's habit of lumping together lots of bits and bobs that have nothing to do with each other, much less with the budget, in the hope of getting us to pass it in one shot. Sometimes it tries to sugar-coat the bitter pill, and sometimes it attempts to shame opposition members by saying we are bad MPs for voting against a single measure buried in a 352-page bill.

The same goes for the budget that was just tabled on November 5. The day after the budget, some commentators said that the only word that came to mind was “opaque”. Chantal Hébert was not shy about criticizing it. She spoke about transparency in paticular, and I would like to share what she said on *Tout un matin*. She said: “When you see a budget that's about 500 pages long, you always wonder if it's like a pond where someone has tried to drown fish. What's been happening over the past few days is that the fish are being dredged up.”

She highlighted two major issues that have nothing to do with a budget. The first is a tiny, rather convoluted sentence in a 500-page budget. We had to ask the government for clarification about it. That single sentence basically puts an end to the moratorium on oil and gas development in the Arctic. The Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature is bringing in environmental mini-measures to try to cover up the fact that she was trying to sell oil and gas at COP, and meanwhile, in the budget, the government was hiding the fact that it is going to end the moratorium on oil and gas development in the Arctic.

I want to come back to the other big issue that Chantal Hébert spoke about. She said that the government does not usually announce immigration targets in a budget, and yet that is what this government has done. She and others have alleged that the government was telling the opposite of the truth. I am saying it that way to keep my language parliamentary. In the budget, the government announced a threshold of 380,000 new permanent residents per year, but then it also said that it planned to give permanent status to 200,000 people who are currently temporary residents. That means we will have 580,000 new permanent residents.

● (1740)

On top of that, 82,000 previous unprocessed applications will be carried over into 2027, for a total of 660,000.

We just received the implementation bill for the most recent budget on Friday. It is already 521 pages long. As we get into it, I expect that we will continue to find inconsistencies and things that should not be in there. This bill is like a big melting pot of ideas that have nothing to do with each other and probably have nothing to do with the budget either, in some cases. I am getting a bit off topic, though.

I want to get back to Bill C-31 and briefly discuss the proposals made by the Bloc Québécois. I want to discuss a few proposals that we made regarding consumer rights in the transportation sector. For example, the Bloc Québécois tabled amendment BQ-3 to require airlines to specify the reasons for denying a claim for compensation. We wanted to have a public record of the reasons given by carriers for refusing to compensate passengers, similarly to what is done with court decisions in many places, in order to establish a case law, so to speak. That way, people would know what to expect, there would be greater consistency in the handling of claims, and claimants would be better equipped to substantiate and develop their claims while having a clearer idea of what to expect when a carrier denies them compensation.

There was also amendment BQ-4, which stated that, even though the bill says that someone who already has a proceeding before a court cannot file a complaint with the Canadian Transportation Agency, they could do so if the proceeding is a class action. We understand the idea of avoiding duplication in terms of the places where a complaint can be filed, and we understand that a person cannot file both a civil claim and a complaint with the Canadian Transportation Agency or the body that will replace it. However, when it comes to class actions, particularly in Quebec, people are automatically included in a class. For that reason, we did not want certain complainants' rights to appeal to a third party, which would be equivalent to the Canadian Transportation Agency, to be violated simply because they were also a member of a class action, either automatically or by opting in. This is a simple request that would come at no cost to the government. Despite everything, it was rejected out of hand.

We also moved amendment BQ-5, which set out the criteria for organizations to qualify to handle complaints, including the requirement that they have no connection to airlines. In the bill, what the government has done to reduce the backlog of complaints is to say that carriers will be able to use various third party agencies to handle complaints. However, no criteria are set out to determine whether an entity with a connection to an airline, for example, should be excluded. We have to take the government at its word when it says it will ensure that the entities are impartial. However, this model already exists. Under federal law, for example, external agencies that handle complaints in the banking sector must demonstrate their independence before being approved by the commissioner of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada.

Knowing that third parties will be handling complaints, we tabled amendment BQ-6, which sought to ensure that complaints would be distributed among all the private entities, rather than assigned by mutual agreement between the carriers and the entities. This would avoid cases where, for instance, the entity becomes a client of the carrier and therefore has a vested interest in stretching out the complaint, since it is being paid by the carrier, or in being far too lenient with its decisions. It would avoid creating a disparity between decisions made by different entities handling complaints. Having a one-stop shop where complaints are received and allocated to the different agencies would ensure that the complaints are handled more impartially and consistently, creating a more uniform case law, rather than having decisions depend on the company that is paying for the agency's services.

All of this, incidentally, is consistent with recommendations made by the Senate, which studied Bill C-31 at the same time as the House, since it had requested a pre-study.

We also tabled amendment BQ-7. I do not have enough time to go through all of our amendments, but they were so great that everyone should go read them. They show that we could have achieved a good collaborative result if only the government had shown some willingness to co-operate and if the matter had been studied by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

● (1745)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that the government has extended the offer of working in collaboration, whether it is outside or inside the House. I appreciate many of the comments Bloc members have made on this particular legislation, Bill C-31. At the end of the day, it is very much needed. We can talk about the procurement process and the changes taking place because now we are moving toward a Crown corporation. I use that as an example.

There is a very heavy legislative agenda and a finite amount of time in the chamber for debate. We are debating a bill that, ultimately, I would argue, should have passed in late 2025 or in early 2026. I would ask for the member's thoughts on that aspect.

● (1750)

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I would like the parliamentary secretary to tell me how we are supposed to debate a bill before it has even been tabled by the government. The budget was introduced in December 2025. Bill C-31 was introduced in the House in May 2026. How do you expect us to go any faster? They are forcing us to work faster on a bill that contains far too many things, a bill that really should have been split up into separate bills and debated properly by the relevant legislative committees. It would have been even better if the budget did not contain an array of measures that have absolutely nothing to do with a budget, despite being included in a budget implementation bill.

[*English*]

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise as the representative for Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies.

I would ask the member from the Bloc why she thinks it took so long for a government that has had over a year to pass a budget. This bill was introduced in November 2025, over one year ago. Why does she think it has taken so long for a government to move its agenda forward?

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, at the risk of repeating myself, this bill likely could have been examined much more quickly had it not been such a catch-all of completely unrelated measures that should have been introduced as separate bills and debated by the appropriate committees. It would have made more sense for the Standing Committee on Transport to examine the very lengthy section on travellers' rights, for the Standing Committee on National Defence to examine the issue of the Defence Investment Agency, and for the Standing Committee on Health to examine the issue of pesticides.

The government decided to lump all of this together, perhaps to cloud the issue, as Chantal Hébert said. The government only has itself to blame. No one else slowed down the work on this file.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is true that we could have used another 10 minutes, because not only was this relevant, but it was also a good idea to go over the time issue and what has already been done. It really does feel as though we are doing some things over again.

I am thinking about countervailing duties in particular. The Bloc Québécois and many elected officials called for this measure. The entire industry agreed that it would not cost the government a penny more.

What does my colleague think about the fact that, a year later, the government has still not done anything to implement a measure, a solution, that will not cost it a penny more?

Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, generally, the Bloc Québécois has no shortage of good ideas. We are not stingy with them, either. We love to share them with the government. Earlier, when the parliamentary secretary asked me a question, he told me that they liked working in collaboration with the Bloc Québécois. I am still trying to figure out how they worked in collaboration with us on Bill C-31. In fact, when it comes to all the amendments that we proposed or that others proposed, like the Conservatives or the Green Party, and that, in some cases, all opposition parties agreed with, they did not even bother to analyze them or explain why they were rejected. They simply shot them down, as if to say that if an idea did not come from them, it was no good.

Perhaps we can talk about collaboration in a different context.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to Bill C-31, which is typically referred to as the budget implementation bill.

I would say that this budget is pretty disjointed, and I will explain why.

Bill C-31 was introduced on November 4, 2025, more than a year ago. It is a massive omnibus bill containing 364 clauses spread across four parts and 17 divisions.

Looking beyond the tax measures, I want to discuss a few legislative changes that the government has chosen to fold into this catch-all piece of legislation.

First, there is the issue of pesticides. What is that doing in a budget? The government wants to abandon the requirement to re-evaluate pesticides every 15 years. What on earth is that doing in a budget? It is a fair question.

Then there is tobacco and vaping. The government is also proposing legislative changes in that area. Access to information is another concrete example of what makes this an omnibus bill. The government is looking to create new exemptions from the disclosure of confidential information concerning retail payment activities. There is also a defence component. The budget establishes the Defence Investment Agency and also expands ministerial powers.

The bill also seeks to create something else, specifically government immunity. The bill protects against certain legal proceedings for any acts or omissions made in good faith in the context of financial regulation. The government is certainly not short of ideas. That said, it may not always apply them in the right place at the right time.

I have yet another example, and that is public contracts. New regulatory powers are being created in this area regarding government procurement and complaints to the procurement ombud. Human rights will also be affected. The position of deputy chief commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission is being eliminated. I am still talking about what is in the budget.

In terms of international research, changes are being made to the board of governors. That is also in the budget. It also deals with mining rights. We have talked about labour relations, official languages, banking services, insolvency, financial institutions, the Tax Court of Canada and even housing.

It is clear that the government simply wanted to pass a budget, but in reality the bill contains far more legislative reforms than one would normally find in a budget measure. It is true that some provisions do relate to the budget, and I intend to address them. However, the examples I have just given make it clear that, in most cases, the government used the budget bill as a vehicle for legislative changes it wanted to enact.

I would also like to draw the House's attention to a particularly important precedent. On June 1, following a point of order raised by my colleague, the member for Mirabel, the Speaker of the House acknowledged that the provisions dealing with air transportation constituted a distinct legislative proposal. They had nothing to do with the budget. This concrete example shows that the government attempted to use the budget to introduce legislative changes that were unrelated to the budget. Who agreed with that assessment? The Chair did.

I hope that the government will take note of the situation and stop trying to have us believe that they want to pass a budget when, in reality, these are major legislative reforms that have nothing to do with the budget.

Today, I rise to speak about a major step backwards in pesticide regulation. More than 70% of Quebeckers oppose the reintroduction of certain pesticides that were previously banned for environmental or public health reasons. The government's Bill C-30 allows this, and Bill C-31 goes even further.

The government is eliminating the mandatory re-evaluation of pesticides every 15 years. In its budget implementation bill, the government is removing the 15-year pesticide re-evaluation requirement that has been part of the Pest Control Products Act since 2002.

People need to understand that this is the most significant rollback since this law came into effect in 2002. This law was created to regulate the use of pesticides. In the budget, the government is secretly going to amend a law that has nothing to do with the budget.

Does the House see the hypocrisy in that? This is what the Liberal Party is doing these days: hiding changes to pesticide legislation in the 2025 budget, just as it hid an immigration plan in the 2026 budget, not to mention all the other examples I referred to earlier.

● (1755)

The question I have for the government is this: How are Canadians supposed to trust it? How are they supposed to maintain trust in our public institutions? This is not just my perception: Seventy per cent of Canadians say they do not trust our institutions, and I find that appalling. Every day, as a member of Parliament, I strive to be transparent as well as accountable to the citizens who have placed their trust in me. However, when I see a government acting in this way and pushing through major legislative reforms as part of a budget, I do not think that demonstrates transparency. There is no public debate taking place about these changes.

The government says it is introducing good measures that are intended to help the public. That may be partly true. However, why is it also slipping in legislative changes that we barely have time to debate? The government is trying to push them through the back door, then it turns around and accuses us of being obstructionist and of refusing to support its budget, as though we opposed the worthwhile measures it contains. We are asking for each issue to be debated separately. If the government wants to discuss the re-evaluation of pesticides every 15 years, it should introduce a bill on the matter. Then we can debate it transparently and openly. It should not be included in a budget.

My concern with these pesticides is that the Prime Minister has spent the past several months travelling around the world promoting increased trade with the European Union, yet here is something the European Union does that the Canadian government does not: It has banned the use of more than 120 pesticides. The Canadian government allows the use of those pesticides. The connection is obvious. We want to expand trade with partners whose standards differ from Canada's. In fact, I would argue that the European Union is ahead of the curve. If it banned those pesticides, it was because they were deemed harmful, yet here in Canada, instead of strengthening the regulatory framework governing pesticides, the government is looking to weaken it. I am very concerned about that. I think the Minister of Health's role should be to protect public health and the environment, not to protect the financial health of lobbies for the oil and agrochemical industry.

I think that the question that I raised today is highly relevant, but it also raises a matter of historical precedent. Another precedent that I would like to call attention to concerns the one set by the Minister of Health who, last winter, openly boasted about participating in a meeting organized by CropLife Canada. What is CropLife Canada? It is a business association representing pesticide producers. Does anyone know what the Minister of Health said? She said that she was the first health minister in the history of Canada to attend one of this organization's meetings. First, the minister boasted about attending a conference of influential pesticide lobbies. Second, she weakened controls on the use of pesticides. I think that the question answers itself. How can people trust a Minister of Health who flirts more with pesticide producers than with groups that promote public health or environmental protection? That is the question I am raising today, and it relates to the provisions in Bill C-31, which we are debating today.

I think that Bill C-31 is a step in the wrong direction. It proposes legislative changes that have nothing to do with the budget procedures that should be taking priority. It is also a major step backward when it comes to public health and the environment. Once again, the government is weakening the mechanism that was intended to ensure pesticides are periodically reassessed and, where necessary, withdrawn from use by certain agricultural producers. From now on, that will be left to the discretion of public health authorities. They will determine whether there is a risk and whether a pesticide should be reassessed. I am deeply concerned that this approach will lower the level of protection that we ought to be maintaining through a precautionary and forward-looking regulatory framework.

That concludes my speech for this evening. It will come as no surprise to anyone that the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this bill.

● (1800)

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are extensive consultations that are done with respect to presenting a budget and the budget implementation bill. The member himself made reference to about 15 different areas that I counted where he would like to see independent bills. Surely to goodness he is very familiar with the process. All of these items were part of the consultations in one way or another. Even the opposition members here had the opportunity to provide feedback.

I reflect on when the bill was introduced back in November of last year. There is nothing that has been said today that was not said back late last year. Does the member believe that maybe it is time we allow this bill to pass?

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to produce the public consultations that were done on the plan to reintroduce pesticides that were banned because they are harmful to public health and the environment. He needs to show us the public consultations done on changing the regulatory framework and complaints, particularly in the air transport sector. They never happened.

What the member just said is the opposite of the truth. All the government did was introduce an omnibus bill. I gave a few examples in my speech. There was no real public consultation. Furthermore, the Speaker of the House agreed with my colleague, the member for Mirabel, that some of what was included in the budget was irrelevant.

● (1805)

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Could you explain again why you think so many Canadians are distrustful of our institutions?

The Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, I would remind members that, under the Standing Orders, members must not address other members directly by saying "you". Rather, they must speak to other members through the Chair.

The hon. member.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I gave a clear example during my speech.

When the government introduces major legislative reforms that have no connection to the budget, reforms that have never been discussed openly and transparently in a public debate here in the House, it undermines public confidence in our institutions.

I will give a concrete example that actually erodes public trust in democratic institutions, particularly Parliament, and that is when a government, in this case the Liberal Party, engages in backroom dealings to secure a false majority. Following the last election, there was a minority government.

The Liberals brought opposition lawmakers into the government and, for the first time in history, formed a majority government. This significantly erodes public trust in institutions.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that my colleague brought up some valid but serious points.

Let us talk about the crisis of confidence. Honestly, I feel so at ease and sleep so well knowing that I am a member of the Bloc Québécois. I imagine myself in the shoes of my colleagues across the way when we see the government fold to the lobbies at the mere mention of the word "oil". Seriously, that is their kryptonite.

If I were in their shoes, I would be really ashamed that the government is not capable of standing up for itself when it comes to public health. This is serious.

Does my colleague agree that things are much better in the Bloc Québécois and in Quebec?

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I will give a concrete example of how even members of this government are uncomfortable within their own ranks. The member for Mississauga—Erin Mills is currently sponsoring a petition against Bill C-39, a bill that the government is proudly championing. Liberal government members are sponsoring a petition against their own government. That should give them pause. There was also another member from Vancouver, in British Columbia, who publicly expressed his discomfort with the bill.

I hope that the government will do some soul-searching and stop thinking that some great saviour banker is going to rescue Canada and somehow solve all of the challenges and problems facing the country.

[*English*]

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to once again rise in the people's House to share some remarks regarding the budget implementation act. I must say that as I was preparing for this, a quote I heard some years ago at a leadership conference came back to me. It was Dr. John Maxwell, who said it like this when he was challenging the leaders in the room. He said that many of us in the professions that we hold are running quickly to the next appointment and rapidly to the next meeting, and that we barely slow down. In fact, because we have important appointments and engagements, we feel like to slow down would take away from what we should be doing. He also said that real leaders walk slowly through the room and take the time to hear the stories of those they come in contact with on their way to where they want to be going, because oftentimes we miss the most important moments along the way in our busyness and in our hurry to make the next grand proclamation or the next great announcement.

I think there is a lesson that is applicable to the subject we are discussing and debating in this chamber today, which is that while the government has mastered the art of announcements and proclamations, it has missed the moment many times of the impact of its decisions or lack of concrete actions on everyday Canadians. That is why it is worth slowing down to hear what we are hearing from people who are living under the consequences of the decisions being made in the House.

I could not help but further think of another illustration that has stuck with me and impacted me, which came back to me as I was preparing. It was a gentleman talking about a fine orator and a speaker who was invited to give a speech. He was well educated and certainly well trained and well versed and he loved to give grand speeches. He was invited to a speaking engagement and probably felt in his mind that it was a bit beneath his abilities. It was a smaller audience. He went reluctantly, but he went, and as he went in, he did not have much time for the people who were there. He kind of considered them a bit perhaps country bumpkins who were not quite of his calibre. He was a well-trained professional, a well-educated man with great potential on the upward trail. Why would he be slowed down and inconvenienced with this little appointment? He was doing a favour for these people, and so he rushed in and did not shake hands on the way through. He arrived a little late, waited for his grand introduction, quickly assumed the podium and then started his remarks.

However, his delivery fell far short of his acumen. His delivery did not connect with the audience and it kind of fell flat. That young, astute gentleman who had great potential ended up leaving in a whole different posture than when he came in. He came in looking very assured and walked out looking very humbled. An older gentleman at the back of the building paused and said to the young man, “Sir, you've got all kinds of potential, and your acumen is great. The announcement that preceded you was wonderful, but I must say the delivery fell far shorter.” He said that he had one piece of advice for him, “Why don't you walk in in the posture that you walked out in?” He told him that if he came in a humble posture and took the time to listen to those he was going to communicate with, he probably would have connected with the ones he was talking to when it was time to communicate.

What is the lesson for all of us here in the House? It is that the leaders who know how to listen, the leaders who, in the face of great challenges, are willing to take the feedback of those they represent and hear the cries of those they are called to serve who will be the ones who have a far bigger and lasting impact. Right now, our country has gone through a year and a half of grand proclamations and great speeches on big stages, yet the results have left them wanting. What are they? Let us look at them just a little.

● (1810)

In 2015, when the current government assumed power, our national debt was somewhere around $632 billion. Right now we are at over $1.3 trillion. That means from Sir John A. Macdonald through the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, the national debt had been accumulated to $632 billion. That means, in the time since then, under the current government, the national debt has more than doubled. With that have come increasing interest payments on that debt, which is now projected by 2030-31, according to the PBO, to be nearly $85.5 billion a year. That level of service charge on the debt alone is more than what we will be sending to the provinces in health care transfers. It is likely more than what we will be able to spend in national defence. All of a sudden, Canadians are wondering, how can we not meet our bills, and pay our bills, when the government is living way beyond its means? All of a sudden, it starts to come back and Canadians are asking if the government is really listening to what we are experiencing.

There is a great gap between the announcement phase and the reality phase. What is happening is we are seeing upwards of 43% of Canadian manufacturers now choosing to relocate their businesses outside our country. That is staggering. That has huge ramifications for jobs for Canadians.

We are now seeing that from 2015 to 2024, according to the Royal Bank of Canada, over $1 trillion in net capital investment has fled our country for other jurisdictions. Why is that? It is because capital goes where it is wanted. Investment goes where it is wanted. What is causing the impediment for investment into our great country right now? It is not our people. It is not our ingenuity. What is standing in the way? It is over-taxation, over-regulation, and things that we have that no other like jurisdiction has anything close to, like an industrial carbon tax. As soon as they come in, they are being hit with barriers and taxation that makes them uncompetitive internationally.

We can blame any scapegoat we want, and we can blame any other foreign country for the perils that we are in, but it is becoming more and more clear to more and more Canadians that the challenges are from within. We have to change course and head in a different direction if we are going to see our country come out of the economic malaise that we are in. It is not sustainable to keep going in the direction that we are going, just spending and more spending, backed up by further announcements about more spending, but still no results.

How do I say that? To get a mining permit and to get it from the permit stage through to starting with shovels in the ground, it is taking, on average, over 14 years. That is not competitive. That does not make us a place where other countries want to come in and say they want to do business in Canada. They look at that and say that it is prohibitive. Why would they come to a country that for over 11 years said that what they were producing is dirty oil and dirty gas that is killing the planet? Investors look at that and say they are not going to be welcome to do business in that country in the long term. Can we trust them to be able to do business?

We must change course, not just by announcements, but with real results, starting with repealing the bills that stand in the way of investment in this country, like Bill C-69, the “no more pipelines” bill, and Bill C-48, and then start bringing the taxation level down. Then businesses will want to invest, and workers will be able to gain meaningful employment, take care of their families and begin to dream again of actually having the life they wanted right here in the greatest country in the world, Canada.

That time to begin is now. Let us move beyond the announcements, and get to the reality of doing real results and real business for Canadians.

● (1815)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the member talks about building a real Canada, one of the things that I flashed back to was just a couple of months ago when the Prime Minister hosted the world, saying that Canada that was open and we wanted investors, both within Canada and abroad, to come to Canada.

We had historic amounts of money, we are talking about half a trillion dollars, talked about and committed in terms of what we wanted to see, working in collaboration with different provinces and indigenous leaders, which are now talking about dozens of major projects. All of that is going to build that stronger and healthier Canada.

Does the member believe that what the Prime Minister hosted back in Toronto was a good thing for Canada? If so, why?

Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, I always respect the number of hours the member spends in the House. It is incredible the amount of time he puts in.

However, the member just said that there has been a lot of talk about talk regarding potential talk of future investment that may come. I hope that every Canadian can take that kind of talk, walk into their bank tomorrow and say, "I want you to know, Mr. Banker, that I was talking to so-and-so, and so-and-so said they might think about lending me more money that may be able to be applied to my overall income perhaps sometime in the future. In fact, Mr. Banker, I am here today to announce that I have a promise of an MOU, and I have someone else telling me they might do it somewhere down the road in the future. Hang on, Mr. Banker, because there is another announcement on the way, if you are not fulfilled with that announcement."

We have to get beyond the announcement phase, get real results and deliver for Canadians in real time.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we often hear the Conservatives talking about their opposition to debt and deficits. Certainly, the size of the debt is outrageous.

At the same time, we have a government that subsidizes the oil industry in all sorts of ways, including by funding a pipeline. There is a whole range of measures that support the oil sector, and those too contribute to the massive deficit.

What does my colleague think about that? Do oil companies need government subsidies? Should taxpayers be providing them?

Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Quebec. It is truly a pleasure to speak with him this evening.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, in response to that, the oil and gas sector has helped build this country and make it one of the most prosperous and, throughout our history, one of the best places to live and do business. It was what enabled many of our social programs to exist in provinces like mine in New Brunswick and throughout *la belle province* as well. It is through transfer payments that were derived, in large part, from the oil and gas sector. Whatever we can do to talk up our energy sector and our resource sector, we need to be doing. It is time to end talking it down. Yes, let us invest strategically, so that our nation can continue to prosper.

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague on his inspiring words and the picture he painted about the life of people in Canada.

I would like the member to expand on his commentary on the government's desperate clinging to failed policies. The Liberals are almost forcing themselves to bribe industry to stay engaged in the economy, when it is the cost of compliance that those in industry are facing that is driving them away and stopping them from investing in the potential of private endeavours and the private potential of the country at hand.

Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely important that the government begin to understand that the best and most sustainable economies in the world are not those that are built on the back of more dependence on government but those that produce an environment in which business can thrive and grow, produce, hire and generate wealth for its citizens. That is the best way we can solve economic problems. It is to grow our private sector and emphasize growth in the private sector. It is a tragedy in this country that the sector growing is the public sector. What we need is more growth in the private sector. That is what is going to overcome this.

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, do members remember when Justin Trudeau promised Canadians three years of small deficits and then the books would be balanced? That was back in 2015. Well, we all know how that turned out. We have a decade of Liberal deficits, a mountain of debt fuelling inflation and Canadians paying more for just about everything. Then along came this Prime Minister, the former central banker, the alleged economic whiz kid, the man who promised change. Well, the numbers are in, and the results are anything but responsible. The Prime Minister is not fixing Trudeau's mess. He is actually making it worse.

The Conservatives have identified $765 billion in projected borrowing over five years, borrowing money we do not have so Ottawa can spend it. That is three-quarters of $1 trillion.

The Prime Minister calls his budget "Masters of our destiny". My Conservative colleagues have a better name: "Mastered by debt". It is a costly credit card budget Canadians cannot afford.

Trudeau promised small deficits and gave us massive debt. The Prime Minister promised change and gave us an even bigger spending problem. The difference? He just has a bigger credit card, and Canadians are stuck with a bigger bill.

Here is something that every Canadian can understand: interest. Anyone with a mortgage knows what interest is. Anyone with a credit card balance knows what interest is. This year, the federal government expects to spend more than $60 billion just servicing its debt. Not paying it down, but just paying the interest. By 2030, that annual bill is projected to pass $85 billion. It builds nothing. It hires no one. It treats no patient. It just keeps the lights on for yesterday's spending. Think what that money could do, such as more doctors, better services for seniors and support for our veterans. Instead, it goes to servicing debt.

Think about a family in my riding of Edmonton Griesbach. Both parents work. They are trying to pay the mortgage. The grocery bill keeps climbing. The cost of gas keeps going up and their kids need new winter jackets. That family has to make choices. They have to live within their means. Why can the government not do that?

Young people are already struggling to afford homes, and the Prime Minister's answer is more debt, more borrowing and more spending. When someone is in a hole, the first rule is to stop digging, but the federal government just rented a bigger shovel.

Here is another troubling part of this budget: immigration. During the election, the Prime Minister promised to get immigration under control and that it would be sustainable, matched to our housing supply and public services. The government advertises a target of 380,000 permanent residents a year, but buried in that budget is a plan. They want to see up to 200,000 temporary residents become permanent residents in Canada by the end of 2027. If we add them together, that is 580,000 people, equal to a city larger than Halifax. Let me be clear. We need skilled workers, but immigration must be sustainable.

Conservatives have asked the government to cut waste, rein in consultants, cut corporate welfare and scrap the Alto rail plan, which is estimated to cost $150 billion over the coming decades. That train should never leave the station.

Ottawa does not have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem. The tap has been left running for 10 years and now our basement is flooded. Ordinary Canadians do not have unlimited credit cards, so why should their government?

Then there is corporate welfare. Why should a small business owner struggling to make their payroll watch Ottawa hand out billions to politically favoured industries? Businesses should succeed because Canada is a great place to invest, not because they know the right people in Ottawa. Here is a better idea. Conservatives proposed eliminating federal taxes at the pump, roughly 20¢ a litre, up to $1,200 for a family, but the Liberals refused. The cost of fuel is sky high. When the fuel costs more, trucking costs more, groceries cost more and Canadians pay the price.

When the money does flow, look at where it goes. This summer, the government's new Defence Investment Agency handed a $2.3-billion sole-source contract to Telesat, run by Dan Goldberg, a close friend of the Prime Minister. That stinks worse than a skunk in a sauna. The Prime Minister's own conflict of interest screen covering 103 companies tied to his old firm, Brookfield, did not cover Telesat or Mr. Goldberg, yet the PM's own AI minister, also a close friend of Mr. Goldberg, has one. It was only after Conservatives asked the Ethics Commissioner to investigate that the Prime Minister asked for a screen. That was after the contract was already signed.

● (1825)

What about Brookfield? The Prime Minister chaired that company before entering politics. He left holding stock options and a share of the fund's profits. Brookfield's profits are reportedly up nearly 500% under the Prime Minister.

The Ethics Commissioner told the House of Commons ethics committee, “It is clear that [the Prime Minister's] future compensation is tied to the success of Brookfield”.

When ordinary Canadians ask for help, the cupboard is bare, but when it is a friend of the Prime Minister's, the money flows.

The Prime Minister also likes to remind Canadians that he used to be a banker. For a former central banker, one would think he would know what a good balance sheet is. Maybe he needs a refresher course in economics.

Andrew Coyne of The Globe and Mail put it this way: “What was it someone said: hope is not a strategy? It's not much of [an approach to budgeting] either.”

Jack Mintz, writing in the Financial Post, said, “In [the] budget, the [Liberal] government used new-found fiscal room to ramp up spending, not cut the deficit.”

The Parliamentary Budget Officer found the government's definition of capital spending was “overly expansive” and gave the government's deficit target only a 7.5% chance of being met.

Canadians were promised competent economic management. Instead, we got more borrowing, more interest and no balanced budget in sight.

Through you, let me ask the Prime Minister something. He claims to be fiscally responsible, but does this budget show that he is?

Luckily, Conservatives have a plan: Cut wasteful spending, reduce bureaucracy, take federal taxes off gas, get deficits under control and tie immigration levels to housing, health care and jobs. These are not radical ideas but common sense. Let us spend less than we earn, not borrow what we cannot repay and not leave our children to clean up our financial mess.

● (1830)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how the Conservatives like to disown responsibility. For example, during the pandemic, we had a wage subsidy at $100 billion and a CERB program at $74-plus billion, all of which was more like the Progressive Conservative Party at the time, which supported initiatives like that. Now they try to walk it back and say that maybe we should not have borrowed that money.

We need to recognize that Canada has a AAA credit rating. We have the fiscal capacity to do the things we are doing. What we are doing is investing in Canadians. Whether it is through major projects or Red Seal-type programs, there is a litany of things we have done. The bottom line is that it is all about investing and building a stronger, healthier economy.

Does the member not recognize that building Canada will make it a healthier Canada?

Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, building Canada is not driving it into a debt situation that our kids and grandkids are going to have to pay off. That is not building Canada. That, indeed, is destroying Canada.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Edmonton Griesbach for his presentation. It was not quite as fiery as the one previous to that from the member for Tobique—Mactaquac, who really puts passion into it, but I thank him for a great speech.

One of the things that have come up in this debate is how the delivery has come short of the expectations or the promises. We have seen a Liberal government, for over a decade now, promise to build Canada's economy and promise to build Canada, yet all it is doing is building incredible debt that is going to be passed on to future generations, generations far beyond our children and grandchildren, possibly. In the next five years, three-quarters of a trillion dollars in debt is going to continue to pass on. This year's debt service cost is $6,000 for a family of four, which they did not ask for but the government is imposing on them.

I would like to ask the member this: Does he believe the government has continually gone to the credit card to pay off last year's credit card and the credit card from the year before that? What is that going to mean for the future of our children?

Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes a good point. There is the fact that the Liberals say they are building Canada, but they are building bureaucracy and they are building a mountain of debt. Anybody who has had a credit card, or anybody who is any kind of financial whiz kid at all, would know that the more we start borrowing money for what we are spending, the more we are digging ourselves into a terrible hole.

We have to stop this, because our very country is at stake. It is ridiculous. It is just absolutely ridiculous. The member across the way talks about a AAA credit rating, but how long will that last with this kind of runaway spending? It is ridiculous.

[*Translation*]

Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we all know the expression, "this meeting could have been an email". That is the impression I got from last spring's budget statement.

Following his excellent speech, my question for my colleague is this: What do the Canadians and Quebeckers watching us from home think? I am thinking especially of the ones who pay taxes and struggle to make ends meet. I am thinking of the business people who fight to keep their businesses profitable and who realize today that the House of Commons of Canada—all of us here are paid well—is currently debating the implementation bill not for last week's budget, but for last year's.

What message does that send about the effectiveness of Mark Carney's Liberal government, especially when it is running enormous deficits?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the member that the Prime Minister's name must not be mentioned in the House.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Kerry Diotte: Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes a good point. It is like Groundhog Day with the Liberals. They spent too much in 2025, and they will spend too much in 2026, 2027, 2028 and 2029. It is ridiculous, and we know that it fuels inflation and makes life more expensive for Canadians.

How is that building Canada? I do not get it. That is a very poor approach to budgeting, and it imperils our very country. It is terrible.

● (1835)

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are income taxes, the sales tax, GST, the payroll tax, EI contributions, CPP contributions, excise duties on products such as alcohol, the fuel excise tax, the clean fuel tax, GST on top of the fuel excise tax and the clean fuel tax, the green levy tax, the automobile air conditioner tax, customs duties, the luxury tax, the air travellers tax and the capital gains tax, and that is just for the federal government. There are provincial income taxes: provincial sales tax, provincial fees, the probate tax and the health care tax. Then there are municipal taxes: property taxes, municipal fees and the recycling tax.

Everywhere, there is tax. We are taxed when we earn, when we spend, when we invest, when we buy, when we sell, when we employ people and when we die. Canadians are some of the most taxed people in the world.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, an average Canadian family spends more money on taxes than on food, shelter and clothing combined, and the Liberals heckling me right now across the way are proud of that.

How about when we buy goods or services? How much of that purchase price is taxes paid by the business person or the service person who sold us the goods? That is also a tax. I hear this from my constituents daily, who say they cannot do it anymore. They cannot continue being taxed up the wazoo. I am here to tell the Liberals this: Enough is enough. We have enough taxes already.

What do we get for all the taxes we pay? We get an incompetent, corrupt, out-of-touch Liberal government. The Liberals gaslight us, telling us that everything is okay.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, they are heckling me. Viewers at home should ask themselves, because they have it so good, what they get for all the taxes we pay. Do we have good airports? No. Do we have a well-equipped military? No. The cupboard is bare. Do we have good health care? We have one of the worst health care systems in the OECD. What are we getting exactly for all these taxes that the Liberals are suffocating us with?

I can say what we get. We have a federal debt of almost $1.4 trillion, that is what, and our debt is not free. Canadians will pay $60 billion next year on interest alone. It is not us, the politicians, but the people at home who will pay more than $1 billion a week on interest alone. They will pay more on interest on our debt than the Liberals will collect from them in GST. They should remember this: Every time they go to the store, buy something and pay GST, which every single Canadian pays, that is not enough to cover just the interest on our debt. Our interest costs are more than our health care transfers.

In 2015, when the Harper government left office, the debt was $612 billion, but now the debt is $1.4 trillion. It has more than doubled since the Conservatives left government. The Liberal government has accumulated more debt than all Canadian governments prior to it combined.

However, it does not stop there. The budget proposes a $62-billion deficit next year. By the year 2031, because we typically forecast for five years, the federal debt will be $1.6 trillion. That is what Canada gets. All Canadians get is Liberal debt. They tax them non-stop, and it is still not enough. Where does the money go? Imagine: Foreign aid is about $12 billion. Just this week, the Prime Minister announced $540 million to Brazil for the Brazilian rainforest. Brazil has an economy larger than Canada's and a larger population than Canada's. Why did the Prime Minister give our money away to a socialist friend?

The Liberals gave $20 billion to consultants last year, even though they were going to make cuts on consultants. The Liberals grew the public service by about 50%, but they still need to go outside and pay $20 billion to Liberal friends and advisers.

Last year, the Liberals gave $8 billion to Vietnam for gender-just rice. Why did they? They also subsidize the media. Liberals will increase media subsidies to over $2 billion next year. This is unbelievable. I do not understand how, in a democracy, the media is supposed to keep the government honest, when the government signs its paycheque. This is while the third—

An hon. member: Every other democracy does. Russia sounds nice.

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, I am very well familiar with Russia. I grew up watching Soviet people line up by the walls reading Pravda, a.k.a. the Canadian version of the CBC.

● (1840)

This is while a third of Canadians are skipping meals or reducing food intake because they cannot afford groceries. That number is over 40% among people ages 18 to 34.

While these Liberals are heckling me, four out of 10 Canadians cannot afford to eat.

Shame on you. Be quiet.

The Deputy Speaker: I have to make sure that the member knows not to speak directly to the members.

This is the member's time. It is not a group activity; it is one person's activity. I can only recognize one member at a time, and I will invite the member to continue his speech, but to speak through the Speaker, not directly to members.

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North does not believe the stat. He should read The Salvation Army report from two weeks ago. Four out of 10 Canadians ages 18 to 34 are skipping meals or reducing their food intake "because they [cannot] afford groceries".

Liberals take so much of Canadians' money. What happened? The Liberals happened. Liberals take so much of Canadians' money to spend on programs that do not work and to spend on foreigners. Then, they come up with another program, so they will tax Canadians some more. Then, the program will fail, so they will tax Canadians some more to create another program, and that program will fail.

In this budget implementation act, the Liberals say that they gave Canadians a tax cut last year. How much was the tax cut? The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that the average taxpayer saved $90 on their 2025 federal income tax. That was only six months. This year, we have a full year, and the estimate is $180. That is $15 a month.

The finance minister will get up and say that the Liberals cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We will ask him how much he gave them in real dollars, and the answer will be $15 a month. That does not even buy lunch anymore. The Liberals stand here, pontificating, gaslighting the opposition and blaming us.

Let us talk about that. In 2015, when the Harper Conservatives left government, Canada had the wealthiest middle class in the world. Google The New York Times article about it and then the subsequent reprint in the National Post.

Canada was a heaven on earth, but members should look at what the Liberals did. Now, Ontario would be the poorest state in the United States. When are Canadians going to say that enough is enough?

We need Conservatives to fix this horrible mess that has real implications for real people. We are so blessed with natural resources. We should be the richest nation in the world. Instead, we have more than two million people at the food bank. Enough is enough.

We should cut Liberal spending, Liberal waste and taxes. We should let Canadians breathe. They cannot breathe because of the Liberals' taxes and programs.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was an impressive leadership speech. I can give it that much.

I do not know if you are going to be able to sell it outside the far right, but I can tell you that, with regard to many of those taxes he is making reference to, Canadians love their health care system. Canadians love the fact that there are many different services the government provides.

Canadians want to be paying a fair share and get a good return. That is something on which this government is focused, and that is why we believe we need to invest in Canadians. We want to build a stronger, healthier economy that works for all Canadians. It is only the far right that opposes everything—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the parliamentary secretary to give time for the member for North York to respond.

Also, a reminder to the parliamentary secretary to speak through the Speaker. I am not selling anything.

I invite the member for North York to respond quickly, because the House has an order to finish at 6:45 p.m.

Roman Baber: Mr. Speaker, anything that is a little right of centre is far right for this member, because there is nothing liberal about the Liberals anymore. They are illiberal, and it is not far right; it is right so far.

The member for Winnipeg North is talking about health care. Canada has one of the worst health care systems in the OECD, even though we are among the top spenders on our universal health care system. I invite him to visit North York and the North York General Hospital. There are two and a half beds per 100,000 people. North York has grown up to—

● (1845)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:45 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 1.

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.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 2. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 3 and 4.

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.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the recorded division on Motion No. 2 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 3 and 4.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 5.

[*English*]

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the vote on Motion No. 5 stands deferred.

[*Translation*]

The question is on Motion No. 6. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 7, 9 to 15 and 17 to 32.

[*English*]

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the vote on Motion No. 6 stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 7, 9 to 15 and 17 to 32.

The question is on Motion No. 8. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 16.

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.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, the recorded division on Motion No. 8 stands deferred. The recorded division will apply to Motion No. 16.

Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands further deferred until Tuesday, November 24, 2026, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in June, I asked the government how the Liberals could continue spending billions of taxpayer dollars while a record 60,000 Manitobans were visiting food banks every month, including thousands who work full-time.

Five months later, the situation has only gotten worse. The Liberals have introduced another massive deficit, adding billions in new spending while Canadians struggle to afford the basics. According to Food Banks Canada's "HungerCount Report 2026", food bank visits have increased 117% nationally since 2019, including a nearly 10% increase in Manitoba in just the past year.

When I raised this issue in June, Manitoba's only federal cabinet minister responded by touting her communities as some of the poorest in the country. She then went on to list her government's subsidies and programs, which have clearly failed to improve the circumstances of any of those communities that she represents or do anything at all to lift those people out of poverty and off government dependence.

This radical spending is a recipe for that number to continue climbing and for outcomes for Manitobans to get worse, not better.

How many more Canadians have to go to a food bank next year before the Liberals realize they are wrong, their policies do not work and they need to change course?

How many Manitobans and how many Canadians is it going to be? What is the number?

● (1850)

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for Canadians all across this country, affordability is not an abstract issue. It is what is left in their bank account after paying the mortgage or rent, buying groceries, filling up the car and covering the monthly bills. That is why budget 2026 focuses, rightfully, on income, housing, food and energy security.

Our government understands the reality that Canadians are facing, which is why budget 2026 contains a plan to deliver on what matters most, which is giving Canadians the opportunity for a better life. That is why the budget proposed a new 2027 Canada groceries and essentials benefit supplement, representing a one-time 50% enhancement next year. This would mean up to $339 for a single person without children and $679 for a couple with two children. This move alone is expected to lift an additional 120,000 people out of poverty in 2027. Combined with the increases we introduced this past summer, the total support available through the Canada groceries and essentials benefit for 2026-27 would be up to $1,290 for a single person without children and $2,570 for a couple with two children.

To further support those working hard to build a better life for themselves, budget 2026 proposes to introduce the build Canada workers benefit, which builds on and enhances the existing benefit with a much lower minimum earnings threshold. It would also increase the maximum benefit to $1,859 for single individuals and $3,143 for families. These enhancements would increase benefits for up to 1.9 million low-income workers, including 180,000 new recipients.

As well, we know that housing is often the biggest expense in a household. To build a bridge to a better tomorrow, we need to invest in housing today. Budget 2026 contains a housing strategy based on three pillars, which are to eliminate homelessness, expand non-market housing and build a housing market that works for all. To get people off the street and into safe, warm housing, the budget proposes $10 billion through Build Canada Homes to support the delivery of about 24,000 supportive and transitional homes annually across Canada. That is in addition to maintaining support for existing programs that help prevent homelessness, such as the Reaching Home initiative and measures to address veterans' homelessness.

Build Canada Homes would also receive an additional $13 billion to supercharge the availability of non-market housing, putting it on a path to deliver 200,000 new homes across the country in the next decade. To bolster affordability for those looking to buy a home, budget 2026 proposes to extend the ban on foreign purchases of existing residential properties for two years, to January 1, 2029, and change mortgage insurance rules to help unlock financing for the missing middle segment of multi-unit homes.

Our work to make life more affordable began before the budget was drafted. Since July 1, 2025, our government has reduced the personal income tax amount by 1%, putting another $840, on average, in a two-income family household. Importantly, the bulk of that tax relief will go to Canadians in the lowest tax brackets.

This is about focusing support where it can make the biggest difference, and providing relief to working and middle-class Canadians while allowing families to keep more of their hard-earned dollars in their pocket. That is what the government is about. That is real help that will support Canadians, and budget 2026 continues that trajectory.

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, the translation on that is that the Liberals, despite year after year of worsening economic results and worsening affordability results, are not interested in changing anything they do, because they think everything is working perfectly, and they just need to give more money away and spend more government dollars. They have no intention of pumping the brakes on their reckless spending.

Conservatives measure success by how many people we get off of government subsidies and programs, and the Liberals believe the opposite. It is clear that it does not work. By every measurable outcome on affordability, they are doing worse now than they did two years ago, and worse now than they did 10 years ago.

If record numbers of working Canadians are already forced to rely on food banks, how high must the numbers get before the Liberals admit that their policy failed and change course?

● (1855)

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, it seems that Conservatives measure their success based on how much they divide and misinform Canadians and weaken this country. With every step and at every turn, they advocate for doing nothing and then nitpick on what we should invest more in. They do not really have a strategy, an economic plan. It is as if they picked their economic plan and advice out of a Cracker Jack box, because it does not make any sense to anyone.

In our case, we have had 3.3% second-quarter growth in the economy. We have made strategic investments in our economy to boost productivity and to give Canadian businesses the confidence to invest in themselves at a time when there is an all-time high level of uncertainty in the economy. That is how we really make progress. It is giving Canadians the confidence to grow the economy, invest in them, provide affordability support and ensure that we have a prosperous economy. That is exactly what we will stay focused on.

HEALTH

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in June, the Liberal health minister announced an independent third party audit of Canada Health Infoway after Conservatives exposed the $300-million PrescribeIT scandal.

It was on that basis that, on June 30, the Auditor General declined a request by the health committee to audit PrescribeIT, saying that an audit at this time, by her office, "would be duplicative and therefore of limited added value".

The government has hidden behind that letter ever since to avoid accountability. On November 16, the Liberal member for Vancouver Quadra told this House that a third party audit was "currently under way."

Furthermore, in response to Order Paper Question No. 1479, the government stated, "The review and audit are both currently underway."

Three days later, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health told this House the government is "in the process of hiring an auditor."

Those statements cannot all be true. The audit cannot be under way if the government has not hired an auditor. Canadians were promised an independent audit more than 150 days ago and still do not have one.

Why did the Liberals tell Parliament that an independent third party audit was under way when they had not even hired an auditor?

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I will tell the member for Riding Mountain the same thing he has heard every other time he has asked this question.

The Minister of Health launched a multiphase review of Canada Health Infoway in June. This review includes a third party audit of Canada Health Infoway's contribution agreement with Health Canada and an external strategic review of Canada Health Infoway's governance and organizational structure, as well as its mandate.

This work is under way now. We should be receiving the findings for both within the next month. As the minister has always said, we will be sharing the findings as soon as they are available, along with our plan for next steps. This is important work.

We are taking every step to make sure that we get it right, so that Canadians can rest assured that their money is being spent in a way that is efficient, effective and, above all, transparent.

Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the government has not answered a basic question.

In Order Paper Question No. 1479, Liberals told Parliament in writing that the review and audit are both currently under way, yet the Liberal Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health admits they are "in the process of hiring an auditor."

Why did the Liberals mislead Parliament and the Auditor General?

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, again, our government understands that Canadians expect us to seek transparency in how their money is being spent.

Work on Canada Health Infoway's multiphase review is now under way. We will have the results very soon for the member opposite.

We look forward to sharing the findings soon, along with our plan for next steps, so that we can modernize our health care system in a way that meets the needs of all Canadians.

● (1900)

THE ECONOMY

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be here in the evening during the Adjournment Proceedings to seek better answers than what we received during question period. The question I am rising on is an old one now. I want to focus on part of the response I got then, when the Minister of Agriculture did something many members of the Liberal cabinet and their parliamentary secretaries do. He suggested that Conservatives somehow do not believe in Canadians when we criticize government performance, when we demand accountability from government or when we raise important facts about Canada's economic status and its numbers. I wanted to just debate that a bit here tonight and unpack this.

Conservatives believe in Canada, but what we also demand on behalf of Canadians is accountability from their government. The Liberal government has spent 11 years executing poor economic policy that has chased business out of Canada. It has spent 11 years piling on public debt. It has spent 11 years breaking all of the promises it makes in each election and in each budget cycle about what its future deficit and debt numbers are going to be.

The government members get upset when the opposition points out that, yes, they did indeed promise to balance the budget within the first three years. It was balanced to start with, but the Liberals promised to run small deficits and balance the budget during their third year in office. They did not do it, and they do not like being reminded of that. They do not like being reminded each year that the previous year's budget projections have been blown.

Here we are again: We have a new budget that has a deficit of $62.3 billion, but it has an overall borrowing demand of $149.5 billion.

We would usually say the deficit is the amount we need to borrow. People usually get their head around this, and usually those numbers are roughly the same for the borrowing amount, borrowing demand and the deficit. There are a few adjustments for, say, pension surpluses or deficits or these kinds of things, but this is the first time we have seen such an extraordinary jump between the actual deficit and the borrowing demand. It is $87 billion. That is the difference. Of that amount, $59 billion is going to be borrowed and moved off the balance sheet, where the Liberals hope Canadians will not see it.

Where have we seen this before? It is like we are watching a documentary on Enron or something, using special-purpose vehicles and shoving money over here, hoping there will be no future demand from the Crown to repay. Debt service is the fastest-growing part of the budget. It is the fastest-growing expense of government. It now exceeds health care. It far exceeds national defence. The government is recklessly piling on $765 billion.

We believe in Canadians, but we do not believe in saddling future Canadians with today's debt, which the Liberals are committing future Canadians to pay.

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the member opposite believes in Canadians. It is great to hear him assert that in the House. We share that. We both believe in Canadians. We believe in this country. It is good that we can stand on solid ground together on that front.

What we disagree on is certainly our approach. Our government has found $60 billion in operational savings through a comprehensive expenditure review since coming to office. We have reported $11 billion less of a deficit in the spring economic update than was projected and $27.5 billion less of a deficit in the budget this year compared to the projections in the spring economic update. We have confirmed with the PBO that we are on track to meet our fiscal anchor, balancing our operating spending one year ahead of schedule. We are sticking to a declining deficit-to-GDP ratio, which is what we committed to in the past.

We are also at a moment in our history when we are going through a profound disruption. We are in a trade war where our economic security and sovereignty are being tested. There are wars in other countries that are affecting energy prices here at home. That is exactly what our government is looking at, and tackling these issues head-on, which is to say that we cannot allow things to get worse on an affordability front for Canadians. That necessitates our investing in an economy to ensure that it grows, to make smart and strategic investments to grow our economy and ensure that we have rising wages.

The Conservatives in the House for years talked about per capita GDP. I did not hear them mention a word about per capita GDP when it was rising by 3.9% in the last quarter, Q2, when those results came in. They did not say a peep about productivity then.

Our government has cut taxes on income, housing, fuel and new business investment. Our productivity mega deduction has made it so that Canada has the lowest marginal effective tax rate of any advanced economy in the entire world. We have done more in budget 2026 to ensure that entrepreneurs who are successful can reinvest their capital back into a growing economy.

We are doing things that are not sexy, the things that are part of improving the operating environment for businesses across the country, such that the Business Council of Canada, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Innovators and Entrepreneurs Foundation all stand up and support our government, saying that this is an investment-first economic strategy when they refer to our budget 2026. They refer to our Prime Minister as someone who understands economics and is getting Canada back on track to build a strong, prosperous economy where wages outpace inflation. That is a key metric for us, and that is what we have seen every month the current government has been in power.

● (1905)

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I heard the member say the words "getting...back on track". I will take that as an admission that, after 11 years, this country was off the rails economically. This admission from him, while refreshing, does nothing to alleviate the concerns Canadians have about the economic leadership from the government.

The PBO has much to say about the budget that he left out, but this whole business of a declining deficit-to-GDP fiscal anchor is exactly the point. Every time one of the Liberals' previous fiscal anchors gets blown through enough times, they just make up another one. That is what they have done with this. They should return to a declining debt-to-GDP ratio, which is rising.

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. They ran six consecutive deficits under Prime Minister Harper, so we will take no advice from the Conservative Party of Canada as to how to balance a budget or invest in the economy.

What I can tell members, though, is that we agree we are on track right now. I heard the member opposite support our government's strategy, that it is on track to build a prosperous, stronger Canadian economy. Those results are showing up in our economy, with new business investment rising by almost 9%, 8.9%, which is significant, with foreign direct investment coming into the country at a nearly two-decade high.

We have seen many results already. We have added more jobs per capita than the United States has since the trade war started. We have seen other signs of strength in the economy, with consumer spending being quite high and resilient. Those are good signs. We are going to continue making progress.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:10 p.m.)

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