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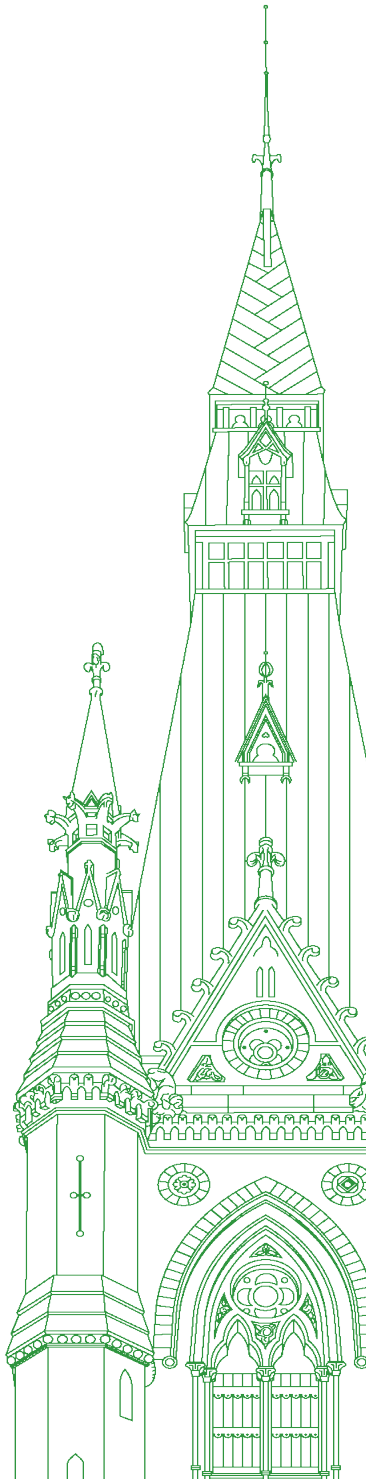

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 26, 2026

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[*Translation*]

BUDGET 2026 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 1

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (for the Minister of Finance and National Revenue) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-43, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 5, 2026.

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

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

EXERCISE OF POWERS UNDER THE BUILDING CANADA ACT

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Special Joint Committee on the Exercise of Powers Under the Building Canada Act, entitled "Review of the Governor in Council's and the Minister's Exercise of Their Powers and Performance of Their Duties and Functions Under the Building Canada Act".

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I present the official opposition's dissenting opinion on the second report of the Special Joint Committee on the Exercise of Powers Under the Building Canada Act.

Conservatives dissent because Canadians deserve more than announcements from the Major Projects Office. Transparency, accountability and measurable results are necessary for public trust.

On November 3, the minister resisted disclosing which companies, banks and agencies had seconded employees to the MPO. Only after repeated questions and media scrutiny did the government disclose 41 secondees. Importantly, the MPO still has not disclosed how many conflict of interest screens are in place, how many employees have recused themselves on decisions about their employers or competitors, which projects are impacted or evidence of independent oversight.

A conflict of interest framework is not the same as demonstrable enforcement. Conservatives urge parliamentary oversight. The minister and MPO CEO went more than six months before answering to the committee while two major projects got national interest designations.

More than five months after the committee's first report, there is no measurable progress on its six recommendations for regulatory coordination, indigenous engagement, labour mobility, conflict of interest safeguards and regular reporting to Parliament.

The MPO also cannot show which project milestones it accelerated while questions remain about the Prime Minister's promised Pacific pipeline's timeline, preferred proponent and cost to taxpayers.

Our dissent calls for the full release of recusal records and independent ethics oversight to prioritize Canadian workers, materials and private sector attraction, and preserve the act's five-year sunset safeguard and mandatory quarterly MPO reporting.

As always, Conservatives want accelerated approval and construction of major projects. Designation is not construction. Announcements are not results. Ethics are not optional. Canadians deserve transparency, accountability and material progress, not central planning, politicized decisions and the illusion of Liberal fixes to what they broke in the first place.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I believe the member for Repentigny would like to table a supplementary opinion. In order to do that, he needs the unanimous consent of the House.

Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois already expressed the fundamental reasons for its opposition to the Building Canada Act and to the existence of the Major Projects Office in the committee's first report. Bill C-5 was already bad enough, given that it was based on an authoritarian view of the role of government and such a devaluation of the law, but the Liberal government was not finished yet, and it introduced Bill C-39 to overturn the safeguards that the Bloc Québécois managed to have included in Bill C-5.

As soon as they got a majority, the Liberals began running roughshod over nature and sacrificing endangered species, democratic processes, the rights of workers and indigenous peoples, and most importantly, the future of generations to come. The government is using the national interest to justify all of these sacrifices, but it is not taking young people into account when making those decisions. Young people are the ones who are saying so.

More than 300 students signed an open letter to the Prime Minister in which they argue that the national interest should be centred on ensuring a healthy environment and a dignified life for everyone, rather than protecting the profits of private companies. Instead of speaking on behalf of young people and claiming to serve their interests, as the Liberals are doing, I prefer to give young people a voice, listen to them and advance their demands. That is precisely what I am doing today by tabling this dissenting opinion, which reflects the genuine concerns raised by young people in their open letter.

* * *

● (1005)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

SALMON FISHERY

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition on behalf of residents from Royston, Bowser, Courtenay and Cumberland.

The petitioners are calling on the government to reverse cuts to Fisheries and Oceans Canada programs and personnel responsible for Pacific wild salmon stock assessment, monitoring habitat restoration and community supports; to restore sufficient scientific, technical and restoration staffing to ensure critical salmon programs and field operations are fully delivered; to address the delays in hiring and contracting that are undermining seasonal stock assessment and monitoring programs; to ensure community and indigenous-led salmon restoration projects have timely access to DFO technical expertise, permitting support and coordination; and, finally, to protect and restore the long-term scientific capacity required to conserve and rebuild wild Pacific salmon and sustainably manage Canada's fisheries.

The petitioners highlight the cuts to creekwalkers, who provide valuable stream-level information on salmon escapement and changing watershed conditions.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling petition e-7742, signed by 21,410 citizens and residents of Quebec and Canada. The petitioners are concerned about two changes. First, Bill C-30 would allow the government, for economic or food security reasons, to restore the registration of a pesticide even if it could pose environmental risks. Second, Bill C-31 would eliminate the mandatory re-evaluation of pesticides every 15 years.

The petitioners are calling for the amendments in Bill C-30 to be repealed, for the provisions amending the Pest Control Products Act to be removed from Bill C-31 and for regulations to be based on independent science and the precautionary principle.

I would like to thank Gérald Chouinard for initiating this petition, as well as all the signatories and the organizations involved: the Association pour la santé publique du Québec, Victimes des pesticides du Québec, Vigilance OGM, Prevent Cancer Now and the David Suzuki Foundation.

[*English*]

SHEN YUN

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions that I would like to present.

The first two petitions have been submitted to my office by Brenda Liu, a constituent of the riding of Waterloo, with a collective of 76 signatures. Brenda and other constituents from the riding of Waterloo are petitioning to bring Shen Yun back to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

The petitioners would like to see Shen Yun's performance restored in the national capital. They were really disappointed to hear that they would not be able to see that performance.

The petitioners look forward to a response by the government.

UKRAINE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last one is electronic petition e-7798, initiated by Terence Labach, a constituent in the riding of Waterloo.

With hundreds of signatures, petitioners support having player Alex Ovechkin added to schedule 1 under the special economic measures, Russia, regulations.

The petitioners believe that the hockey player has shown public support for the Russian president, and thereby support for the illegal war and aggression against Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The petitioners would like Alex Ovechkin to be denied entry into Canada, whether that be for work or pleasure.

The petitioners look forward to the government's response, reconfirming the government's position and standing with the Ukrainian people and with Ukraine.

● (1010)

UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO CANADA

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this being American Thanksgiving, forgive me for taking a moment in these times of stress to say to American relatives that we all look forward to the day that Canadian and American families can join together. A lot of us have friends and relatives across the border and know that American Thanksgiving is a real occasion for bringing families together.

This petition is in that spirit. It is sponsored by a resident of Calgary who brought this forward on parliamentary sponsorship. Parliamentary sponsors cannot take a position on a petition, but it is worth noting that this electronic petition number 7531 has gathered an extraordinary 285,993 signatures from Canadians who agree with the petitioner that U.S. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra has repeatedly made public statements undermining Canada-U.S. diplomatic relations, including characterizing the 2025 election in Canada as anti-American.

Mr. Hoekstra has continued to repeat some of his president's threats that Canada should become the 51st state. He describes these as a "term of endearment". Canadians feel otherwise, obviously. Mr. Hoekstra has accused Canada of interfering in U.S. domestic politics. He has been linked to a Michigan-based voter identification app used by the Alberta separatist movement.

I will summarize this, because there is more. The petitioner, a resident of Calgary, joined by nearly 290,000 additional Canadians, says the following, "That we, the undersigned residents of Canada, call on the Government of Canada to: 1. Formally declare Pete Hoekstra persona non grata, and request his removal as U.S. Ambassador to Canada; 2. Raise with the United States"—

The Speaker: There is a point of order. I believe I know what it is. The member should not be reading from the petition. Is that what the—

Elizabeth May: I am not reading the petition; I am summarizing.

The Speaker: No, I heard that the member was going to read.

The member may continue, but I will warn everyone that we should not be reading petitions.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am familiar with the rules, and I was summarizing the petition. I left out a good chunk of the specifics.

Since the hon. parliamentary secretary has invited me to explain more, the petitioner, a resident of Calgary, specifically references Mr. Hoekstra's links to a Michigan-based voter identification app that was used by the Alberta separatist party, and that the Alberta Prosperity Project has met with U.S. administration officials.

Again, the petitioner and the many people who have signed this petition really deserve to be heard in this place, at least. This petition calls on the Government of Canada to take action to declare this particular person not a diplomat, because nothing he does is diplomatic, and declare him persona non grata and have his removal from Canada.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 2

The Speaker: Before we proceed, I wish to remind hon. members of the Speaker's ruling of Monday, June 1, 2026, regarding Bill C-31, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025.

At the time, the Chair indicated that, pursuant to Standing Order 69.1, the question on the motion for second reading would be divided to provide for a separate vote on measures that were absent from the budget presentation and its related documents.

[*English*]

As the bill still contains these measures, we will follow a similar approach at third reading.

Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 69.1, the question on Bill C-31 will be divided at third reading stage as follows: A first vote will deal with part 4, division 17, or clauses 339 to 364 of the bill, which amend sections of the Canada Transportation Act that appear under the heading "Administrative Monetary Penalties"; a second vote will deal with all remaining provisions of the bill, which contain measures to implement certain provisions contained in the budget.

● (1015)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marjorie Michel (for the Minister of Finance and National Revenue) moved that Bill C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, be read the third time and passed.

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-31 and the important impact that it will have on the future of Canada and the future of my riding of Beauport—Limoilou. This bill, which seeks to support and encourage Canadian industry, includes several important measures. What is happening with our neighbour to the south has put us in a very unusual situation, one that explains in part the actions that we are taking today, which have become essential in these changing times.

When I worked with businesses, we talked a lot about diversification. We talked about diversifying customers, for example, so that no single customer would account for more than 30% of sales, thereby reducing the risk associated with suddenly losing that customer. We talked about diversifying suppliers, having two or three suppliers for the same inputs in case an unforeseen event occurred and orders could no longer be filled. We even talked about diversifying sources of financing, about working with several banks that supported the business in different ways, so that it can be properly supported throughout its growth cycle. What we did not talk about, however, was diversifying the countries to which the company exported in case a political problem were to arise. Of course, there have always been countries around the world that are considered to be higher risk and with which it is inadvisable to do business, but our neighbour to the south was never on that list, and I do not think anyone could have imagined that the situation would deteriorate to this extent.

I mentioned at the start of my speech that this situation explains our response in part. In fact, the current government is taking bold action to wake up the country from this slumber that it has been in for many decades now. The circumstances of the past two years have exposed this reality within our country. In particular, we have been reminded that we need to protect our sovereignty, be masters of our own destiny and start building again like we used to do.

We are no longer building enough. Like other countries, we have gradually lost the ability to build. As the years passed, we introduced procedures, new steps, new standards and countless other requirements. Individually, all of these standards make sense. They seem to address very specific needs. Taken as a whole, however, these same standards make construction projects harder to carry out. They result in endless delays that discourage developers and, above all, the people who stand to benefit from these projects. Everyone has heard of eagerly awaited projects that ended up taking 10, 15 or even 20 years to build because existing processes had to be followed.

Guess what? People are losing trust. They no longer trust their public institutions to get projects completed in a reasonable amount of time. The outcome of it all is a housing shortage, industrial sectors put at risk, a lack of investment and investors, a significant productivity gap among our businesses, a lag in innovation and public services that are becoming less and less effective. This generalized status quo has to end. The public expects us to get things moving. Here are some of the things we are going to implement.

We will accelerate nation-building projects in close partnership with the provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, and private investors. On September 14 and 15, we held the 2026 Canada investment summit in Toronto. The theme was “Canada has what the world wants”. Canada must be the country of choice. We need people to invest in Canada. Twenty-seven projects of national interest worth a total of $192 billion were submitted to the Major Projects Office. By telling investors from around the world that Canada has a AAA credit rating, a stable banking system, and access to free trade agreements, we were inviting them to invest here. The result is $500 billion in commitments.

We will also introduce Canada's first comprehensive buy Canadian policy, ensuring that public funds are used to strengthen our supply chains and support local innovation. This will give Canadian businesses an edge in public contracts, prioritize Canadian steel, aluminum, and wood, expand Canadian procurement for Ottawa-funded infrastructure, facilitate access to federal contracts for small and medium-sized enterprises, and encourage Canadian innovation and research. In doing so, we will be able to provide our businesses with greater predictability and encourage them to invest more in their own growth, thereby supporting thousands of jobs.

● (1020)

We will also make the largest investment in defence that Canada has made in decades. Our new defence industrial strategy will grow our defence sector and boost the capacity and competitiveness of domestic suppliers. Bill C-40, introduced earlier this fall, supports that ambition. The Canadian corporation for defence investment will enable hundreds of businesses to become suppliers within Canada's defence sector. Through loans, loan guarantees and insurance, we will reduce our reliance on foreign suppliers and strengthen our own supply chains.

We will also seize new opportunities in a changing world by launching a trade diversification strategy that will double overseas exports within a decade. Over the past year, we have signed more than 20 economic and security agreements on five continents. We are currently exploring several more such agreements. Our aim has been to enable our businesses to diversify their customer bases and suppliers while supporting their growth, ensuring their long-term viability and providing them with greater predictability.

We will boost growth and innovation by lowering capital costs for Canadian businesses through the productivity superdeduction. We are making the immediate expensing measures permanent by increasing the eligible investment rate from 15% to 65%, while lowering the marginal effective tax rate on new investments to 6.4%, the lowest rate among all industrialized countries. This is for all kinds of businesses, whether it is the local coffee roaster looking to buy a new coffee machine or a large corporation wanting to bring in a new production line. We are encouraging businesses to invest here and now. We are sending business owners a strong message that every crisis presents opportunities, and we are helping them seize those opportunities.

We will also foster a clean economy through Canada's climate competitiveness strategy. How are we going to do this? We are going to provide clean technology investment tax credits. We are going to invest $50 billion in the electricity grid and provide $400 million to support industrial and manufacturing businesses. We also recently announced $2 billion in support for the installation of heat pumps. There is also the proposed extension of the clean electricity tax credits to 2040. Finally, we will continue to expand our network of charging stations.

The time has come to build our economy bigger and faster than ever before, to make Canada less dependent on others, more self-reliant and better prepared for the future. As I said earlier, every crisis presents opportunities. We can choose to complain about the current situation and wish things would just go back to the way they were, or we can seize this incredible opportunity to shape our future, to rewrite the script, to take action rather than be acted upon, to innovate rather than maintain the status quo, to invest in the next generation, to believe in our country, our strengths and our abilities, and to make the most of the advantages we possess.

I myself have chosen to roll up my sleeves and get to work. I hope my colleagues opposite will do the same and vote in favour of Bill C-31.

● (1025)

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about working to move supply chains away from the United States, and he talked about trade diversification. I know that he recently got elected, so I just would like to share a bit about the history of Stephen Harper. Way back in 2006, he advanced an aggressive agenda of signing free trade agreements. He actually signed 43 free trade agreements around the world. I am appreciative of the Liberals' renewed focus to implement that agenda.

I am just wondering if the member is aware of the agenda that Stephen Harper undertook, starting back in 2006.

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I was indeed familiar with the current Prime Minister's agenda, because that is why people elected us. They elected us to get things moving. The companies where I worked for nearly 20 years want to be part of what is coming, but they cannot do it on their own. We need to help them.

As I mentioned earlier, we need to support local supply chains and local businesses. The Defence Investment Agency will enable us to help them join in. After all, asking them to just invest, get on board, and put up money without knowing what is coming is a lot to ask. Now, we will be able to help them overhaul their production lines. Making these changes will take between six and 12 months and cost a lot of money.

We will support our local suppliers.

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague, whom I respect immensely.

What does he say to his constituents who need the countervailing duties, who need transparency, who are concerned about credibility and whether they can trust our democracy? Could he explain what the government plans to do? This is unprecedented. There will be no more safeguards, no more accountability. Those are not my words. That is what the procurement ombud says.

Where was my colleague when it came time to stand up and say that this was going too far?

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, whom I also hold in high regard.

We were elected to bring about change and to move things forward. As we have seen, for the past 40 or 50 years, Canada has become a country where things do not get built. The seaway is a useful, vital and essential tool for trade in Canada that was built over a five-year period, but that was the last big project to be built.

If we look at each of the bills separately, we see that they all make sense, but taken together, they make it hard to get anything built. Investors have lost confidence, and the public no longer believes in the ability of their public institutions to see projects through to completion.

We are trying to reduce delays without removing any safeguards or regulations. We want to push ourselves to do things faster so that projects can be completed in a reasonable time. As many folks used to say, anything that takes time either makes a mess or costs more. Costs can double, triple or even quadruple. There are examples of this all over the world, and plenty in Canada, too. When projects drag on, costs go up. People often do not realize that they are throwing money into a black hole.

That is what we are doing.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the way my colleague addressed the bigger picture, the holistic approach, of what the government has been able to accomplish.

I would focus in on many of the other things the member has raised today, and has raised with me personally, such as the productivity mega deduction and high-speed rail. I wonder if the member could comment further on those two issues.

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I am really glad he asked.

I will start with the mega deduction. There was an interesting article in La Presse this morning. The reporter had some good things to say about the mega deduction, which is not just for large corporations. As I said, it can also help the little roastery on the corner. The reporter noted that it is available to self-employed workers too.

The idea is to invest now and claim the deduction now, rather than over a number of years. As the reporter indicated, that encourages people to invest immediately and improves their cash flow right away. The mega deduction even applies to self-employed workers. People need to learn more about it because it will have a significant impact on our economy.

● (1030)

[*English*]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, you might recall the time when Liberals would rise in the House and talk about how they were going to protect pharmacare. Even Liberals from the seven provinces and one territory that do not have pharmacare agreements would do that.

The Prime Minister himself said he was committed to signing agreements with the seven provinces and one territory last year. Not a single agreement has been signed for the critical medicine needed by people who are living with diabetes, like insulin, or birth control, something the Liberals prided themselves on. We passed the Pharmacare Act.

Are the Liberals abandoning pharmacare? Canadians need to know. Canadians in the seven provinces and one territory do not have equal treatment. It should not be someone's postal code that determines whether they get the medicine they desperately need. There was a commitment from this country. In the last election, I will remind members, the Prime Minister committed to signing an agreement with everybody.

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raises an important question about Canadians' health. I just checked my notes, and I see that we are investing heavily in health care. Let us just consider dental care. In my riding of Beauport—Limoilou, 28,000 constituents have access to dental care, and more than 180,000 will be getting access to caregiver support.

All of that is written in my notes. Then we have Canada's national school food program, the fight against homelessness in the next budget, and the list goes on.

I would like my colleague to remind the opposition members that they voted against all of these measures. They are the ones who need a reminder.

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to circle back a little to the question I asked earlier. I see that the Liberals are now stealing Conservative ideas: pursuing an aggressive trade diversification agenda, and the mega deduction, which is something we called for, particularly when the United States had put that in place a number of years ago.

I am just wondering if the member is not embarrassed about the last 10 years of Liberal rule.

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I see that my colleague is stuck in the past.

One of the things that life has taught me is that ideas have no political stripe. What we are doing today by diversifying markets is going to help businesses. They need that help now to diversify their activities. We are working on the things within our control. We have no control over what happens south of the border.

What we do have control over is the way we can support our businesses today. The mega deduction is available here and now, in the next tax return. We are telling businesses not to hold off on investing, but to do it now. They can write off their investments now, rather than depreciate them over three, four or five years.

This deduction is a game-changer: It changes investing and it has a tangible, immediate impact on Canadian industries.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important we correct the record in terms of the Conservatives' trying to give a false impression and trying to change history. The Conservative Party did not sign 40 trade agreements. That is clear. We just cannot change history.

However, what we can say is that in the last 18 months or so, the Prime Minister and the government have entered into well over 22 trade and security agreements. Trade agreement negotiations have been concluded; there will be signatures. Legislation has actually passed over the last 18 months under the current government.

● (1035)

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I did not respond to the second part of his question about the high-speed train earlier.

I would encourage people to read the Aviseo consulting firm's study. Voting against the high-speed train means voting for more asphalt, more concrete and more pollution.

I urge everyone to read the report. I am certain it would change their minds.

[*English*]

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to lead off debate on Bill C-31. For everybody who is watching at home, this is budget implementation act number two for the budget, not for the one that was tabled a couple of weeks ago but for the budget that was tabled about 12 months ago. That year-end was actually on March 31. We are voting on stuff here in a budget for which the year ended eight months ago, but we are dealing with it only now.

This is how the Liberals have been managing, first, the legislative agenda, which is not a priority; and second, again, the Liberals' doing their shell game on how they do budgeting now, where the budget is actually tabled six months after the fiscal year starts instead of being tabled at the beginning of the year so departments and Canadians could know the direction of the government and how their hard-earned taxpayer dollars are going to be spent by department officials. We are dealing with this only now, after the fact, because those dollars have already been spent and we are into a new budget. The new budget was tabled six months too late.

We have to keep in mind that the Liberals' management of both the legislative agenda and how they are doing the budgeting process is flawed. We know that the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Auditor General, as well as leading economists such Don Drummond, who used to be in the Department of Finance and the Bank of Canada, have all called out and criticized the government for using three different credit cards: an operating budget, a capital budget and Crown corporations. The Crown corporations are being used to shuffle money off the books and then transfer the debt to the government Crown corporations.

I want to talk specifically about division 16 in Bill C-31, which involves the second iteration of the Defence Investment Agency. As we know, following the last federal election, the Liberals were able to stay in power, and the Prime Minister announced he was going to set up a new Defence Investment Agency to expedite procurement. Through that whole process, they hired the best friend, the BFF, of the Prime Minister, Doug Guzman, who is now the CEO of the Defence Investment Agency.

The Liberals did not like how it was working as just part of PSPC, so they moved it out of the government department and want to set up this special agency through Bill C-31, the second iteration of it. This would still require more bureaucratic oversight, more reporting mechanisms, more transparency, and accountability back to Parliament and back to Canadians. However, essentially what it turns out to be is that it was reported that Doug Guzman threatened to rage-quit. He actually talked about how he was disappointed and frustrated with the whole process. We really know that the Liberals then had to pivot.

We are dealing with Bill C-40, which is at the national defence committee as we speak. We will be starting clause-by-clause on that bill on Monday, because we have already been studying it and have had over 16 hours of testimony from witnesses who appeared before the committee, as well as briefs mailed in by numerous different individuals and organizations.

The bill would turn the DIA into a Crown corporation, where all expenditures coming through that new DIA Crown corporation would be used to help obscure the books of the federal government, because then it would become both a debt and an asset at the same time, which would cancel each other out. It would allow the government to hide the true debt-to-GDP ratios.

I think Canadians need to understand, too, that the government likes to use, in its calculations of GDP expenditures and government debt-to-GDP ratio, the Canada pension plan, which is the asset of employers, employees and other people who have paid into the CPP. It is not a government asset, but it uses that fund to actually reduce the national debt, which is approaching $1.8 trillion under the Liberal government.

The Prime Minister says that he was an economist, a great manager and a fiscally responsible individual, but he is actually adding another more than $800 billion of debt over the next five years to our credit card, which is going to further burden Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1040)

Just the interest payments alone on that are $6,000 per year per family this year and will be going up to over $8,100, almost $8,200, per year in the next five years. That is right off the top of all the taxes we pay, and it is, for every family, $6,000 to $8,000 coming off over the next five years, just to pay the interest on the national debt, which has now ballooned to over three times more than what it was when the government took office.

On the Defence Investment Agency, first and foremost, Conservatives support one point of accountability on defence procurement. Second, we will always support the Canadian Armed Forces. We will continue to support the Canadian Armed Forces and ensure that it gets the equipment it needs to do the dangerous work it is asked to do on behalf of Canada first and foremost: defending Canada right here at home, protecting our sovereignty, investing in our Arctic infrastructure and protecting it from any incursions from Russia, China and others.

For over 10 years under the Liberals, and it was a lost Liberal decade, morale tanked. Recruitment and retention became a major issue. The number of people actually serving dropped significantly. The Liberals are now announcing all sorts of money. We can change the budget tomorrow, but we cannot improve morale overnight. That is going to take work. The Liberals have lost the trust of the people who serve. They may be getting some new people signing up, but they still have the retention problem on the other side, as guys and gals who work in the Canadian Armed Forces are still walking out the door over and over again.

We know that we are going through another round of belt tightening. We are looking at a cut of over 10% to the operating budget of National Defence. We saw that play out over the weekend. We saw how the Liberals were cutting the cadet program. There is a great outcry from families in the cadet program. It is the largest youth program in Canada. It is the only one funded by the federal government. It is funded through National Defence. It is really geared toward those youth in Canada who are patriots and want to show how they serve. They really do represent the best of the best of the kids we have. The Liberals cut it.

Because parents and Conservatives were outraged over this, the minister had to reverse himself. The money was announced. There is going to be money there to continue on with the drilling, the training and the parading from now until the end of the fiscal year, but there is no guarantee on how it is going to affect training in the next summer and the next fiscal year. We want some surety on that.

I would also just say that the reserves cut is something that is still hurting badly. We know that the reserves across the country have been told that they get only one paid day a month now to train, and to come in for their weekly parade and roll call. We know that they are not going to be allowed to go out there and increase their skills or further their education in the trades they have selected within the Canadian Armed Forces.

The reserves represent 25% of our armed forces. When we deploy, 20% to 25% of our forces who deploy, including to Latvia right now, are always reservists. The Liberals have cut their training, have cut their paid days and have laid off full-time reservists. There are actually members who have worked full-time in our armouries across the country and who have been given a pink slip. They have now lined up in the unemployment line and are applying for EI. That is ridiculous.

How can we say that we are standing up for the Canadian Armed Forces, as the minister likes to do all the time, when the Department of National Defence is actually laying off full-time reservists? That is disgusting and has to stop.

I just want to say that having the Defence Investment Agency in Bill C-31 makes no sense. A new bill is going to be coming in, and there is actually a clause at the end of Bill C-40, which, if that bill passes after Bill C-31 becomes law, would delete a whole section of Bill C-31, division 16, which is dedicated to the establishment of the Defence Investment Agency as a special operating agency. We have to address that. The idea behind the Defence Investment Agency is to start to finally make investments in our Canadian Armed Forces, which the government has done so poorly.

● (1045)

The Liberals like to say they have hit the 2% mark, but they have done that through creative accounting. They have moved things into defence spending that were never there before. This includes all of the budget of the Canadian Coast Guard, most of the budget of Veterans Affairs, and planes from Transport Canada that have nothing to do with defence.

The Coast Guard has nothing to do with defence. It is actually used for ice breaking, fisheries, patrols, science and vessel research. It has no role in national defence and national security. It is a great operation, but it should not be a part of National Defence unless we are going to arm and equip its people and turn them into a constabulary force. We cannot do that, though, because they are civilians.

If we want to compare apples to apples, the Liberals always say the Conservatives spent only 1%. In our last year, that was true. We had a deficit reduction action plan. We reduced every department by 6%, and we balanced the books. At the end of the day, there was a short-term cut of the Canadian Armed Forces. However, Stephen Harper committed in 2014, at the NATO summit in Wales, that we would get to 2% in 10 years. The Liberals failed to do that when they took government in 2015.

If we really want to compare apples to apples, we can compare National Defence spending under the Harper Conservatives and National Defence spending under the Justin Trudeau Liberals. They were at 1% spending during the last year of Justin Trudeau. They have nothing to talk about when the only way they got to 2% was by using creative accounting.

There is another metric we should use in comparing how bad things have gotten with the Liberals since we left office. We talked about performance reviews of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. We talked about fleet availability. In 2014, the fleet availability of the Canadian Armed Forces was 84%.

Let us compare that to what has happened today under the Liberals. We know that only 45% of maritime vessels are available for use at any point in time. For land vehicles, like tanks and LAVs, only 49% are available for use at any point in time. For our aircraft in the Royal Canadian Air Force, that is under 44%. It was 84% under the Conservatives, and it is under 50% with the Liberals. That is the metric that proves whose military can defend Canada and deploy. It was the military under the Conservatives. The government that cannot do that without major drawdowns within the Canadian Armed Forces, its bases and wings across this country, is today's government under the Liberals.

I just want to highlight some of the things that we bought. The Liberals have not bought anything, including under the Defence Investment Agency. There are many announcements, reannouncements and potential bidders they are going to work with as preferred suppliers, but nothing has been bought. We have not bought subs or fighter jets. The Liberals are still waiting around to make a decision on the F-35s. We need those planes today, and they have not committed to the entire purchase.

The Conservatives bought 650 brand new LAVs; 500 new tactical armoured patrol vehicles; 100 new Leopard tanks; 82 armoured heavy support vehicles; 50 Nyala vehicles, which are Jeeps; 37 new howitzers; 21 new Chinook helicopters; 17 CC-130J Hercules aircraft; 16 IED clearance vehicles; five Globemaster aircraft, so we can move our forces and materiel around the globe to wherever they need to be; and four new UAVs. We also did the life extension for our CF-18s and the life extension of all our frigates. That put us in a position to better promote Canada abroad, to work with our allies, to defend Canada first and foremost, and to be a reliable partner to our NORAD and NATO partners.

Bill C-31 and the Defence Investment Agency part in division 16 have a lot of flaws. Nobody can trust the Liberals when it comes to the Canadian Armed Forces, being responsible with managing our national debt or the expenditure of our taxpayer dollars.

I move that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

> Bill C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, be not now read a third time, but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Finance for the purpose of deleting all clauses contained under Division 16 of the bill, since it would be impractical and unnecessary for Division 16 to receive Royal Assent making changes to the Defence Production Act and instructing the machinery of government to create a new stand-alone agency only to be repealed later by C-40, An Act respecting production, procurement and investment in relation to national defence and national security.

● (1050)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I reflect on history and reality, on both of those things, that last speech is really out of tune.

Let me make a suggestion to the member. He was the parliamentary secretary to defence when the Conservatives hit the wonderful goal of 1% of GDP on military expenditure. Within 18 months, this government, with a new Prime Minister, hit 2% of GDP. Also, if we take a look at the comments, the member said that we have not purchased anything, and even made reference to the F-35s. Does the member know we actually have two F-35s, and we have Canadian pilots who are being trained on those F-35s?

There is a litany of issues within the member's speech, but I wonder if he can address those two issues.

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, as so often, the member for Winnipeg North likes to get up here to pontificate, yell and pull his hair. I wish he would actually quit doing that. He can come in here and constantly badger us as the official opposition, without looking at the facts. If we want to look at the facts, as I already pointed out, we had 84% of our forces at any one point in time that were deployable. It is under 50% under the Liberals.

The member wants to talk about 1%. Well, at the end of the 10 years of Justin Trudeau, and he was part of that government the entire time, they were at 1%. The only way they got to 2% was that they added in the Canadian Coast Guard, and they added in veterans' pensions and other veterans' benefits. They have added in part of Transport Canada's budget. Who knows what else they are going to do in creative accounting?

There was an increase in salaries to our Canadian Armed Forces members. Guess what they did? They actually clawed it back by increasing rents, cancelling the bonuses and decreasing the posting living differentials.

[*Translation*]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for talking about oversight and for announcing what is to come in terms of a lack of transparency.

As for accountability, the procurement ombud clearly told the Standing Committee on Government Operations that if the government keeps creating Crown corporations like this, he will no longer be able to do his job. His job is to serve as a safeguard, because we rely on him for oversight.

What does my colleague think about a future where we no longer have the safeguards we need to deal with what the government is doing, given that it is just doing whatever it wants?

[*English*]

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I should mention that I will be walking out before my entire 10 minutes is up, because I have to get to committee, and we have the minister at the national defence committee today. I ask for everybody's forgiveness that I am not standing in my spot and taking questions.

The member is completely correct on the lack of accountability in Bill C-40 and how the Defence Investment Agency would no longer be under the scrutiny of Parliament as a Crown corporation. Essentially, we would get once-a-year reporting. We may be able to call the CEO, president and chair of the boards of the DIA in front of committee, but that is not the same accountability as we have here in the House, when we have ministers appear and we can have more in-depth investigations happening by the national defence committee and the committee on government operations, or OGGO.

When we look at the role of parliamentarians, we want transparency and accountability. The government continues to hide behind organizations and bureaucracies like the DIA Crown corporation.

● (1055)

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member brought up the Liberals cooking the books. One of the items identified by the Auditor General this year is that this year and last year, the Liberals added $1 billion incorrectly in defence spending that did not actually happen. They cooked the books by taking a charge this year for items not actually received and money actually not paid out. They counted it toward their 2%, just as they counted, as the Treasury Board told us, counting fish, as an activity with the Coast Guard, as defence spending.

I wonder if my colleague could comment. Is this really an activity toward helping protect Canadians, or is it just more cooking the books by the Liberals?

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, my thanks to my friend for his diligence in holding the government to account, going into the details of government spending and asking the hard questions at the public accounts committee and OGGO. We know the government has done a lot in the shell game with its creative accounting. It has not actually invested in the lethality and kinetic capability of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The government may want to celebrate and mislead Canadians, saying we will get to that 2% metric, but guess what? That is just one thing we have to do. We actually need to ensure that our Canadian Armed Forces are properly trained, properly equipped and properly paid. The government is in the process of laying off members of the Canadian reserves in the air force, navy and army, mainly on the army side. That is affecting our readiness. That is affecting our operations, and it is demoralizing our troops.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing but respect for the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, and I hope I am not trespassing on that goodwill to ask how he feels about the fact that the first meeting of state parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons opens this Monday in the United Nations in New York without a single Canadian presence, even as an observer delegation.

I hope the official opposition would agree with Greens that we should at least have an observer delegation when the threat of nuclear war is ticking evermore towards the doomsday clock, getting closer to midnight.

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, it is very disappointing. I have long been an advocate of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The first non-proliferation treaty was signed by Brian Mulroney and the Conservative government of the day. For the Liberals to actually walk away from these discussions and the content that is going to be generated from the UN in New York is more than disappointing. It is actually making the world less safe if Canada is not an active participant.

I encourage the government to get there as we watch the great power struggles change. What we saw just this past weekend with President Trump, President Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin hugging and back-slapping is more than disturbing, seeing the great powers who control all the nuclear weapons and have the biggest arsenals potentially working together against the free and democratic world.

With that, I am out of here.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member appears to be drawing a distinction between what he calls an illusion and reality.

The reality in the Quebec City region is that the Canadian Armed Forces have a long-standing and significant presence there. When I meet with members of the armed forces in Quebec City, and there are many of them, I consistently hear three things. First, recruitment is increasing significantly; second, the recent raises were very well received; and third, 1,000 new housing units are being built at CFB Valcartier alone.

I find it difficult to reconcile the reality on the ground with the illusion the member is describing.

Would he consider sending some members of his caucus to Quebec City to see for themselves what is happening with the Canadian Armed Forces?

● (1100)

[*English*]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know our colleague had to rush off to the defence committee, but there is one thing I want to flag to everyone here. Right now, an atmospheric river and king tides are colliding on Vancouver Island, and there is a state of emergency in Ahousaht first nation and a state of emergency in the Comox Valley regional district.

I think that on behalf of everybody in the House, we can thank the first responders. We can thank the people who are lending a hand. We can thank the emergency preparedness personnel for stepping up to protect people's property and homes and making sure people are safe. I just wanted to make sure that we acknowledge those people right now in the House. I am taking a moment to do that while our colleague has left, because he cannot answer the question.

However, I will flag one more thing, and that is the question I was going to raise to my colleague. One in 16 adults who are living with disabilities in this country is accessing the Canada disability benefit. I will tell colleagues the reason why. It is because it is so hard to get the disability tax credit done. It is taking up the time of health professionals. It is taking up the CRA's time. It is another barrier on top of a barrier that people face, so they have to prove twice that they are living with a disability. I do not think anyone in the House believes that is okay. I hope the government will fix this.

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, we have before us a budget bill from a year ago. It is an omnibus bill, a massive budget bill containing all sorts of measures that have nothing to do with the budget. As a result, Parliament does not have enough time to examine it. The government is not being transparent. It is using this bill to dodge criticism and bypass the parliamentary process.

We saw what happened this week. As a Quebecker, and especially as the member of Parliament for Mirabel, it is pretty clear to me that the temperament and actions of this government and Prime Minister are becoming more and more authoritarian.

I want to talk about my late grandfather, who was a very wise man. He always used to say, "You can tell a lot about a person by the company they keep". The Prime Minister is keeping company with Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, people who asked that the men be separated from the women when they came here for a visit. We have a government that keeps company with the Chinese government. In fact, economist Pierre Fortin recently wrote in L'actualité that the Prime Minister is drawing inspiration from the Chinese model for his infrastructure projects.

Moreover, the government is still bringing forward omnibus bills. Last year's bill was 338 pages long, the 2025 bill was 600 pages long, and the Trudeau government's 2024 bill was 640 pages long.

Here we have yet another omnibus bill. I will explain why the form of the bill is problematic and show just how much can be crammed into one omnibus bill. The government is creating a new defence agency, a Crown corporation whose employees will not count toward the size of the federal public service. The government is doing away with many pesticide safety measures to accommodate the pesticide industry. It is literally selling the air travel complaints process to the private sector.

Here are a few more examples of what can end up in an omnibus bill. This year's ways and means motion referred to the Alto high-speed rail project. That shows what kind of government we are dealing with. Alto is a Crown corporation that operates with zero transparency. It is a Crown corporation, and if we want to know anything about its activities, we have to put questions on the Order Paper. That is the only way to find out how much it pays in bonuses or how it is spending Quebec and Canadian taxpayers' money on misleading advertising. We are forced to resort to parliamentary privilege just to find out what is going on with Alto.

These people are incompetent. Alto is nothing more than a marketing firm. Its CEO was brought in from the Port of Montreal after committing expense account fraud. He was asked to sell Canadians a project with a negative net economic value, all because the Prime Minister decided, out of sheer ego, that he wanted something to brag about at the G7. The government is telling people that it is going to destroy their farms, but at least he will be able to go be a show-off. That is basically what makes up the bulk of his schedule anyway.

Alto says that it will cost between $60 billion and $90 billion. What is it basing this on? We have numbers. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has numbers and a methodology. A McGill University study has numbers. A study from the C.D. Howe Institute has numbers. Everyone who is not paid by Alto has numbers.

Now they are saying that the methodology of these poor academics—like the member for Québec Centre said—is based on nothing. They are saying that it is going to cost between $60 billion and $90 billion. When we ask them where these numbers come from, they tell us that they met in a closed room with fluorescent lights, with the windows shut and the microphones off, and that they are absolutely not going to tell us where these numbers come from. Why? It is because, in order to force these projects down people's throats, the costs are generally underestimated. That has been done all over the world. The project gets started, and by the time people realize that it is too expensive and that the proponent expropriated people's land, ruined lives and farms, and lied, it is too late to stop. That is exactly what they are doing.

Meanwhile, the folks at Alto paid themselves $2.76 million in bonuses last year. How much has Alto spent on advertising? It spent $1.6 million in four months. Today, their misleading ads are in our movie theatres and subway stations.

● (1105)

When the Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons spoke to the media yesterday about his new omnibus bill—and of course I strongly condemn bills of this nature, including the one before us—he said that this is about being mindful of taxpayers' money. Some $2.76 million was spent on bonuses for people who are paid to deceive us, steal from us and engage in false advertising. The Minister of Transport refuses to consider alternative projects, but Mr. "We-Care-About-Taxpayers'-Money" did not tell us that his project will cost $500 million more for every minute of journey time saved.

Obviously, we are living under an authoritarian government. The Alto project is not just a Crown corporation project. The Liberals keep saying that Alto is a Crown corporation that will be independent. However, as soon as the people at Alto run into any problems, it is the Minister of Transport, the political arm of the federal government's executive, who does the dirty work. When a city like Kingston first says that it does not want this train and calls it an abomination, but later decides that it will calm down if it gets a station, the Minister of Transport goes straight there and solves the problems himself. It is entirely political.

This train is going to be extremely expensive. The Parliamentary Budget Officer told us that, as things stand, it will cost between $75 billion and $113 billion, not including operating costs. The McGill University study says that the Liberals will not be selling tickets at the stated price. The tickets will be subsidized. The actual cost will be at least 25% higher than Alto said. Based on a 95% confidence interval, the cost could climb as high as $243 billion.

Some sly folks on the other side will say that this would only happen if something went wrong. How much did the Trans Mountain project cost? It was originally estimated at $4 billion. It came in at $40 billion, when it was supposed to cost $6 billion. That is why the Parliamentary Budget Officer clearly says in her report that all the risk factors point to an increase on the right-hand side of the curve, because costs will be higher.

By the time we realize how much this ended up costing, the Liberals will have expropriated the land. They will have violated the rights of people in Mirabel and other communities. They will have trespassed on private property. They will have expropriated land from the Government of Quebec. They will have prevented us from completing Highway 13. People in the Lower Laurentians and the Laurentians who spend an hour and a half sitting in traffic on Highway 15 every morning will continue to suffer. The Prime Minister can go show off as much he wants at the G7, but that is exactly what they are doing to people's lives.

I was just listening to the member for Beauport—Limoilou, who, frankly, is no expert on the matter. He said that if we are against Alto, then we are in favour of more greenhouse gases, more cars, more of this, and more of that.

I will share the findings of the C.D. Howe Institute, which publishes its methodology. The institute calculated the economic benefits. In a cost-benefit analysis, we are talking about the benefits. We are starting to find out what the costs are. The study estimated the benefits over a 60-year period, up to 2098, calculated their value and converted it into today's dollars. What did it include under benefits? It included agglomeration economies, meaning that, if a train travels faster, people are theoretically closer together and there are productivity gains. It included the effects on users, on speed, on regular schedules, on CO_2 emissions and on the environment. It even included reductions in road fatalities.

What did the study conclude? It concluded that, in 2024 dollars, the total benefits of this project over 60 years would be $27 billion.

Therefore, even using Alto's fraudulent figures, even if the train costs $60 billion to build and nothing to operate, anyone in their right mind would take this project, shred it, throw it in the trash and start looking for an alternative.

Once this project is built, people will still burn fuel on the highways. We will still lack viable public transit. The Government of Quebec says it has a $65-billion asset maintenance deficit. Some cities are being forced to raise taxes. Some can no longer balance their budgets. The previous Quebec government and the other provincial governments asked for $100 billion over 10 years for infrastructure. The Minister of Finance is spending money on the Prime Minister's pet projects and giving the provinces only half of what they asked for. Then the Liberals have the gall to tell us that not wanting to throw infrastructure dollars away somehow means we do not care about the environment. That argument reflects a lack of either good faith or economic literacy.

● (1110)

They say that everyone is going to use this train. For example, Alto's ads suggest that if someone has a wedding to attend in Toronto, they would hardly see their family if it were not for high-speed rail. They add that, thankfully, Alto brings people together. That is the kind of argument this politically controlled Crown corporation is using to sell us a train. We are told the trains will be full, but a study by McGill University makes two things very clear. For one, it says that Alto has significantly overestimated ridership. This is a ploy that has been used in other international projects. The study also suggests that travellers are not willing to pay significantly more for these tickets than they currently pay for VIA Rail. What a disaster. How did the government and Alto respond? They went to a firm called Aviseo. What is it? In the language of economists, they are called mercenaries. People from this firm attend economist conventions and shake hands. I have nothing against them; they are just doing their job. The government's own competent civil servants, who are professionals, say that they cannot possibly go along with fraudulent figures and misrepresentations.

That is why the government hires that kind of firm. What do these firms do? They produce 250 to 300 versions of a model until they get what the customer wants. Now they are pointing to agglomeration economies: People from Toronto will commute to work in Quebec City in the morning, folks in Quebec City will commute to and from work in Montreal, and so on. They make it sound like high-speed rail could be like a subway. We are being told that it will boost the GDP by $24 billion a year, yet the Parliamentary Budget Officer clearly stated in her report that this makes no sense and these urban economic models do not apply. We would like to know how much Aviseo was paid, and we will find out through the means at our disposal. We will find out how much it was paid to invent GDP numbers.

It is for all these reasons that people are rising up, that the people of Mirabel are rising up. Just because the federal government is given special powers does not mean that it will use them responsibly. In the 1970s, there were people in Mirabel who were tenants on their own farms and who had to apply for permits for 17 years just to paint a kitchen and tile the floors. They could not renovate their silos. If their farms or barns burned down, as happened to my friend Éric Couvrette not too long ago, they were not allowed to rebuild. They lost their livelihoods. That is why public opinion is shifting. A recent Leger poll showed that nearly 80% of Quebeckers, including men and women from all regions, all age groups, and both urban and rural areas, support taking care of our existing infrastructure and not spending a single cent on this.

What is the response of this authoritarian government led by a Prime Minister who does not participate in parliamentary debate? Rather than taking a rational approach and saying that they will reconsider, hold genuine consultations led by an independent body and collaborate, the Liberals' reaction was to say that they are just going to push this through. They are just going to keep pushing until there is no more resistance, until people, including those in Mirabel, where the first part of the track will be laid, have no more fight left in them and understand that this Liberal gang's strong Canada is the kind that steamrolls over anyone who stands in the way of this Prime Minister's imperial projects.

The Minister of Transport keeps saying that we are only talking about a 60-metre corridor, but 60 metres is the size of an entire vegetable farm. The government wants to pass a bill that says that if farmers do not want to drive 400 kilometres per day on their tractors during harvest season, then they will have to pay out of their own pockets to build crossings to get their tractors over the fences that are breaking up their farms. The government is now targeting more properties. It is allowing third parties to expropriate land on behalf of the government and then resell it for real estate development. The government is allowing below-ground expropriation. It is allowing Alto to steal from the Government of Quebec. It is saying Alto can steal the land in Sainte-Scholastique that had already been expropriated in hopes of one day completing Highway 13. That is exactly what this law does. Those may be strong words, but that is exactly what this bill does.

● (1115)

They can take land, and Alto can even take land and transfer it to a separate entity. They can sell our property, and they are speeding up the process to make sure that people have no time to band together. I can promise them that people will band together anyway. They can look me in the eye if they doubt what I am saying.

They are allowing trespassing. They were sending drones over people's property at night. Alto was terrorizing people. There was a backlash. People said they wanted no more drones. What did Alto do instead? It sent out notices that allow them to walk onto people's property after 30 days and do pretty much whatever they please. They can excavate on people's land and disturb farmers on their farms or in their homes.

The same thing is happening in suburban areas. If anyone living inside the 10-kilometre corridor wants to install an in-ground pool, Alto can veto that idea now, because Alto gets to decide what can and cannot be done on a person's property. It can take possession of an owner's land without paying in advance. Do my colleagues realize what that means, considering we live in a democracy?

They can force people into private arbitration. The Expropriation Act, which was enacted in the wake of the Mirabel airport fiasco, provides that the federal government must cover the reasonable costs incurred by citizens so they can defend their interests and have their losses and any consequences assessed. Now Alto is going to make people pay for this and go through private arbitration. That is what they are going to do. That is the power of an omnibus bill.

There is also the issue of pesticides this year. Does this not deserve a proper democratic debate? Has the Prime Minister lost sight of what democracy really means? That is where we stand today.

The message I am sending to the people of Mirabel and to Quebeckers is that this is a project that will drain so many resources that all of our infrastructure will suffer. At the pace they are moving, this bill is getting out of control. It is being driven by people whose competence is clearly unproven. This bill will prevent us from investing in public transit, improving mobility and increasing our efficiency. That is the way it is now, and that is the way it will be.

Let us talk about the Prime Minister's ego. When the Prime Minister looks in the mirror in the morning, is it worth the damage that is about to be inflicted on farms and suburbs? Is it worth cutting off parts of Mirabel and Oka and splitting Sainte-Eustache in two? Is it worth it? Is it worth undertaking a project when the cost, in the tens of billions of dollars, outweighs the benefits? This is the Prime Minister we have before us. As I said, public opinion is shifting. It is changing.

We are getting messages. People understand that we need to take care of our infrastructure. People understand that their municipal taxes are going up. People understand that we can afford these projects, but that they have to be worthwhile from an environmental, community and social standpoint. I recently attended a lecture given by Jacques Roy, professor emeritus of transportation logistics at HEC Montréal, who is not on Alto's payroll, and he simply said that this project should be scrapped, that the cost-benefit analysis is clear. We need to scrap this project for the good of the community and find another transformative project as soon as possible.

Today, I am calling on people to fight back. I suggest that they blast heavy metal at 500 watts when Alto representatives come to their farms. We have to make their lives miserable and stop them from getting through. That will be doing the community a favour.

My message to the government members is that if they truly believe in democracy, then they should get over themselves, let go of their ego and reduce the size of these omnibus bills. They need to give us the time to do our job as parliamentarians. I would remind them that citizens do not support them.

I will end there. Last summer, the Minister of Transport came to my riding. He had to hide just like Donald Trump hid in that catering truck. The minister hid from the people of my riding. He hid from the local MP. These are people whose only allegiance is to the Prime Minister's ego. In Mirabel, we are worth more than that. I can guarantee the Liberals that if they will not listen to reason, then we will find another way to convince them.

● (1120)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I would like to highlight two things.

The first is the peculiar alignment that seems to exist between the positions of Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party. The Conservative Party says that the Canadian government never gets things right when it comes to major infrastructure projects, and the Bloc Québécois says that the Canadian government should not be doing these kinds of things because they might strengthen the Canadian federation, meaning Canada, including Quebec.

The second thing I hear is language that closely resembles what we hear in the Quebec City region during discussions about the tramway. For years, people in Conservative circles in Quebec City have claimed that building a tramway, a major, transformative infrastructure project—the member alluded to this—is impossible because we do not have the physical, social and economic means to get it done.

What does my colleague think of that analogy?

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but think that the language being used by my colleague, who is an intellectual in his private life, sounds more like the Conservatives. He is making cheap, simplistic generalizations. It is completely convoluted logic to compare us to this and that. He said he listened to my speech, but perhaps he misled the House when he said that.

I began by saying that we need to analyze projects and support them when they are worthwhile. We in the Bloc Québécois were open-minded initially, but the numbers speak for themselves.

He talked about the Quebec City tramway. I have clearly stated that that project would be detrimental to the environment, to public transit, to mobility and to the productivity of Quebec's regions.

I hope my colleague realizes that the question he asked proves that the project is indefensible, and that is why the member for Québec Centre needs to adopt the Conservatives' tone.

[*English*]

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate a lot of what my colleague from Mirabel has brought to this debate around Alto, especially around property rights. His community, obviously, went through this process 40 or 50 years ago with Mirabel, and I would hate to see a repeat of it.

A lot of the government's and Alto's talking points come out of a report, paid for by Alto, by a consulting company called Aviseo, which claims Alto will magically create $10 billion a year in added government revenues; raise annual GDP by $25 billion every year, quite magically; and create 5,000 permanent operational and maintenance jobs, even though Via Rail, with a much wider network, only has 3,700. Somehow, Alto is going to create about 30% more. This is all based on its claim that shorter travel times from Montreal to Toronto are going to increase productivity.

Does my colleague think this is based on fact or that it is pure fantasy?

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely absurd, because these studies do not take other alternatives into account. They received contracts from Alto and from the government. The thing is, Alto is the government. They are comparing the government's project to the idea of letting everything deteriorate for 25 years, doing nothing with the money and making no investment whatsoever. The reality is that Alto and the government are using our own money, our taxes, to wage a disinformation campaign. I have always said that I am a man of facts. I presented facts. I named studies, and I can table them in both official languages. However, the government members do not want to hear about that because they are not interested in the facts. We are saying that this project is bad for our economy if we do not have the money for a viable alternative. I believe that. I will always be open to changing my mind when I see facts on the table, credible facts from people who are not being paid by Alto.

However, I have noticed one thing, and I will close with this. As of today, I note that a prerequisite to having a study that is favourable to Alto is having Alto pay for that study.

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his very enlightening speech on this issue.

Coming out of the pandemic, everyone agreed. There was a consensus that protecting our food security and food autonomy was absolutely essential. With a project like this one, the government is destroying the 2% of arable land that remains in Quebec. The 44 members opposite from Quebec who agreed with that consensus are deliberately turning a blind eye and a deaf ear, using flawed analogies and staying silent.

How can my colleague justify such behaviour from a Prime Minister who is basically fuelling a fantasy of a strong Canada through the symbol of high-speed rail?

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, under its new Prime Minister, the Liberal Party is no longer a political party; it is a religion. Whatever the leader of the religion says must be applauded, and that is what the Liberals do. I know that, deep down, they agree with me in many respects.

On the subject of food security, the Minister of Transport keeps saying it is a 60-metre corridor. I took a journalist to a market garden in my riding, and I showed him what 60 metres actually looks like. The farmer, Cynthia Grondin, was there with us, in tears. It was then that the journalist from La Presse realized that taking away 60 metres meant there was no farm left. Access roads, drainage and logistics further complicate matters. When farmers tried to talk to Alto representatives about these issues, their incompetence and disregard for the agricultural community were plain to see.

Nothing about this is reassuring. The truth is, our food security is the last thing on the Prime Minister's mind. He wants to build bombs.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mirabel for his speech.

He talked about the cost-benefit analysis. As members can imagine, I am very concerned about the pipeline in my riding, which crosses some extremely fragile ecosystems. There has not been a single cost-benefit analysis of this pipeline, just as there was no cost-benefit analysis for the Trans Mountain pipeline, which was paid for with taxpayers' money.

What does my colleague think about that? Is it too much to ask to conduct cost-benefit analyses for projects of national interest?

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, cost-benefit analyses are conducted for all major projects. The benefits considered are not limited to private economic gains; they also include social and environmental benefits. The same applies to the costs.

When the government tries to ram through projects that are detrimental to our well-being, our future, our environment, our productivity and our economy, and when it realizes that those projects serve little purpose beyond satisfying the Prime Minister's ego or advancing partisan interests, it hides the cost-benefit analysis. The Liberals are hiding that information so Canadians cannot make informed decisions when they vote, make decisions, choose their MP or elect their government.

This is undemocratic, unacceptable and authoritarian. It is becoming increasingly common under this Prime Minister, who thinks he can do whatever he wants.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague painted a very bleak picture in his speech. It would be interesting to hear more—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): On a point of order, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I hate to do this, but do we have quorum?

And the count having been taken:

● (1130)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): We do have quorum now.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my Bloc Québécois colleague presented a very one-sided argument. When a person refers to various studies, as the member did, if they want to be academically rigorous, then they cannot just cherry pick the data and studies that support their point of view. They cannot just choose the studies that support their argument. They have to conduct a thorough review of the literature.

I would encourage him to review the literature on all the impacts and benefits of high-speed trains in Europe, Japan and China. There is a wealth of documentation that shows the positive effects such trains have in had in these countries. I would invite him to broaden his horizons so that he understands that this high-speed rail project has the potential to bring about positive change in our country and modernize Canada's transportation system.

I wanted to make that comment and encourage my colleague to be less one-sided in his remarks.

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I understand that my colleague has just submitted his doctoral thesis in political science. I want to take a moment to congratulate him. Oh, wait, he has not submitted it yet.

I also understand that, in his doctoral studies, he did not develop the quantitative skills to read the studies I mentioned. That is why I took the time to explain them. The things the Liberals are referring to are in the studies and have been considered by researchers.

The new trend with the Liberals is to say that people with a nuanced perspective are extremists. We are saying that there are benefits, but that they are not enough. We are saying that we need public transit, that we need to take care of the environment, that we need to consider other alternatives and that we need to hold proper consultations.

My colleague across the way is a rising star within Liberal Party. It seems that, to be a rising star in the Liberal Party, one must first embrace this kind of black-and-white thinking that will ultimately lead to serious expropriations and violations of people's rights in our communities.

I therefore urge my colleague to strike a new balance between his career path and the rights of our constituents.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to approach this bill from a bigger picture.

I challenge the opposition parties to realize that, at the end of the day, when we talk about the budgets and listen to the speeches that have been delivered thus far, a couple of things come to mind. Number one is the issue of what I would call some nuisance reactions. I do not know what the best word for it is. For example, members say this bill should have been passed a year ago and that we are debating a 2025 budget.

Maybe the opposition parties should take some responsibility for that. All the members do is say that it is the government's fault as we set the agenda. Yes, we determine what is going to be called on Government Orders. However, it does not take much; give me 12 high school students and if they were sitting in the opposition benches, I could prevent legislation from passing. The opposition does play a role.

Why did we have to bring in time allocation on Bill C-31 the other day in order to get it passed? The simple reason is that, even though the Conservatives will criticize us on the legislative agenda and not getting bills through, all they want to do is filibuster legislation. That is the reason we needed to use the tool to get Bill C-31 to come to an end, so it would go to committee, so it could be here today. Then the opposition members stand up and somehow blame the government for not being able to pass the legislation, seriously.

Then we listen to other comments, for example, where the opposition members were talking about the Prime Minister. They look under every possible rock out there and try to develop some sort of a conspiracy, so that they can say that this government is bad, using personal attacks and character assassination.

Let me make it very clear to the opposition, as much as they want to be focused on those types of issues, that the government, and the Prime Minister in particular, will continue to be focused on Canadians, and fulfilling a commitment that he and every Liberal member of Parliament have made to Canadians, and that is to build a stronger, healthier Canadian economy that works for all Canadians. That is what we are committed to do, no matter what kinds of distractions the opposition, and at times the unholy alliance between the Bloc and the Conservatives, try to put forward. Quite frankly, there is a lot of work that needs to be done, and, as a government, we are prepared to do that work.

I made reference to the bigger picture. Earlier, one of my colleagues talked about that bigger picture and a holistic approach, in terms of how we can deliver to Canadians. Looking at that bigger picture, virtually from day one, during the election, Canadians were genuinely concerned about the economy, Donald Trump, trade and tariffs. We made it very clear that our priority was going to be to build that stronger economy. We had a plan, and we are executing that plan, through budgetary measures, legislative initiatives or our very proactive Prime Minister, who is out and about securing—

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Montcalm on a point of order.

Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech in interesting, but we do not have quorum.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Ring the bells. There is no quorum.

And the bells having rung:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Quorum has been re-established.

The hon. parliamentary secretary can resume.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one Bloc, two Conservatives, and they have the tenacity to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Order. The member knows he cannot make note of who is or is not in the chamber.

The member may continue.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will refrain from making comments about the level of interest the Bloc and the Conservatives have day in and day out dealing with important issues that Canadians have to face. Shame on them.

At the end of the day, as we try to build a stronger, healthier economy for all Canadians, including the people of Quebec and every region of the country, we find the games that are played by the Conservatives are irresponsible. They need to take the initiative and start contributing in a more positive way. It does not mean they cannot be in opposition.

I understand opposition. I was in opposition for over two decades. They can be critical of the government. I would not take that away. They have a responsibility to do that, but they also have a responsibility to ensure that there is some efficiency in terms of what is taking place on the floor of the House of Commons. They will cry a river saying they want more time to debate issues, but when I have asked for an extension of time, they have said no. Then we get the games they are playing, like quorum calls.

They need to give their collective heads a shake and understand that the unholy alliance at times can be very frustrating for me and others, because I am here to work. Maybe members from the Bloc are not. I am here to work for Canadians, and I will continue to do that, day in and day out. The residents of Winnipeg North deserve the very best from every member of Parliament. I can say that, collectively, the Liberal caucus is there to get the job done.

That is why, if we look at the bigger picture and the last federal election, we see that coming out of that election, we had a Prime Minister and 300-plus candidates saying that we were going to look at ways to expand trade that goes beyond the Canada-U.S.A. border. We were committed to building one Canadian economy. The very first initiatives by the government gave tax breaks to Canadians and brought in legislation to reinforce the need that Canada have one Canadian economy.

The Prime Minister met on numerous occasions with provincial governments, territories and indigenous leaders with the idea of recognizing what Canadians have been wanting for eons. Even when I sat in the Manitoba legislature, they wanted one Canadian economy. We brought forward legislation to do that. The federal government has done its part to do just that.

We have ongoing discussions taking place with the federal government, encouraging other provinces to do likewise. I am pleased to say that we have seen movement. We have seen other provinces move toward taking down those barriers, because it has been a team Canada approach, working collaboratively to build that stronger Canadian economy.

If we think past that, we made a commitment to put a larger emphasis on exports and trade outside the Canada-U.S.A. border. That was not to marginalize the importance of trade between Canada and the United States. That trade is always going to be there. We are going to continue to push and negotiate in good faith. We want to get an agreement. However, in the interim, as we wait, what I can tell members is that we will continue to work around the world at building on the principle that Canada has everything the world wants. We are the premier country in the world to look at, to invest in and to be a part of.

If members were to talk to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Industry, a number of other individuals and even members of Parliament who go abroad, a common theme that is raised is the level of interest in Canada. As a government, we are taking advantage of that, which is the reason we have a Prime Minister who is out and about getting trade agreements. We already put 22 or 24 trade and security agreements in place in the last 18 months. That is more than what Stephen Harper did in 10 years.

We just concluded trade negotiations with the Philippines, where the Prime Minister and the President of the Philippines sat at a table and shook hands. Now we have an agreement that hopefully will be signed and sealed in early 2027.

We anticipate getting another trade agreement with a country that has over a billion people. I think it is 1.5 billion people. That is India. We are working with India with respect to a trade arrangement. There is a high expectation that our Prime Minister and government are going to deliver on that too.

Those trade opportunities have been greatly enhanced by this government to the degree that we have seen huge percentage increases in exports beyond the Canada-U.S.A. border. Why does that matter? Because every region of the country will benefit. It will create jobs. It is no wonder that, even at a time that has proven to be challenging because of Trump's tariffs on trade, we have seen a net gain in jobs. There have been tens of thousands of new jobs over the last 18 months, in part because of a team Canada approach and the manner in which this government is focused on building that stronger Canadian economy.

● (1140)

All we need to do is to take a look at what took place in Toronto just last September, when the Prime Minister held the first event of its kind, opening the door, saying that we want investors to come to Canada. We can talk about the different things we have been talking about over the previous year, things such as the megaprojects. From coast to coast to coast, we have seen megaprojects being proposed and, in fact, acted on.

Before I go on to those, I will go back to Toronto, all the projects that are there and so much more. We had leaders from our communities across Canada, stakeholders, who showed up in Toronto, as did the investors. Investment ideas and thoughts materialized into over half a trillion dollars. This was completely unheard of in Canadian history. We are building on the team Canada spirit and the reputation of the Prime Minister, whose economic credentials are absolutely outstanding.

That is what enabled us to not only have those doors open but to achieve the types of deals that are having a positive outcome for Canadians. We all saw that first-hand when we saw an investment of half a trillion dollars, in terms of money that was being talked about and trying to line it up for projects.

When we think of those projects, we can talk from coast to coast to coast. We can go from LNG in British Columbia to energy in Atlantic Canada. We can talk about copper in Saskatchewan, as well as about the MOU and energy in Alberta. We can talk about my home province of Manitoba. We can talk about the potential of the Port of Churchill and, again, mining. We can talk about nuclear energy and the impact it will have in the province of Ontario. We can talk about the port of Montreal and energy development in the province of Quebec. We can talk about northern sovereignty and the investments going up north. Every region of the country is a part of the bigger picture. It requires a great deal of effort and work. The government has made it very clear that we are prepared to put in the time and the effort to make that happen.

We can take a look at more recent announcements that build upon that. We had the productivity mega deduction. Think about that. Small, medium-sized and large businesses are now being encouraged to expand and upgrade for the purpose of longevity, of having a stronger and healthier company. That means more employment opportunities. It means that we are going to be able to take advantage of the many different trade relations that we are building today, working for tomorrow.

When we talk about the bigger picture and taking a look at how it is that we are building that stronger economy, we can take a look at the actions that have been taking place, from day one of the new government being elected, just 18 months ago, to where we are today.

Do members want to talk about industries? One could easily talk about the shadow critic for defence from the Conservative Party. He is being critical of the government on the issue of the military. That very same member was the parliamentary secretary for defence when just 1% of Canada's GDP was going toward the military. Within six months, this government hit the 2% mark.

The member across the way said we do not even have F-35s. That is wrong again. We actually have two F-35s, and we have pilots who are being trained on those two F-35s.

● (1145)

An hon. member: We have two, an amazing two.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, they say we have an amazing two. That is two more than Harper, and even the previous government, was able to get.

It speaks volumes of the investment in our Canadian Forces. We have seen a record number of people going to recruitment offices. We would have to go back over 30 years ago, over a generation, to see this many people saying they want to be a member of the Canadian Forces.

An hon. member: What about cadets?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member refers to cadets. We had, I believe, an increase of over 50%. There is so much more activity and interest in our cadet program today as a direct result of a government showing that it is prepared to invest in our young people, whether it is the summer youth program or the cadet program. The Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Defence made it very clear that we are going to continue to support the cadet program. We are going to continue to support our youth through the summer youth program and many other programs.

Let us think of industrialization, the industries that are vitally important. Not only is the government saying it is going to protect our steel industry, our automotive industry and our wood industry, but we are looking at industries we will be able to expand. We are making investments in AI. I must confess, I am still learning a little about AI, but I know it is important. As a nation, we need to invest in AI, and the government is doing that.

I can talk about the Canadian Space Agency. The Conservatives like to say it is a waste of time and energy. They are so off base. Magellan in Winnipeg manufactures satellites. It is important that we build this industry in Canada. The provinces of Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba, and to a certain degree B.C. and Alberta, have thriving aerospace industries. Investing in space and our military is going to assist in the growth of those industries. There will be good quality jobs for Canadians. That is what the government is about.

To achieve having the strongest economy in the G7, to set that goal and do the work necessary to advance it, we are protecting our social programs, which Canadians want and deserve. At the same time, before I get into that, we are very much aware of the affordability issue. I have not heard members today talk about affordability, but the Prime Minister and members of the Liberal caucus are concerned about the affordability issue. That is why we suspended the excise tax. That is why we have the groceries and essentials benefit. That is why we have the tax break, which 22 million Canadians benefited from. It is because we understand the importance of affordability.

On the social programs, we are going to make sure we continue to support the health care that Canadians love, but we are also going to continue to support programs such as our national school food program, even though the Conservatives call it a garbage program, because it is a program that feeds 400,000 children. It is in every region of our nation. We are going to continue that support because the Prime Minister says that is going to be a permanent program.

Building a stronger economy enables us to deliver that much more on the social side—

● (1150)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Essex.

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many times during the member's speech, he spoke about big picture thinking. He even mentioned that Canada does not have only one F-35, but it now it has two under the government.

I want to go back to Alto for a moment. Obviously, Essex is down by Windsor, and Alto will basically stop in Toronto. If we are going to talk about big picture thinking, why would Alto not start in Windsor to collect our friends from the United States to get them to Quebec?

By the way, as a final thought, I will never be for annexing farmers' property, but I am curious.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, many individuals are very skeptical about the port of Churchill, and many Manitobans see the opportunity for the port of Churchill and believe in it. I would ultimately argue that there are many people in Quebec and Ontario who see the benefits of Alto. There was a time when Progressive Conservatives, and I guess I would have to underline the word “progressive”, particularly those in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, saw the merits of Alto. Even though they might have flip-flopped their position, or at least they are being told to be quiet on the issue, at the end of the day, when looking at this particular large project, I would ultimately argue that it makes sense economically and environmentally. If the member wants to see an extension of it, first he might have to reverse the Conservative policy and then maybe advocate for it.

● (1155)

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member should thank me for injecting a little more passion into his speech. Considering the number of members in the House, I would note that the Bloc Québécois takes more interest in his speeches than his colleagues do.

In any case, he was telling us about the wonderful and amazing Alto project. The Parliamentary Budget Officer, researchers at McGill University and the C.D. Howe Institute are all telling us that the profitability has been overestimated and the costs underestimated, and that the Crown corporation Alto is showing an incredible lack of transparency. What is more, we are about to waste 2% of Quebec's arable farmland.

How can my colleague be so enthusiastic about such a damaging project?

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the best way to respond to the question is to say that I have had the opportunity to talk to a number of my Quebec colleagues and have also had the time to talk to a number of my Ontario colleagues. At the end of the day, we need to take a look at the overall benefit of the project, and it seems to me to be heavily weighted to see the project go ahead. Even though I am a resident of the Prairies, I understand the importance of this project moving forward. As I just finished explaining, I believe there is a very strong economic argument for it. I also believe there is a very strong environmental argument for it.

On that particular point, I am surprised that the Bloc members are so opposed to it, and I am hoping it is not because the Conservative Party is infiltrating and influencing them maybe a little too much.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard, with gratitude, the member speak about the cadet program. He spoke to the fact that we have seen an increase of 59% in the participation of cadets across Canada. There are three cadet units in my own riding, of which I am very proud: a naval unit, an air unit and a land unit.

What advantages does he see in the government supporting even more than it used to the cadet program in his riding?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have witnessed, because we are reinforcing and supporting our Canadian military, is huge numbers of people who want to join the forces. Not everyone who joins the cadets wants to join the Canadian forces, but I believe it has created a heightened sense of excitement and opportunities, and we have seen more interest in the cadet program. I am not overly surprised by it. I, for one, was a navy cadet myself. The McGregor Armoury has a wonderful cadet program.

I can tell members that both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Defence are enthusiastic supporters of the cadet program. We are going to make sure that is it there not only for today, but also for future generations.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just came from a press conference with Linda Silas, the president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Union. I sponsored a petition that 22,000 Canadians signed supporting a refundable tax credit for nurses. Almost half of the nurses in this country, 46%, have said that, if that were to be supported, it would help them stay in their job. This is at a time when one-third of nurses are considering leaving the job this year. What did nurses get back in response? They received a fluffy response saying how good of a job the government is doing in our health care system with transfers and whatnot, but they did not even get a response to their request.

Does my colleague not agree that nurses deserve respect? It is shameful that they did not even get a response to their petition when 22,000 Canadians signed it. Does my colleague not agree that they deserve fairness and that they have been forgotten in the budget? They have also been forgotten in the budget before.

This is their time. They are there for us. It is time that we are there for them.

● (1200)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the government has never forgotten our nurses and the important role they play in the health care system, so it is somewhat misleading to try to give that impression. Let me tell the member across the way that in the city of Winnipeg, it is about more than just finances. It is a safety issue in Manitoba. Even though there is an NDP government in Manitoba, we now have three hospitals, Thompson, Seven Oaks and the Health Sciences Centre, that have been listed as grey zones because of the safety of nurses and other health care workers and the violations against their person.

When we talk about providing for our nurses, it is more than just saying we should give a tax break to nurses. There are many people in society who want a tax break. We will continue to look at it and to provide for and support nurses the best way we can, but we also look at working with the different levels of government so we can improve the conditions nurses have to work in. If there are ways the federal government can participate, I am sure we would at least be open to discussions. I know I am always open to listening to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's 20 minutes of fiction. I am glad he spoke about the cadets. My youngest son was a cadet and did a great job. The cadets do an incredible job. They have produced a lot of wonderful graduates, the member opposite excepted, of course.

During his speech, the member talked repeatedly about the false claim of the investment seminar: the $1-million investment seminar in Toronto's producing a half trillion dollars in investments. We had an Order Paper question come back from the government that claimed that only the Bell investment was an actual, true investment. The vast majority, 90%, were just announcements. About this, the PBO stated, “Financing commitments...do not constitute investments in specific projects.” Further, it said that because they “are not...attached to actual investors and actual projects”, the announcements therefore do not provide economic gains to Canadians.

Will the member stop misleading Canadians about this supposed half a trillion dollars in investment?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is not actually misleading. With respect to the number of major projects that are being talked about and the individuals who participated, does the member think people are just going to have billions of dollars in suitcases and fly to Toronto and hand over their money? They have to look at projects and do due diligence.

There is the opportunity of a half trillion dollars that is there. It is real. It is tangible. The issue is whether we can continue to push with a team Canada approach. If we are successful at doing that over the next five years, we have the potential to hit $1 trillion dollars in terms of investments and mega projects. I am an optimist. I see glasses as half full.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a joy to rise in the House.

We challenged the Liberal government's constantly claiming, “Oh, we created a half-trillion in investment”, until the PBO and its own Order Paper came back to say that, well, it is not investment. It is actually announcements. Then we hear the member for Winnipeg North saying that he is optimistic about future announcements. It is quite humorous.

I will be splitting my time today with the member for Calgary Centre.

People at home are probably going to be a bit surprised to hear that we are debating Bill C-31, which is for budget 2025. This is for the fiscal year that goes from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, eight months ago. I do not blame Canadians who are sitting at home, all five or six of them, watching on CPAC. It is probably four more than the number of F-35s we actually have. They are watching this and asking, “Why are we debating and have not passed the bill from so long ago, basically a year and eight months ago?”

The budget for this fiscal year, which was just tabled, is for April 1, 2026, through to 2027, because we operate on a fiscal year not a calendar year. It just came out, seven months into the current year. Normally we would think that budgets, as they do in the real world, come out before the actual fiscal year starts, but not with the Liberal government. The supplementary estimates (B), which is the second part of the cash authorities for 2026-27, just came out as well. It is shocking that we are so late.

Originally, the government had not planned a budget for 2025. In fact, the Prime Minister , in May 2025, said that in producing a budget for 2025, there was "not much value". Then the Liberals turned around, after pressure, and tabled this budget, almost eight months into that fiscal year. They came to the House waving it around and saying that it is a generational budget, that it is the budget of our lifetime and that it is so important. Funnily enough, in May 2025, the Prime Minister had said that a budget was not of much value.

One of the funny things in budget 2025, I should say "odd" things, is that it would create the Defence Investment Agency, the agency that is supposed to speed up defence procurement. The CEO, a friend of the Prime Minister , was put in charge. He came to the OGGO committee. One of the things in last year's estimates was $1 billion to help fund the agency so it could actually make immediate purchases. However, Mr. Guzman was not able to tell us what any of the $1 billion was for, yet here the government is saying to pre-approve the $1 billion and it would tell us later what it is being spent on.

One of the tenets of the development of Parliament, which I have quoted often in the House, is King Edward I's saying, "what touches all should be approved by all", which means Parliament should be approving spending in the House. However, here we have the government saying to pre-approve a billion dollars and then it will tell us later what it is going to spend it on for defence.

Mr. Guzman was put in charge of the Defence Investment Agency to actually speed up procurement. About six months in, he announced he was quitting because he could not deal with the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy the DIA was supposed to get around. The Liberals created a bureaucracy to get around their own bureaucracy. Rather than let him quit, they decided to make the agency a Crown corporation through Bill C-40, just very recently. The Liberal government would create a Crown corporation to get around the failed bureaucracy of the Defence Investment Agency, which was created to get around its failed bureaucracy in defence procurement.

However, not to worry, because, as the member for Winnipeg North says, we now have two new fighter jets. The government has been in power for 11 years, but we have two new jets. Belgium was able to do the procurement process for the F-35 in, I think, eight months. The Canadian government, not to worry, now has two in 11 years.

Only the Liberal government could have such a broken bureaucracy that it would create another broken bureaucracy and then eliminate it before it even comes into effect, by creating a Crown corporation to fix the broken bureaucracy. The Defence Investment Agency has not been officially created in a way, because it is supposed to be finalized in the budget of 2025, not this year's.

● (1205)

If people are having trouble keeping up with this at home, I do not blame them, because I am as well.

We have seen lots of this with the government, where it is putting hand-selected CEOs into government roles. The Prime Minister's friend was put in charge of the Defence Investment Agency for a salary of about $1 million a year. He would now be head of a Crown corporation that would further block Parliament's ability to look into its spending.

There was the infamous Mr. Pichette, who appeared in the operations committee very recently. He is now in charge of Shared Services and billions of dollars of spending every year. He is also going to be in charge of transforming our IT operations with the government, which is also billions of dollars of spending every year. He has conflicts like members would not believe. One of his investment companies was one of the original investors in Cohere, for which he lobbied the Prime Minister, and now Cohere has just received $1.6 billion from the government.

I will go on. Of course, there is Mr. Goldberg with Telesat, and Dominic Barton. Would we ever have government largesse from the Liberals without Dominic Barton somehow being involved? *Yes Minister*, the great British TV series, called it a quango, a quasi-autonomous, non-government organization. Quangos serve as a lucrative patronage network for the old boys in the TV show. Well, it seems to be so with the Liberal government as well.

There are many common lies that we joke about: "The cheque is in the mail"; "Your call is very important to us"; "Please hold", as people wait three hours for the CRA to answer; or the dentist's saying that it will not hurt a bit. In political terms, we have, as Churchill called it, "terminological inexactitude". That is the way he gets around saying things in the House. We had Reagan's comment, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help." There is also the famous statement that so many use: "I'm leaving to spend more time with my family", much like the Attorney General spent time with his family and decided he was going to spend more time with the parliamentary family.

Some of my other favourite famous lies are “The budget will balance itself” and, as the Prime Minister said on September 25 last year, “We [will] have a declining level of debt.” He did not say “a declining level of deficits” or “a declining level of debt to GDP”, which we do not have. He stated, “We [will] have a declining level of debt.” However, we do not have that in these budgets. We have an increasing level of debt.

The current budget that just came out adds $289 billion more debt. Borrowing will increase by two-thirds of a trillion dollars, $765 billion, over the next five years. Why is that so much higher than the debt? It is because the government hides a lot of its debt in fantasies, capital, as it calls it, as opposed to in operating. With respect to the mega deduction it talks about, $36 billion in tax deductions for corporations for investment, it does not include it as a revenue reduction. It is actually including that $36 billion as capital and is not counting it toward deficit, so it can falsely claim it has balanced the operating budget.

Total liabilities are going to rise from $2.3 billion to $3.15 trillion. Who would ever have thought that we would stand in the House and look back fondly at the days of the Trudeau-Freeland budgets, when we had such sound fiscal management compared to now?

I want to end with a comment from the PBO regarding the Liberals' operating balance, as they are claiming: “The Government's definition extends beyond the System of National Accounts”. It continues, “tax incentives, housing tax measures, support for private sector research...and battery manufacturing [are] not...considered capital formation under [international, normal accounting standards].” However, the government is including these in its false claim of balancing the operating budget.

I will leave it with this: I hope that one day, the government is actually able to table a budget in advance of the coming year, instead of eight months into the current year, as it has now done again.

● (1210)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Madam Speaker, these are turbulent times. When Stephen Harper was prime minister, he worked with our current Prime Minister and Jim Flaherty to invest heavily in infrastructure and run deficits in order to get the economy through those turbulent times, and it worked. We are taking the same approach now.

Does the member believe Stephen Harper was wrong in taking that approach?

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, no, I do not believe Stephen Harper was wrong in that approach. The member opposite, though, is wrong in her assertions. The government is not actually investing in infrastructure, as she claims. A tax rebate is not an investment, as she is claiming.

When Harper was in power, the Auditor General audited, every several months, those infrastructure investments, and they were shown to be actual investments. A tax rebate, a housing incentive or a tax credit toward housing for the private sector is not an actual investment, as she is claiming.

[*Translation*]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member, who is the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates. That is a committee worth listening to. We hear from all sorts of people there who lead us to raise the concerns we are expressing today. Where are we heading with an authoritarian government?

I know my colleague agrees with me about the precedent that is being set. I would like him to explain it to me in his own words. What will happen in the coming years with regard to the authority of the Prime Minister and the current government?

● (1215)

[*English*]

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question and her excellent work on the government operations committee. She is truly part of the mighty OGGO.

I am greatly concerned as well about the path the government is taking, like expropriating land for Alto, a pet project that is not financially reasonable. With Bill C-39, we see the government making changes. Financially, we see the government pushing billions and billions of dollars of spending to hide under the premises of Crown corporations. The government should be focusing more on transparency, and giving Canadians and parliamentarians a say, instead of taking away transparency and oversight.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Madam Speaker, from 2020 to 2025, the government managed to increase government revenue by over $130 billion. In spite of that, it still manages to be racking up record deficits. My colleague did a great job of highlighting the record amount of debt that the government is going to continue adding to the taxpayer.

The government says it is going to spend less to invest more. Can my colleague just highlight a little more about the fallacy of such a ridiculous statement?

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, it is true that it is a bit of a sham to say we are going to spend less and invest more.

Eventually, Canadians have to pay for this. We are seeing an extra two-thirds of a trillion dollars of liabilities getting added over the next five years. That incurs interest. We are going to see the interest on the national debt go up to almost $90 billion a year, more than the federal government gives in health care transfers to the provinces. Despite revenue doubling over the last 10 years, debt interest payments as a percentage of tax revenue is going from 1.8% to 2.2%. That is a 22% increase in Canadians' money going to bankers instead of health care, the military, and the infrastructure and services Canadians need. The government is off track, and it needs to get back on track.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives like to focus on debt, but the reality is that Canada has a AAA credit rating. That is tied with the best in the G7 countries. We are also doing exceptionally well on the GDP ratio.

In the last 19 years that the Conservatives were in government, they had 16 debts. I wonder if the member can just provide some sort of explanation.

Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, a very brief answer is that the member for Winnipeg North is, as he is on most issues, incorrect.

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Edmonton West for his wonderful speech, and I appreciate the horde of my colleagues on this side of the House who have shown up for my speech today.

The last time I gave a speech on this bill, the budget implementation act, was on November 3. A lot has happened since November 3, of course. We had a budget later that week for the 2026-27 fiscal year. By the way, we are almost eight months into the 2026-27 fiscal year, and we finally got a budget, which says, "Here's all the money we're going to spend. Here are all the choices we're going to make." Of course, all those choices have been made in the rear-view mirror. No sooner did the government present the budget for this current year in November than they started exceeding that budget.

Let us get to the heart of the matter here. Most of what the government calls a budget is just the government reporting how much it is going to spend and how much it has spent. There are no guardrails as far as what it is going to spend. It is just going to continue throwing taxpayers' money at a wall. Let us not pretend this is anything but that.

This is the budget implementation act, one of the rare responsibilities the government thinks it still has to delegate to Parliament. What we have in this bill, the budget implementation act from the 2025 fiscal year, is more and more derogation of responsibility from the House of Commons toward Crown corporations.

The bill would set up the Defence Investment Agency act. We would get an agency that spends money on behalf of the Department of National Defence, and that is different from what we have currently because, of course, now we would have somebody who is going to invest on behalf of the Department of Defence, and the Department of Defence is just going to have to talk to that organization and tell it what it needs in order to go buy something. We are increasing the process of actually buying equipment for our undersupplied national forces.

This is important because since this bill, the Liberals have turned the Defence Investment Agency into a Crown corporation. They hired a good friend of the Prime Minister to be the head of this agency, and then something happened in the summer. It depends on who one talks to, but he may have been unhappy with that arrangement, and now there is a Crown corporation. The deviation in this Crown corporation, and it is written in the legislation, is that the minister would have direct control over what is done at this department. Nowhere else in any Canadian legislation regarding a Crown corporation does a minister get to direct a Crown corporation.

We need to recognize that we are crossing lines as far as structure goes. Most of the time in the Government of Canada, a minister directs his or her department, and the agencies are one step removed and not accountable to Parliament. A minister is accountable to Parliament in a regular, responsible government scenario. This is far from that. In the evolution over the last seven years that I have been here, there has been less and less responsibility. This would move more of that responsibility out of an agency, even, and into a Crown corporation, which is supposed to be beyond the reach of Parliament but has to report through a minister to Parliament, and now that is hands-off for Parliament.

All my colleagues on this side of the House are becoming more concerned about what the government wants to do behind the scenes as opposed to in Parliament. I would pose a question to my colleagues across the aisle. Do they think their jobs are going to be relevant going forward if they keep taking our parliamentary responsibilities off the table? We are drifting more and more to an executive style of management. Since the Prime Minister has been here, he has stood up nine agencies or Crown corporations on top of the 92 that were there before.

This is an egregious overstep in government, and I will tell the House exactly why that impacts what is happening here. Part of what the government is doing, and what the Prime Minister is doing in particular, is moving the way we define how we spend in Canada. I know it is beyond this budget implementation act, but the last budget that came in actually indicated what our borrowings were going to be over the next four and a half years, at $765 billion. We are going to the market to spend money that is going to cost Canadians $765 billion more in borrowing. The Liberals are not calling that debt. They are only calling $265 billion of it new debt. What is the difference? The difference is about half a trillion dollars.

● (1220)

What is the difference on the current balance sheet between our borrowings and our debt? Right now, our borrowing is about $1.4 trillion from the Government of Canada and our debt is about $1.3 trillion, so there is a small gap. Of course, that is made up for by everything going into Crown corporations. The Liberals are holding onto their balance sheets and being a little more restrained about how they value those so-called investments, most of which are expenses and not investments, but there are all kinds of accounting tricks going on there. This is an accounting trick from the government, at the end of the day, with $765 billion more in borrowings.

If we asked consumers, Canadians, taxpayers, what they call debt, they would say it is something that one has an obligation for that one probably has to pay interest on. The borrowing is, in effect, what Canadians would call our debt. We are increasing it from $1.4 trillion by another $765 billion. That is about 50% more borrowing over the next four and a half years. That is ridiculous from a Prime Minister who has asserted himself to be a financial professional. Well, if that is financial professionalism, all I see there is the ability to cook the books. That is not the way to run a country. We have to make sure we get ahead of this before we burn the house down, as far as our fiscal position in Canada goes.

My colleagues across the way will talk all this nonsense about how we have a AAA credit rating. We can take a look at that. At the end of the day, how are they getting that AAA credit rating? They are getting it off the backs of pensioners in Canada. The government is still considering pensions built into the formula they have. These are not the government's pensions. These are Canadians' pensions, which are taken off their paycheques. They are supposed to be in a separate account. They should not be used as the government's assets unless they are being counted as the government's liability. It is a wash. It should not be counted. Somehow, the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, thinks the government has access to that to pay the bills of the Government of Canada, as opposed to funding Canadians' retirements individually for themselves. That is a problem.

Let us get to the root of the matter. We have done much in the House of Commons on trying to root out these Crown corporations and what they are spending money on, like the Defence Investment Agency, or the defence Crown corporation, depending on how we morph it. Nevertheless, the minister wants direct control of it, so we think it should be directly accountable to Parliament in that respect, which it is not.

That is the reason the Liberals are trying to move more money off the government balance sheet and onto the balance sheets of all these arm's-length Crown corporations, one of the worst corporate structures one can come up with, as far as accountability mechanisms go. What they are after is less and less accountability. What this country needs is more accountability. Whitewashing Parliament, making sure this is less effective, is a challenge I am going to put on the desks of my colleagues across the way. They are making themselves less relevant in the whole democratic arrangement here. They have a responsibility to stand up for the accountability that the government should be showing Canadians in its financial dealings. Nothing there is accountable at this point in time. This bill even makes it less accountable. We have to reverse course on so much of this.

One thing my colleague said that I liked was when he talked about spending less and investing more. I worked in investments before I came here, as members know. If I had to depend on the government, after what I have seen here in the last seven years, to be my investment adviser, I might as well just declare bankruptcy right now. I have seen everything the Liberals spent on the whole electric vehicle nonsense, where they blew $40 billion of investment. The person who was in charge of that allegedly did not even read the contracts, but look at him now. That person is the finance minister of Canada.

There is no accountability. There is no culpability in how much of Canadians' money has been thrown out the door on misaligned, misdirected strategies to throw away government money. With respect to Export Development Corporation, the Business Development Bank and the Bank of Canada, we are trying to expose all of this about accountability to Parliament, for even those organizations. Getting more of them off the government's balance sheet is not the way to go forward.

I will yield to questions now.

● (1225)

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going through very turbulent times and trying to help Canadians and help the Canadian economy in the face of unjustified and illegal tariffs. Yes, there is a cost associated with investing in building Canada strong and all these nation-building projects, but the plan is to grow the economy to $4 billion by 2030.

Which thing does the member not like, helping Canadians or growing our economy?

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I am trying to distill what that question is asking me. We are going to grow our economy to $4 billion, yet our economy is actually about north of $3 trillion right now in GDP in Canada, so I am not sure what is being asked of me in that question.

However, I will say that we have to get back to building an economy in Canada. I do not think there is a soul in this House, in my riding of Calgary-Centre or in the business community across this country who does not think that I would move business forward in this country much faster and in a more responsible and accountable format than the government has ever presented.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague about a very specific aspect of this bill, namely the Canadian exploration expense deduction. The government is actually now including expenditures incurred to determine the inherent natural qualities of an oil and natural gas deposit, for example. Those expenses would be eligible for a deduction.

Let us take a look at the Bay du Nord project. The company could be eligible for significant tax deductions, particularly because this exploration could be extremely expensive. Once again, this is a form of direct subsidy to oil and gas companies, which, I would remind the House, are making astronomical, record profits at the expense of the public, who are being held hostage at the pump at a price of nearly $2 a litre.

Does my colleague agree that the government should be giving yet another gift to oil companies with public money?

● (1230)

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is a really good question from my Bloc Québécois colleague. I hope that I will be able to give the House a good answer.

Canada's oil industry, including projects such as Bay du Nord in Newfoundland and Labrador, needs an environment that is conducive to investment. This industry pays a lot of taxes across Canada. In fact, it pays more taxes than any other industry. That is how the Canadian economy works right now. That is the economy that the government on the other side built for 10 or 11 years.

Right now, however, it seems as though the government is talking out of both sides of its mouth. Does it want to advance oil projects or put an end to them? We will see.

[*English*]

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is a shame that the member for Calgary-Centre and I agree on much, but not on pipelines expansions.

I want to ask him if, in looking at the budget, he is talking about the unusual accounting methods of the Liberal government, which is surprising since it comes from a Prime Minister whose economic and financial acumen we were assured of.

Does the member have any comments on the way in which "capital" is defined in this budget for the purpose of what I think is called the productivity mega deduction, which adds $37 billion to our national debt? It is treated as a current expense, but it could be anything designed to eventually create an increase in capital. It could apply to advertising expenses. Does the hon. member have any comments on that?

Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for such a great question.

It is part of what used to be called in the old financial world "jiggery-pokery". Is it an expense or a capital investment? People were making it up as they went along.

Canadians have elected a man who they thought was a financial whiz to run this country. Yes, I think he is very financially qualified. However, he is also one of those people who understands exactly how to cook the books. In my opinion, this is cooking the books. This is sort of saying that an expense is an investment. We are throwing the money out the door that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): We are out of time. My apologies.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche has the floor.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the second budget implementation act.

It is an important part of our plan to build Canada strong. Since last year, we had budget 2025, the spring economic update, and the first budget implementation act. Now, we have budget 2026. Over the next 20 minutes, I would like to take the time to explain how the bill before us today is part of a coherent whole, a comprehensive plan to build a stronger Canada and a stronger Canadian economy that works for everyone.

Last year, we launched the build communities strong fund because we recognize that infrastructure needs in our communities are significant. As the federal government, we must partner with the provinces, municipalities and our community organizations to help update our infrastructure so it meets the public's needs. In budget 2026, we even added $1.5 billion to what was already announced last year for community recreational facilities.

This type of decision to invest in our infrastructure, which we are making here in Ottawa, has very concrete effects on the ground, in our communities. I would like to use some examples from the riding of Madawaska—Restigouche. Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to take part in a number of big announcements in my riding. I am thinking in particular about the announcements to update aging water and waste water infrastructure in Grand Falls, Edmundston and Campbellton. This is a tangible way to support our municipalities and keep their networks up to date to meet the needs of the community today.

I am also thinking of the recent announcement of more than $2 million to help modernize Mont Farlagne. I am particularly proud of this investment because it supports a professional team, backed by committed volunteers, who have a clear vision for the future: transforming Mont Farlagne into a true four-season destination. Our funding will help provide the modern infrastructure needed to make that happen.

I am also thinking of the investment of more than $5 million to extend the cycling trail in Grand Falls. A group of local volunteers has been working on this project for nearly a decade. It will have a transformative impact on Grand Falls, and I am very pleased that the federal government is contributing to it.

I am also thinking of the announcement of more than $1 million for the Saint-Léonard arena in the municipality of Vallée-des-Rivières. This investment will improve the building's energy efficiency and support the addition of three multi-purpose rooms to the Saint-Quentin public library. This, too, is a project that the community has been working toward for many years. I recently had the opportunity to visit the construction site, and I look forward to seeing the finished result because I think it will have a positive impact on the community.

I recently had the opportunity to announce investments to carry out modernization work at the senior centres in Charlo and Atholville. These are important gathering places for our seniors. They help combat social isolation. Investing in these buildings means investing in the quality of life of our constituents.

In the coming weeks and months, I will have four more exciting announcements. I will not go into details just yet, but I have a great announcement coming up in Kedgwick, another in Bois-Joli, one in Baie-des-Hérons, and another in Haut-Madawaska.

In other words, thanks to the build communities strong fund, every municipality in my riding will have had at least one project over the past year. This really shows how the decisions we make here can have an impact on the ground, in our communities. I am very proud of these investments, which will help improve the quality of life for the people of Madawaska—Restigouche.

If we want to build faster, renew our community infrastructure, build more housing in this country and support the expansion of industries critical to our economy's prosperity, we need workers. If we want to build Canada strong, we need more welders, more electricians, more crane operators and more people in the skilled trades overall.

In my opinion, a key part of our spring economic update is our plan and our objective to help recruit, train and hire up to 100,000 new workers in the skilled trades by 2031. To achieve this objective, we have introduced a series of concrete measures. I am thinking in particular of the Red Seal completion bonus, a $5,000 payment for individuals who complete their certification. In fact, people who have completed their certification since April 1, 2025, can now apply online. The portal is open for applications for the $5,000 apprenticeship completion bonus.

● (1235)

I am also thinking of the financial incentives for employers. When apprentices are in training, they have to complete a certain number of hours of on-the-job training. This practical component is essential to proper learning. Employers are happy to take on apprentices, but doing so creates extra work. In recognition of that, we will be offering financial incentives of up to $10,000 for employers who hire first-year apprentices.

I am also thinking of the internship programs that we are putting in place for young people who want to have rewarding experiences in the skilled trades and of the apprenticeship training grant, which provides apprentices with an income top-up of $400 per week while they are completing their classroom training. Earlier, I mentioned an incentive for employers who provide on-the-job training opportunities, but we also cover in-class learning with financial support for apprentices. That is on top of the employment insurance benefits that some apprentices are already receiving.

This package of measures also includes the union training and innovation program, which helps businesses modernize their facilities, increase their training capacity and invest in modern equipment. These are just a few examples. Our plan also includes various other measures to help support apprenticeship continuation and to help apprentices transition to the workplace.

Taken together, these measures send a key message to the young people listening to us, an invitation to seriously consider a career in the skilled trades if that interests them. We are investing heavily in our infrastructure, and we need young people to choose careers in the skilled trades to help us achieve our vision of building Canada strong.

Over the past year, we have announced a series of tax incentives to stimulate growth and innovation. I think these measures make it clear that now is the time to invest in Canada. We want to make that attractive. We want to reduce investment costs for Canadian businesses.

I am thinking specifically of our new measure, the productivity mega deduction, which allows immediate deductions for a wide range of assets. In practical terms, it shortens the depreciation period. For example, a self-employed photographer who purchases a new camera costing several thousand dollars previously had to depreciate that expense over a number of fiscal years. Under this new mega deduction, however, that person will be able to deduct the full cost of the equipment used in their business in the first year. That means recovering cash more quickly and being able to continue investing in the business. The aim is really to make investing more attractive.

I want to emphasize that this mega deduction will be particularly beneficial for small and medium-sized businesses. We were truly thinking of SMEs when we developed this tax measure. I am thinking in particular about SMEs in the food services sector, which will be able to more quickly deduct the cost of purchasing items such as stoves, refrigerators and food processors. In the agriculture sector, purchases of tractors and farm trailers, as well as investments in grain elevators, will qualify. I am thinking about businesses in the processing sector, when they purchase sorting equipment, washing equipment or industrial grinders. I am thinking about businesses in the tourism sector when they buy furniture like beds. These are all assets that businesses have to buy in order to carry out their activities and that will now be eligible for accelerated depreciation. I gave just a few examples to illustrate how this mega deduction, this new tax measure, has the potential to support SMEs.

Forestry is a cornerstone of the economy in my riding of Madawaska—Restigouche. As members know, Canada's forestry sector is a pillar of our national economy. That is especially true in New Brunswick, the province I represent in the House. Across the country, the forestry sector supports more than 200,000 jobs and represents the primary livelihood in more than 300 rural and remote communities.

Today, however, our forestry sector is facing significant challenges, due in particular to unjustified tariffs imposed by our neighbours to the south. There are other pressures as well. We are also seeing shifts in global markets and changing demand for wood products. Our government recognizes the challenges facing the forestry industry and has put in place immediate support measures. I am thinking in particular of the various support programs related to tariffs. Addressing these immediate needs is important, but it is equally important to develop a medium- and long-term vision to ensure that our forestry industry remains competitive in the long run. That is why we are working to diversify the sector, modernize its operations and ensure it remains competitive.

● (1240)

In fact, last June, our government launched an action plan to transform Canada's forestry sector. In budget 2026, we are building on this momentum by adding $6.5 billion in new investments to support the forestry sector. It is in line with this vision that we recently announced a $50-million investment to create a strategic innovation centre for digital forestry in New Brunswick. I am very pleased to say that this initiative will be led by the Northern Hardwoods Research Institute, which is based in Edmundston, in my riding, in partnership with ResearchNB.

This centre will launch a pilot project aimed at digitizing the forestry supply chain. This digital infrastructure will enable companies and various stakeholders in the sector to better identify, track and utilize wood fibre resources throughout the supply chain. This will have several tangible benefits, including reducing uncertainty surrounding the supply of wood fibre. This will also help better align available resources with the production needs of the mills. It will reduce operating costs, improve operational efficiency, and promote better decision-making in the forestry sector through the use of new technologies.

What is really interesting is that this digital infrastructure will put New Brunswick on the cutting edge of innovation and will promote the resilience of the Canadian forestry industry in the long term. This project is being carried out from my home province of New Brunswick. It has the potential to make a real difference across our country. A project of this scale is great news for my region. It is not every day that we announce that a project worth $50 million will be carried out from Edmundston in northwestern New Brunswick. I think this investment is a testament to the fact that our communities have the skills, the institutions and the talent needed to develop innovative projects with a scope than extends far beyond our region.

I would like members to recall that my region, Madawaska—Restigouche, is not only part of Canada's forestry economy, but it is also helping to shape its future. This investment also recognizes the expertise developed over the years by the Northern Hardwoods Research Institute. Gaetan Pelletier's team is doing an outstanding job. Awarding such a grant for conducting leading-edge research is a testament to the confidence we have in their skills.

It bears repeating that preserving our forestry industry through immediate support measures is not the only goal. We also want to give it the means to grow, innovate and remain competitive for decades to come in accordance with our long-term vision.

Over the past year and a half, we have implemented a range of measures to support the sectors hardest hit by the current unjustified tariffs. For example, the strategic response fund helps our entrepreneurs orient their efforts toward serving the Canadian market or expanding into new international markets while exploring ways to improve productivity through various innovation support measures.

When we think about support for the sectors affected by tariffs, one key initiative comes to mind for businesses in Madawaska—Restigouche, and that is the regional tariff response initiative in Atlantic Canada, which helps businesses cope with the challenges arising from the current situation. I want to emphasize that the support we are providing is aimed at businesses that were doing well before these unjustified tariffs were imposed. We are sending the message that we want to be there for businesses that make a significant contribution to local economies. We want to be there to protect local jobs and to protect communities so that they can remain economically active.

Since March, over $10 million has been invested in businesses in Madawaska—Restigouche under the regional tariff response initiative in Atlantic Canada. The first announcement of this kind in Atlantic Canada was made in March in Clair, in the Upper Madawaska region of my riding. Then, investments were made in businesses in Val-d'Amour, Campbellton, Balmoral, Saint-Quentin, Saint-André, Grand Falls, Clair and Edmundston, just to name a few.

Of course, some sectors have been particularly hard hit, including the steel and forestry sectors. However, many other sectors have also been affected by the unjustified tariffs announced last August.

● (1245)

I am particularly pleased with these investments, which help support local businesses, keep them operating, protect good jobs, safeguard our local economy and stimulate private investment amid economic uncertainty. I have had the opportunity to visit several of the businesses that have received such investments, and some told me that, given the current uncertainty, they were not sure whether to invest now or postpone their expansion and diversification plans. The assistance program our government has put in place provided the necessary incentive for them to invest private capital in modernization projects. It is through investment that we keep the Canadian economy moving forward, and I believe that the discussions I have had with local entrepreneurs show that our plan is working.

Since day one, our focus has been on building Canada strong. In budget 2025 and our economic update, we launched a series of initiatives that we are now building on with budget 2026. That includes all the work we are doing to diversify our trade relationships, work that is paying off. We have signed agreements with more than 20 countries around the world, and that is having a tangible impact on businesses here at home. For example, the agreement with Mexico will give potato producers in Grand Falls access to the Mexican market. Maple syrup producers in my riding will have better access to the European market. Diversifying the Canadian economy means tangible benefits like that for my part of the country.

Another example is the build communities strong fund. As I mentioned, in less than a year, every municipality in my riding will have received infrastructure money through this fund. Then there is our forestry sector transformation strategy, which is essential to supporting a pillar of my region's economy. In budget 2026, we are injecting an additional $6.5 billion to support the sector. I would also point to our national food security strategy. Conversations about affordability and the cost of living usually turn to the cost of groceries. The goal of the strategy is to increase food production in Canada and put more Canadian food on our plates, thereby helping to stabilize prices in the medium and long terms.

I am thinking of our nature strategy, including the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon, which is set to receive over $80 million in funding. Back home in Madawaska—Restigouche, this is an important issue not only for protecting our environment but also for our economy, because more than 400 jobs depend on the salmon-rich Restigouche River. It has a very significant economic impact on the communities along the Restigouche River.

I am also thinking of our defence industry strategy. The investment of more than $1 billion announced for CFB Gagetown will have an impact across the entire province while providing members of the armed forces with training facilities that truly meet their needs. I am also thinking of our plan for the skilled trades, which will enable us to recruit thousands more skilled workers, encourage our young people to pursue careers in these trades and provide support to sectors affected by tariffs.

We have launched a whole series of initiatives over the past year, and we are continuing to build on them. These initiatives are having a tangible impact on the communities I represent and that are helping us fulfill our vision, which is to build Canada strong.

Division 15 of part 4 of Bill C-31, the budget 2025 implementation act, no. 2, amends the Red Tape Reduction Act to provide that the provisions of the Official Languages Act are not subject to a prescribed exemption. In fact, if departments wish to adopt regulations to implement part VII of the Official Languages Act, they will not be penalized. This will not be seen as another layer of bureaucracy, because it is essential. This amendment may seem trivial, but it is important to enable our various departments to fulfill their obligations under the Official Languages Act.

On that note, when it comes to francophone matters, the good news is that Canada will be hosting the next Francophonie summit, which will take place in the national capital region in September 2028. Over 90 member states of la Francophonie will come to Canada for this event. It will be a wonderful opportunity to affirm Canada's leadership within la Francophonie, strengthen our economic ties throughout the international Francophonie and showcase Canada's francophone communities. We need only think of the significant impact that the 1999 summit in Moncton had on our Acadian communities. I expect that the 2028 summit will have a similar effect on our francophone and Acadian communities. New Brunswick will be organizing pre-summit activities for young people. In Quebec, the focus will be on the economic Francophonie and, in the budget, we are investing over $400 million to host this major event in style.

● (1250)

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague about Stephen Harper, who pursued an ambitious agenda of promoting the economy in Canada, signing 42 free trade agreements around the world. I know the hon. member was not part of the Trudeau government, but I do wonder if he has any comments or could apologize to Canadians on behalf of the Liberal government for the way the Trudeau government treated the forestry industry over the last 10 years.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, the forestry sector is a pillar of the Canadian economy, and we are investing to support it.

Budget 2026 provides $6.5 billion in additional investments. In my riding alone, several companies have received a range of supports for innovation and infrastructure modernization. For example, $50 million was invested in a new innovation centre.

The forestry sector is a priority. When something is a priority, members on this side of the House take concrete action. Members on the other side talk about important issues, then vote against them.

When we say something is important, we follow through with concrete measures, and that applies to the forestry sector.

● (1255)

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I am happy for him that the forestry sector is doing well in Madawaska—Restigouche. That is not the case in the Laurentians. I am also thinking about my colleague from Joliette—Manawan, since a mill in Saint-Michel-des-Saints closed its doors.

I was also a casualty of the 2000s. I lost my job because of the value of the dollar and the changes in exports. We developed a good list of all the possible solutions. Right now, every time that industry representatives appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, they tell us that they need economic resilience. Economic resilience begins not with upgrading what we have, but with having the cash flow we need to get there.

We suggested providing a 50% advance to offset the countervailing duties in the forestry sector. We have been talking about it for a year. Not a dollar would have to be spent.

Can my colleague explain why the government did not accept our proposal?

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, when it comes to the forestry sector, we need to address the immediate needs. There is the issue of unjustified tariffs. There are immediate needs, and they require support measures. Worth noting are the liquidity support programs that have been launched over the past year. There is a whole range of measures to help businesses access liquidity. There are also measures aimed at processing, which my colleague mentioned. In short, there are various measures tailored to different circumstances.

Of course, short-term assistance is needed, but we also need a medium- and long-term vision. How can we make the sector more resilient in the long term? Tariffs are one issue, but there are also changes in global markets and in demand. Various factors are having an impact on the forestry sector. I believe we must also address these various factors.

Like my colleague, I come from a forestry community. In early 2005-06, these factors also had an impact on my region. People I knew lost their jobs at that time. I am therefore very aware of the importance of supporting our forestry workers and our industries.

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I too listened carefully to my hon. colleague. His speeches are always very interesting.

First of all, I would like to congratulate him on receiving iPolitics' rising star award. That is quite an honour. I feel he deserves it.

I know that he is a staunch defender of both the French language and linguistic minorities. I would like him to comment on that, because he did not address it in his speech. I know it is a matter of great importance to him.

How will budget 2025 improve protections for official language minority communities?

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, in budget 2025, we are continuing to implement the action plan for official languages 2023-28. I would remind the House that this plan included a historic $4.1-billion investment to support our two official languages. This is the largest investment in the history of Canada to support official languages, even after adjusting for inflation. This helps support the vitality of our communities across a variety of sectors, whether in education, health, justice or immigration.

We are in the process of holding consultations for the next action plan for official languages for 2028-33. Recently, in budget 2026, we also announced nearly $400 million in funding for the international Francophonie summit, which will take place in the national capital region in 2028. I expect this to have a significant impact on our francophone and Acadian communities.

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I share ridings that do many of the same things, but particularly around forestry. I dispute with him when he says that the forestry industry is doing well. The forestry industry has suffered over the last 10 years, when it could have been making a lot of money. It suffered competing with a world that does not have a carbon tax while its government, the Liberal government, put a carbon tax on it. It has suffered under the Liberal government of the last 10 years, which has been putting restrictions on the amount of fibre it can harvest.

The forestry companies come to me all of the time and say that if they cannot have access to fibre, they do not exist anymore. In northern Alberta, in northern B.C. and perhaps in his riding as well, we have seen dramatic reductions in the allowable cut because of policies of the Liberal government.

I am just wondering what the member has to say about the actions of the Liberal government over the last 10 years.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, I clearly explained in my speech that the forestry sector is facing challenges right now, whether because of the tariff dispute or because of other factors affecting the industry.

We certainly recognize that this sector is confronting major challenges right now, which is why we have introduced concrete support measures. As for access to wood fibre, I spoke at length during my speech about New Brunswick's new strategic innovation centre in digital forestry, which should address several of the concerns raised by my colleague.

● (1300)

[*English*]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, this morning, I joined the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, and I was standing with Carla and Angel. They are two nurses who are working on the front lines, keeping Canadians healthy and cared for each and every day. They were signatories to an e-petition that was also signed by 22,000 Canadians, asking for a refundable tax credit. They highlighted that things are getting really hard. It is really hard to stay in the job. In fact, we are hearing that a third of nurses are considering leaving their job in the next year, but 46% of them have said that a refundable tax credit would give them an incentive to possibly stay in the job.

In its response, the government highlighted the personal support workers tax credit, which we all support, but it actually did not even talk about nurses. Nurses took the time to fill in this e-petition, to gather momentum and support and to share their ideas on how to deal with the nursing crisis, yet the government did not even show them respect. It is shameful.

I would like my colleague to maybe speak about what the government is going to do. Is it going to acknowledge their request and listen to nurses?

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, investing in health is essential. We support the provinces and territories. In budget 2026, we are renewing mental health funding by providing $1.2 billion to extend existing funding agreements.

As my colleague mentioned, we introduced a tax credit last year for the personal support workers who care for people in our communities. We are putting a suite of measures in place to help personal support workers in our communities and the health care sector.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really do appreciate many of the comments my colleague has put on the record this afternoon. I tried to amplify this in my comments in regard to the bigger picture and how it is so important that we continue along the stream of investing in Canadians in a very real and tangible way through things like trade and things like major projects.

I wonder if my colleague can just continue the thought in regard to the types of things he believes are important in terms of building that healthier, stronger Canada, the Canada that is there for everyone.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. The bill we are discussing today is part of a comprehensive effort to build Canada strong. This includes investments in infrastructure that help stimulate the economy. If we want to build more infrastructure across the country, we also need skilled workers. That is why we are investing in team Canada strong, to help train more skilled workers nationwide.

Building Canada strong also means diversifying our economy, signing economic agreements abroad, opening new markets for businesses, and strengthening our domestic market. If we look at all the initiatives launched over the past year thanks to budget 2025, the two budget implementation acts, the spring economic update, and budget 2026, we can clearly see a consistent overarching theme: building Canada strong and strengthening our economy. We want an economy that works for everyone so that we can continue to fund the social programs that help those in need.

[*English*]

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I just want to advise that I am going to be sharing my time with my seatmate, the member of Parliament for a beautiful part of the country, Fundy Royal, in New Brunswick. I am looking forward to hearing what he has to say.

It should not be any surprise that I am not going to be supporting the budget implementation act. The next time Liberals accuse Conservatives of stalling anything, one only has to look at this budget implementation act to realize that it is from the 2025 budget, and here we are, on November 26, dealing with this at third reading. Obviously, there were lots of concerns with this budget and the implementation of it, not the least of which comes from the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

There is not a day that goes by that I and my staff are not walking somebody in off the ledge in Barrie South—Innisfil from dealing with the affordability crisis, the housing affordability and attainability crisis or the food insecurity crisis. There are lots of problems going on in this country, yet when the finance minister and the Liberals stand up, it is like rainbows, lollipops and gumdrops. It is absurd to think that things are going that well when I, my colleagues, and I am sure the Liberal members of Parliament are hearing from constituents about the challenges that exist, the job insecurity, the anxiety and stress, and the mortgage delinquencies that we heard about the other day. Things are not rosy in this country.

The moment that we come to that realization is the time that we actually have an opportunity to fix things. What is happening is that things are getting worse, not just with the budget from 2025 but with the budget from 2026. One has only to look at the Parliamentary Budget Officer and her recent report about the state of finances in this country and how it is impacting everyday Canadians, seniors, families, single moms and businesses who are struggling under the weight of the policies of this government, which is not doing anything to help the average Canadian but is helping the well-connected club of Liberal insiders.

Let us review what the Parliamentary Budget Officer said in her latest report, in particular related to the BIA, that the latest Liberal budget will add a record-smashing $765 billion of debt over the next five years, which is going to cost each household in this country $44,000. A family of four will pay nearly $6,000 in federal debt interest costs this year alone. For families already struggling under the weight of debt, deficits, credit cards and mortgage obligations, this is adding to that stress and anxiety.

Just a few years ago, debt interest consumed five or six cents of every federal tax dollar. Today, it consumes about 11¢, or roughly $60 billion annually, more than what we are sending to the provinces for health care transfers. One has only to talk to one's local regional health authority, to the CEO of the hospital or to doctors or nurses to find out just how much stress our health care system is under.

In the case of the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre, at an elected official's breakfast a couple of weeks ago, they attributed the cost burdens that they are facing right now directly to population growth as a result of increased population and immigration. They are struggling under the weight of this. They are 143% over capacity on their acute care beds and 128% over capacity for their emergency room visits. They cannot keep up, and they are actually mounting debts. Here we are with $60 billion in interest costs, which goes to debt holders and bondholders, yet the hospitals are not getting any increases this year in the federal health transfer, and Canadians are paying the interest on the debt.

The PBO reports that government spending is up a staggering $331.6 billion in new measures under the Prime Minister. According to the PBO, by 2030-31, per capita debt charges will be $2,000 per year. Per capita debt will be $37,000, and per capita liabilities will be $74,000, which is up from $56,000 last year. That is going to translate to a 40% increase in interest costs per person from $1,440 in 2026-27 to $2,009 in 2030-31. Federal debt per person rises 15% to $37,437.

● (1305)

The PBO, shockingly, outlined that, of the $158 billion gained in new fiscal room over the last five years, the Liberal government has committed 96¢ of every dollar of the $158 billion to new measures, which means that the Liberals are spending every bit of revenue that they get on something. That something is not improving the lives of Canadians. I know, and members of Parliament know, that people in the country are struggling under the weight of debt and deficit, the housing crisis, grocery costs and all of that stuff. The budget is not going to do anything to help. In fact, it is going to make it worse.

I want to focus on part 4, division 16, which would formally enact the Defence Investment Agency act, and, in particular, the connection between Bill C-31 and Telesat. Telesat has been in the news a lot lately as a result of the Prime Minister's relationship with its CEO, Dan Goldberg, which is a clear conflict of interest under both section 4 and section 9 of the Conflict of Interest Act.

Telesat, as we know, received a contract of $2.3 billion from the government. They have debt obligations of $1.71 billion. They are an almost insolvent company, with very little cash and very little cash flow or revenue. The $2.3-billion contract is the exact same amount if we convert the $1.71-billion U.S. amount of the debt obligations that were due on December 6, which have now been pushed back, conveniently, to January, perhaps because of the budget implementation act not having been passed at this point. Dan Goldberg is a lifelong friend of the Prime Minister's. The Prime Minister did not declare a conflict of interest screen on Dan Goldberg after he was elected. It was only a couple of weeks ago that the Prime Minister invoked the conflict of interest screen, after Telesat received $2.3 billion.

Last night at the ethics committee, Conservative members moved a motion to study the situation with Telesat, to have the Clerk of the Privy Council, the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Dan Goldberg and others appear to find out the sequence of events. We have asked the Prime Minister many times in the House whether he had discussions with Dan Goldberg over this period of 20 months, in relation to Telesat and in particular to the $2.3-billion contract. The Prime Minister's consistent answer was that he was not involved in the decision. That was not the question. The question was with regard to the discussion.

We know that under section 9 of the Conflict of Interest Act, the Prime Minister cannot further the interests of his friends. This is why it was important for this conflict of interest screen to be put into place when the Prime Minister was elected, not retroactively and not when he was caught in what I believe to be a conflict of interest. The Prime Minister has been going around the world promoting trade and investment. He has also been promoting Telesat and what they do to other governments as well.

We tried to have this issue brought to the ethics committee. Liberal members of the committee voted against it last night. Again, in the budget implementation act, with the establishment of the Defence Investment Agency, Telesat is a key player in terms of contracts now and future contracts. In the budget implementation act, notwithstanding the financial reasons, we are seeing a level of self-dealing that is going on in the country, where well-connected Liberal insiders are benefiting as a result of the Prime Minister's being in office and as a result of his using the levers and powers of his office, and we need to get to the bottom of it.

The Liberal government is using its manufactured majority to shut down the work of committees and the voices of Canadians trying to get to the truth, to expose exactly what is going on with respect to this self-dealing.

For financial reasons and that reason alone, I cannot, on behalf of the people I represent in Barrie South—Innisfil, support any form of the budget implementation act. Things are not great in the country. This budget is going to make it worse, and the 2026 budget will do the same.

● (1310)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite just made the arguments I made at the beginning of my speech earlier today.

The sole purpose of members of the Conservative caucus appears to be to look under all the rocks, to put on those tin hats and figure out all the conspiracies they can to try to character-assassinate different members of the government. Their focus is not trying to build a stronger, healthier economy, by any stretch of the imagination. It is more about character assassination. It is truly amazing how it is over here, over there, a little over here, over there, web it all together and we have a scandal. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Prime Minister is following all the guidelines that were put in by Stephen Harper, I must add.

At the end of the day, why does the Conservative Party not start focusing on more creative criticisms as opposed to character assassination?

● (1315)

John Brassard: Madam Speaker, the answer to that is simple. Is it because of the pattern that we are seeing from the Prime Minister's Office? Using the levers and powers of his office to self-deal with well-connected Liberal insiders has grown since this manufactured majority happened. Everything that we are talking about is publicly sourced, including the artificial intelligence minister's brother getting close to $3 million.

The Prime Minister was a volunteer economic adviser to Justin Trudeau in 2020. He was aligning public policy at that time with his personal asset strategy and his corporate asset strategy with Brookfield. We are seeing that heat pumps, artificial intelligence, modular housing, nuclear, all of the policies that are being enacted by the Liberal government are to further enhance and enrich the Prime Minister's personal assets and corporate strategy as well. That is why we are exposing—

[*Translation*]

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

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about the problems with the health care system. There is no doubt that the government has made cuts to health care. Next year, health transfers will not be indexed, which means the escalator will drop from 6% to 3%, and the provinces and Quebec will be out billions of dollars for health care.

What does my colleague think about that policy, given that we are still dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic and there is a backlog of patients waiting for care?

John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I spoke about that in my speech today. There has been no increase in health transfers for any of the provinces. We are currently paying $60 billion in interest on the debt. That is more than the government is giving to all of the provinces and territories combined for health care. That is a major problem.

When I visited a local hospital, people were telling me about the problems in the emergency room, in the health care system and so on. Hospitals in my riding are all at capacity and struggling to provide services to people, and I think that, if we were to talk to other members, we would see that this is a problem all across the country. The health care system is not in good shape right now because the government did not increase transfers to the provinces. This problem is only going to get worse going forward.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to my seatmate's fantastic speech, but I am having trouble reconciling some of what he said with what the Prime Minister has said. The Prime Minister said that affordability is the best it has been in over a decade. When I speak to my constituents and see the food bank use, the cost of food and other things in my riding of Fundy Royal going up, that is not what they are saying.

I am wondering if in the member's riding that is his experience.

John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I spoke about that and I am sure the hon. member will be speaking about that in his riding.

It is not all good. There are people who are hurting. The affordability crisis, the housing crisis and the cost of living crisis are problems in my riding for the voices I represent and I know it is a problem across the country.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak here today.

It is an honour to follow up and share my time with my colleague and seatmate from Barrie South—Innisfil. I listened intently to his remarks and I found some commonality in the experience of my own constituents and what I am seeing throughout my riding of Fundy Royal.

I mentioned the quote from the Prime Minister, where he was saying that affordability is the best it has been in over 10 years. To listen to some of my colleagues across the way, some of the Liberals in the House, we would think that everything is roses. However, how do we reconcile what we are hearing at the arena or at Tim Hortons talking to people in our community, dealing with constituents who are coming with serious problems and talking to us about how the economy is affecting them? For example, in talking to people at Fundy National Park, we learned they have all been given notice that they could be losing their job. It is very important work that they do.

We are trying to balance how the government could find $560 million, over half a billion dollars, to send to other countries, for example, for the rainforest, without, at the same time, supporting the great work that is happening in our national parks here in our own country, in New Brunswick, in my riding of Fundy Royal. We are trying to reconcile what the Prime Minister is saying about affordability never being so great, and Canadians have really never had it so good, with what we are hearing in our ridings.

A lot of this could be anecdotal, but when we look to Statistics Canada, which compiles the data, it tells us some of the facts about the cost of items compared to past years. When I look at these facts from Statistics Canada, it is hard to reconcile the facts with what the Prime Minister is saying. For example, Canada, right now, has the highest food inflation in the G7. Among our peer countries, food inflation is rising higher in Canada than any of those other countries. There is no reason for that. There is no reason that in a country like Canada, which is so blessed with natural resources, the great work that our farmers do, and the space and conditions that we have, food inflation would be higher unless it is something that our governments are doing.

There is one thing we have that these other countries do not, and that is the industrial carbon tax, which is going to be a common theme in my remarks. It is contributing to food inflation and all kinds of inflation that we are seeing affecting our constituents.

From Statistics Canada, in New Brunswick, the price of onions is up 149%. The price of carrots is up 78%. The price of ground beef is up 72% in the last 10 years of the Liberal government. The price of chicken is up 46%. The price of flour is up 46% as well. Food bank use in my home province of New Brunswick, and this is a startling statistic, which is borne out in what I am hearing when I talk to the food banks in my riding and in our region, is up 60% in just the last four years.

People are hurting. Families are struggling to make ends meet. Families are having to make very tough decisions on where they spend their limited resources. Seniors, for some time now under the Liberal government, have had to choose between turning the heat up or turning the heat down and buying certain food. They are trying to get to the end of the month and support their family. People are stretched to the limit in New Brunswick, in my riding, and there is nothing, and this is the point, in Bill C-31 that would help those families, those seniors and those who are struggling to make ends meet.

● (1320)

I mentioned the industrial carbon tax. We are all well aware of, for example, with Stellantis, the risk of a loss of jobs in our great country and the province of Ontario. Increasingly, we are seeing blame laid where it should be, at the feet of a government that seems to have been bent for over a decade on driving investment, development and entrepreneurship out of this country. When we look at it all together, it can only be taken as being deliberate.

Let us look at what happened as soon as the Liberals took government to a project that had great promise for this country. It was a nation-building project that would have taken natural resources from Alberta and brought them to my home province of New Brunswick, where we have the largest oil refinery in Canada, the Irving Oil refinery. It would have brought those resources to be value-added. Instead of giving away our resources at a discount rate, we could have added value here in Canada, right in New Brunswick, and exported to a world that needed more of what Canada has to offer. That was the energy east pipeline project. Right out of the gate, the government kept moving the yardstick until finally the proponents said that, under the ever-changing regulatory environment, just when they thought they were at the goal line, the Liberals moved the post. They kept doing that until finally the proponents said that when they were under a Conservative government this would happen, but under the Liberal government it was not going to happen.

That is just one example. We have seen this all over the country. How else do we explain the industrial carbon tax, which none of our peer countries have in place, that undermines the competitiveness of car manufacturing in Ontario, or the mills that have recently shut down in New Brunswick that were impacted and running at a deficit fuelled in large part by the industrial carbon tax? The industrial carbon tax is costing jobs in every sector all across our country. Not only is it costing jobs, it is making the cost of living higher, including the cost of fuel.

I know that for Canadians it has been punishing at the pumps over the last several years. Conservatives have been calling on the government to remove all fuel taxes until at least Canada Day of next year, remove the industrial carbon tax, the GST and the fuel excise tax from the cost of fuel. The government has cruelly not only refused to do that, but starting in the new year we are going to see a major hike in taxes back on fuel. When fuel prices are at an elevated level, it reaps a windfall on the backs of everyday Canadians.

The Liberals had a real opportunity here to get people back to work, to encourage entrepreneurship, to reverse the tide when it comes to business, development and investment fleeing this country for the many other jurisdictions, including to the U.S. and other countries, where they are welcoming our business, investment and employees with open arms. They are happy to have that, whereas here in Canada we said that we do not want the investment and the jobs. That has caused immense suffering for all of our constituents as they try to run their family the way the government should be running, watching expenses, investing in priorities and not spending half a billion dollars on another country for its rainforest. It needs to invest in Canada, in our people and in our businesses. That was a missed opportunity here.

Conservatives will continue to stand up for Canadians as they struggle to make ends meet. We will continue to call for more affordability, lower taxes and more investment right here in Canada.

● (1325)

Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing we know, and it is very simple to google this, is that food prices have increased all around the world. What we can do as governments to respond is provide relief for our citizens. What our Liberal government has done here in Canada is cut taxes twice over the last 11 years, put in place measures to increase the GST rebates and ensured that we put in place funding for $10-a-day day care. The list of things we have done is very long.

My question for my hon. colleague who represents Fundy Royal is, why, if he is so concerned about the well-being of the families and the seniors who live in his community, did he and his Conservative Party vote down every single one of those measures that put more money back in the pockets of the constituents he claims to care for?

● (1330)

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, to listen to the member opposite, everything is apparently going great here in Canada. He might not have heard what I said from Statistics Canada: Canada has the highest food inflation in all the G7. We are doing the worst. That is not something to celebrate. It is a direct result of the government's policies. It is a direct result of the industrial carbon tax. How else do we explain that food bank usage is up 60% in just the last four years?

What the government is doing is, demonstrably, not working. It is hurting Canadians and contributing to the inflation that Canadians are suffering from.

[*Translation*]

Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague.

I have been a member of Parliament since 2019. I do not know what to say to my constituents when they tell me that they do not understand why we are debating the 2025 budget today and the 2026 budget tomorrow. What is going on? The government wants to build Canada strong. It wants to go faster, further, harder, but I do not know what to tell my constituents.

What do you think I should tell them?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I will not tell them anything, but perhaps the hon. member for Fundy Royal will.

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, I can appreciate the confusion. Canadians, the member's constituents and my constituents as well, are looking for solutions. They are looking for things, whether it is in budget 2025 or budget 2026, that will help them, principally with the cost of living. That is the struggle Canadians are facing. That is the root of the tough choices Canadians are having to make, and I completely understand the confusion.

We see also that we all need to continually press the government to do whatever it can to help Canadians in the affordability crisis. It has to start listening and start taking strong action now to save Canadians money.

Rob Morrison (Columbia—Kootenay—Southern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member's speech was really enlightening. First of all, for the people in my riding, our food banks are going dry. They cannot afford groceries, yet the government is continuing to spend massive amounts of money. Why would it do that when we know that the direct effect is that people cannot afford to live, cannot afford to feed themselves?

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, inflation increases the cost of everything, so as people are being squeezed in other areas such as fuel, it affects food bank use. The dramatic increase in food bank use is the result not only of the dramatic increase in the cost of food. It is the result also of the dramatic increase in the cost of everything my colleague's constituents and my constituents have to spend their money on, whether it is fuel, rent, mortgage, heat or, of course, food. All of it has gone up.

I look at that stat, and behind every stat is a family, an individual, a senior or a young person who is struggling. When we hear this stat, it should alarm all of us that food bank use across Canada has increased 60% in just four years. That is an alarming stat, and it is a call to action for all of us.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the third reading debate on Bill C-31, the budget 2025 implementation act, no. 2.

Budget 2025 lays out our plan to build Canada strong amidst great uncertainty. We all see it every day. The global geopolitical landscape is undergoing a profound transformation. After decades of growth fed by globalization and free trade, a fundamental shift has taken hold, driven by economic nationalism, political and geopolitical uncertainty, and rapid and disruptive technological advancements. These changes are obviously causing a lot of concern for our workers and businesses.

We simply cannot stand idly by in the face of these changes. Rather, we can leverage our collective strengths to ensure that Canada not only withstands these global shifts, but also seizes every opportunity for growth that comes along, and there are many. Canada has everything the world wants. We are a clean and conventional energy superpower. We are among the top five producers of many of the world's critical minerals. We are a leader in AI and quantum computing. Canada also has a highly skilled and educated workforce and can attract top international talent.

Since the 2025 budget was tabled, our government has moved quickly to build a stronger Canada and enhance our ability to be masters of our destiny. Through Bill C-31, we are now implementing a number of the key measures announced in the 2025 budget. One of the measures included in Bill C-31 is immediate expensing for manufacturing and processing investments. Simply put, businesses will be able to deduct the full cost of certain types of investments in the year they are made. With this measure, and the productivity mega deduction as well, our government is encouraging capital investment and long-term economic growth by allowing businesses to immediately write off a larger proportion of the cost of their new investments. Thanks to this measure, it will now be easier for businesses to invest and expand.

Another useful measure included in Bill C-31 is the expansion of eligibility for the clean hydrogen investment tax credit. As we know, Canada is committed to building a clean energy future, and hydrogen is part of our plan. I would also note that the expanded eligibility will apply retroactively to December 16, 2024.

Our government understands that a competitive labour market fosters innovation and productivity, which in turn leads to higher wages. However, the use of non-compete clauses, which prevent people from working for or starting a rival company, hinders competition and undermines jobs and wages. That is why Bill C-31 amends the Canada Labour Code to restrict the use of non-compete clauses in employment contracts for federally regulated businesses. In this way, we will protect workers' rights, promote labour mobility, strengthen competition and create more well-paid jobs.

The government also knows that millions of low-income Canadians do not file tax returns, either because they do not have the necessary resources to do so or because their income is too low and they do not have to pay taxes. The problem is that the people who need benefits the most often do not receive them. For example, they are not getting the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, the Canada child benefit, the Canada workers benefit and other extremely important benefits to which they are entitled. That is why Bill C-31 proposes to allow the Canada Revenue Agency to file a tax return on behalf of certain eligible low-income individuals whose tax situation is straightforward, who do not owe any tax, but who struggle to file their own returns. This measure will ensure that these important benefits reach the folks who need them most.

● (1335)

I would like to conclude by summarizing some initiatives that are particularly important to the people of the Quebec City region and the riding of Québec Centre, which I have the privilege of representing. I will start with four projects that clearly illustrate the work we are doing in the Quebec City region to become masters of our destiny, beginning with substantial investments in the Davie shipyard. We are talking about six program icebreakers, one polar icebreaker, and thousands upon thousands of jobs that support not only the workers at the Davie shipyard, but also workers at nearly 1,000 suppliers, many of whom are in the Quebec City and Chaudière-Appalaches region. The goal is to better protect Canada's coastlines and sovereignty and to drive significant innovation in what is becoming a world-class hub for shipbuilding and ship maintenance.

A second very important project that will help us be masters of our destiny is the Quebec City tramway. The tramway project represents the largest investment that the Canadian government has ever made in Quebec City. It is creating 4,300 jobs a year and spurring the construction of nearly 15,000 homes. These homes are located closer to services and public transit especially. The total public and private investment is around $12 billion. This project will not only revolutionize land use, the urban landscape, economic growth and environmental protection, but it will also reduce pollution and congestion in big, beautiful Quebec City.

A third example of being masters of our destiny is the Quebec Bridge, a historic, strategic and critical piece of infrastructure for the greater Quebec City and Chaudière-Appalaches region. We are investing $40 million a year to restore this bridge so that nearly 35,000 vehicles and dozens of trains can keep crossing it every day. This is Quebec City's first link. We are very proud to have acquired it, to be restoring it and to ensure the long-term survival of such a strategically and historically important link.

Lastly, there is the high-speed rail project, which is the largest infrastructure project in modern Canadian history. It will benefit the Quebec City region in particular, connecting it to Trois-Rivières, Montreal, Laval, Ottawa and other cities in Ontario. That is the equivalent of taking 100,000 cars off the roads in Quebec and Ontario, resulting in less pollution and congestion in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada and less need to invest in new road infrastructure and new highways. About 18 million Canadians and 40% of Canada's economy will be covered by this major project. It will cut travel times in half between Quebec City and Montreal, between Quebec City and Ottawa, and between Quebec City and Toronto. It will also boost Canada's GDP by nearly $35 billion.

The considerable resources stemming from projects for building Canada strong, and therefore building Quebec strong, are also being used for some major social justice measures. I will summarize four such measures that are especially important to my constituents.

The first is the Canada child benefit, which is probably the most innovative Canadian social policy in generations, responsible for reducing poverty by 40% in my riding, particularly in inner city neighbourhoods where, unfortunately, individuals and especially families are struggling to make ends meet. That means 40% less poverty among children and, of course, among the adults who care for them. Nearly 500,000 children are lifted out of poverty every month. The benefit is paid on the 20th of each month.

When I travel around my riding and the more central neighbourhoods and meet with community organizations, educators or teachers, sometimes they are not aware of the Canada child benefit. However, when I tell them that the benefit is paid on the 20th of each month, they tell me about the “20th effect”. They say that within days of the 20th of each month, the lunch boxes arriving at school contain more fruits and vegetables, the children seem more relaxed, and the parents seem less stressed. We can see that the quantitative aspect of lifting people out of poverty is also very evident from a qualitative perspective. This is an important measure for the people in my riding.

● (1340)

Second, there is the Canadian dental care plan, which is a success story that is rarely discussed. It certainly is a success. It helps nearly 25,000 people in my riding who can now visit the dentist and dental hygienist without ending up in the emergency room or at their family doctor's office. The doctor cannot do anything to help with oral health problems. This program reduces health care administration costs in Quebec. It eases the strain on the health care system and leads to better oral health and greater financial well-being for tens of thousands of people in my riding.

The third example is the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. Both the recent budget and the previous one included the introduction of this benefit, which is a major initiative. In budget 2026, we are adding a top-up of 50% of the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. This payment, which will be made in early 2027, amounts to nearly $340 for a single person or a single senior, on top of the standard amount of the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. A family of four will receive $680. Over the 2026-27 period, a family of four will receive nearly $2,570 as a result of this new benefit.

I will conclude with a fourth measure that delivers significant social benefits and that, while rarely discussed, is particularly well understood in Quebec: universal, affordable, accessible child care. In Quebec, although the system is far from perfect and needs ongoing improvement, we recognize the importance of universal, accessible, high-quality, affordable child care. It helps reduce poverty and increases participation in the labour market, especially for women. This leads to greater gender equality, and it also helps create more equal opportunities for children by ensuring that they all can benefit from the same child care services to flourish and develop within that environment. The Canadian government's investment amounts to roughly $10 billion annually in transfers to the provinces and territories, including nearly $2 billion for Quebec. In Quebec alone, this funding supports approximately 150,000 child care spaces.

* * *

● (1345)

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

ABILITY OF MEMBER TO REPRESENT CONSTITUENTS

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise to put on the record comments from the NDP regarding the question of privilege the leader of the official opposition raised yesterday.

The allegations raised by the leader of the official opposition are troubling to say the least. Let me be clear that no Canadian should face intimidation, retaliation or threats to their livelihood for exercising their democratic right to speak with their member of Parliament. Maureen is a veteran and a nurse who helped care for Canadian Armed Forces personnel in the aftermath of the horrific tragedy at CFB Wainwright. She met with her elected representative to share her experiences and raise legitimate concerns about the support needed for those affected. For that, she allegedly faced threats to her employment and professional future from a government contractor. That is deeply troubling.

The right of constituents to communicate with their elected representative is fundamental to our democracy. It cannot depend on the goodwill of an employer, a contractor or a government department, nor should workers have to weigh the risk of losing their job before deciding whether they can speak to their MP.

There is also a serious parliamentary privilege issue here. Members of Parliament can only effectively represent their constituents if those constituents are free to approach them without intimidation or fear of reprisal. If people are punished for speaking to their elected representatives, it undermines not only the rights of those individuals, but also the ability of this entire institution to function. Let us consider the chilling effect. How many other workers might now remain silent? How many legitimate concerns will never reach the House because people are afraid of the consequences?

Parliamentary privilege exists to protect the ability of elected representatives to do their jobs on behalf of the people who sent them here. It is not a personal entitlement. It is a safeguard for democracy itself. We must send an equivocal message that constituents have the right to speak, MPs have the right to hear them, and no employer or government contractor should use coercion or threats.

The NDP supports referring this matter for a full examination and supports ensuring that this constituent receives the protection, fairness and accountability she deserves.

● (1350)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member. The Speaker will take that into consideration.

* * *

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of the motion that C-31, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He brought up the dental plan. The government just recently wrote off $435 million from that plan. It is actually a line item in the 2026 budget. A fair amount is fraud and a fair amount, as the government says, is miscommunication.

Does my colleague agree that the government should be writing off fraud instead of going after the perpetrators of that fraud? How would the government so poorly roll out a plan that it loses hundreds of millions of dollars due to miscommunication?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will say two things on that. The first is on fraud. I do not believe that word was used in communications with his constituents. The second is communication. I would encourage the member, and all of the Conservative members of the House, to speak more openly and clearly to their constituents about the dental care plan. The Conservatives have opposed it systematically, but tens of thousands of people in his riding are probably unaware of the plan because, unfortunately, Conservatives try to avoid speaking about it.

The plan has obvious and important advantages for everyone in the House, and I think we all have a responsibility to speak clearly and loudly about it.

[*Translation*]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have some questions for my hon. colleague, who is touting the high-speed rail project even though, several months after the government decided to commit fully to this project and even give itself the authority to expropriate people's property, we still have no figures on the exact cost, the revenue it will generate, the people it will serve, or the projected ridership. The government is stubbornly determined to move forward.

It is all well and good for him to say that he thinks this project would take 100,000 vehicles off the road, but when we are talking about a cost of $243 billion, that still works out to about $810,000 per metric ton of carbon dioxide reduced. I think that at this stage, we need to see some numbers to be able to determine whether this is a good project.

That said, I would like to come back to another project the Liberals are promoting, including in their budget: a $43-billion pipeline that would be funded by the government. Just to produce additional oil, this would add the equivalent of 27.7 million metric tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions nationwide. That is equivalent to putting nearly 10 million additional vehicles on the road.

I would like my colleague to explain to me how he can promote a project without having any numbers when he is talking about 100,000 fewer vehicles on the road. On the other hand, he is proposing and supporting a project that would be funded by the government and that would result—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I must give the hon. member for Québec Centre time to answer the question.

The hon. member for Québec Centre.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, I will say three quick things.

First, yes, there are many numbers out there, and some are more valid than others. I will let the experts speak to that, since many statistics have already been shared.

Second, for city hall and Quebec City and for all the environmental and social organizations in my riding—I invite my colleague to come meet with them—it is clear that this high-speed train project is extremely important to the greater Quebec City area. I find it hard to see how a member from Quebec could oppose that.

Lastly, we, all the members from Quebec, should rise in the House to defend this project because, unfortunately for the Ontario members who are listening to us, most of the investments in this major infrastructure project will benefit Quebeckers, and Quebec in particular.

Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, according to the budget, the Liberals will add $750 billion to the debt over the next few years. We know that past Liberal deficits have contributed to inflation and therefore to the rising cost of living.

Is my colleague concerned about that? If not, why not?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, I think the member forgot to mention all the benefits for Canadians, including people in her riding, who are struggling to make ends meet. Covering the cost of groceries, rent and gas in 2026 is not easy. The vast majority of the measures I summarized earlier, such as the Canada child benefit, child care, the Canadian dental care plan and the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, will provide proportionally more support to the families and seniors in her riding who need it most.

Let us stand in solidarity with all Canadians who need a little more breathing room and a few more resources to make ends meet.

● (1355)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Dieppe, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech today. He spoke a lot about affordability. That is a recurring theme in the speeches that we hear in the House of Commons. What is a bit sad, though, is that the opposition parties, particularly the Conservative Party, often vote against the affordability measures introduced by our government.

I was wondering whether the hon. member could elaborate on the importance of the Canada child benefit and the difference this program has made in his riding and across Canada.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague, who works hard for the people in her riding.

She is absolutely right. We are basically using the same resources and budgets that were in place before 2015. We are using the same amounts as the Harper government, but we are using them much more efficiently and fairly. This money is more readily available to the families who need it most.

The wealthiest Canadians, the millionaires, no longer receive this assistance, and that is a good thing. This is helping to reduce poverty by 50% in Québec Centre and elsewhere in the province. What is more, it helps middle-class families that might otherwise have more trouble making ends meet.

[*English*]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Liberals keep talking about building major projects in British Columbia, but where do they expect the water to come from if they will not invest upstream in the watersheds that community, salmon and industry all depend on? B.C. put $100 million into the Watershed Security Fund, yet the Canada Water Agency has committed just 0.9% of its $650-million budget to B.C.

Will the Liberals finally make sure that we get our fair share in British Columbia and match the province's $100-million investment so that first nations and local communities can protect water at its source?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, our provinces are obviously not very close to each other, but they are similar in that they both experience the benefits and challenges of living near the coast, near oceans. In Quebec City, I am obviously talking about the St. Lawrence.

I think the people in my riding have the same attitude. They want the Canadian government to defend and protect the aquatic and coastal environments in our big, beautiful region.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts in regard to the productivity mega deduction. This is a program that is going to provide, I believe, the incentives to small, medium-sized and large businesses to look at ways they can upgrade and expand, all of which means more jobs for Canadians.

I am wondering if my colleague could just provide his thoughts as to how that fits into the bigger picture of growing a stronger and healthier Canada for all.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Madam Speaker, the member knows really well that to generate greater wages and better jobs, we need a more innovative Canada, a stronger Canada that comes with investments in capital and technology. It is exactly what he said. The productivity mega deduction is going to increase investments significantly, lead to increases in the GDP to the order of $25 billion and lead to better jobs and more jobs in Canada for the future.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the lead-up to the budget, Conservatives put forward a series of constructive proposals around parental leave reform. These are simple things that already exist in Quebec that could and should apply to the rest of the country. For instance, one of the proposals is letting a parent pause and then resume their leave. These are reasonable, no- or low-cost proposals. The government did not include any of these in its budget.

I want to know, from the government members, why they did not include these reasonable pro-family proposals we put forward to make life easier for parents on leave.

● (1400)

The Speaker: It is two o'clock. Can the hon. member for Québec Centre answer in about 15 seconds?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, that would be unfair to the question, so I will leave it as it is and hope to have a conversation separately with the member.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

STEEL INDUSTRY

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the incredible news for Hamilton's workers and the decisive action our government has taken to deliver it. In late September, Hamilton's steelworkers and unions were shocked by Cleveland-Cliffs' announcement that it would idle its Stelco operations and lay off 500 employees by December 1, but our government refused to stand by and let Hamilton's workers pay the price.

Through the determined leadership of our Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Industry, Stelco is bringing its laid-off workers back and ensuring they receive the compensation they deserve. We delivered the results in record time. We stood shoulder to shoulder with our workers and unions, confronted the consequences of unjust and illegal tariffs and fought to protect good-paying jobs.

We will never abandon Hamilton's steelworkers and we will never stop fighting for Canadian jobs

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TYRONE MAGBITANG

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour the life and memory of Tyrone Magbitang, a 27-year-old Durham Regional Police constable in training, who tragically lost his life in July while travelling to the Ontario Police College.

After three years of dedicated service as a special constable, Tyrone was one step closer to fulfilling his lifelong dream of becoming a police officer. His dedication to others extended well beyond his uniform. He turned his passion for boxing into an opportunity to raise funds for cancer-related causes. Although Tyrone never completed his training, his compassion and professionalism exemplified the very spirit of public service. His legacy is measured by the lives he touched.

On behalf of Oshawa, I extend my deepest condolences to his parents Garry and Christine, his brother Tyler, who is a Toronto police officer, and his favourite person Charlotte. To his friends, colleagues and the entire policing community, I pray they all find comfort in the precious memories he leaves behind and that his example of selfless service continues to inspire us all.

* * *

LUNG CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Wade Chang (Burnaby Central, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cancer is more than just a number. My husband was diagnosed with lung cancer last year, but, thankfully, screening caught it early. His experience reinforced my belief that early detection can make all the difference.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Nearly 33,000 Canadians are diagnosed with lung cancer every year. While provinces are making progress with screening programs, we must make sure no one is left behind. Current eligibility criteria focus largely on age and smoking history, potentially overlooking people exposed to occupational exposures, environmental risks and generic factors. Through the Right2Survive coalition, health care professionals and cancer survivors are calling for stronger prevention and early detection. The federal government can help through national coordination, sharing best practices and regularly reviewing screening criteria as evidence evolves. I also want to recognize the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network for 15 years of dedicated service to Canadians.

Finding cancer early saves lives. We must make sure more Canadians have that chance.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 350 jobs are on the line in Niagara West. Stanpac, my riding's largest employer, is a proud, family-owned Canadian business that has manufactured dairy and beverage packaging for over 75 years. It has supported generations of families and generously given back to our community.

Today, its future is at risk. Since August, Stanpac has been facing 50% tariffs, costing the company over $500,000 every week. It has burned through its cash reserves trying to protect their employees. In September, Stanpac warned the government that without tariff relief, 350 jobs would be lost. I have repeatedly contacted multiple ministers seeking assistance, but still no relief. The Prime Minister found $560 million for forests in Brazil. Meanwhile, 350 Niagara workers are facing an uncertain Christmas.

Will the Prime Minister deliver the tariff relief needed to protect these Canadian jobs before Christmas, yes or no?

* * *

[*Translation*]

BOL D'OR

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Cégep de Trois-Rivières for its outstanding organization of the 50th Bol d'or 2026, the provincial football championship of the Réseau du sport étudiant du Québec.

This year's tournament featured six final matches between the best high school and college teams in Quebec. I would like to acknowledge the performance of the Vert et Or from Séminaire Saint-Joseph in Trois-Rivières, who took top honours in the division 2 junior final. This is a source of great pride for the Trois-Rivières region and its up-and-coming athletes.

Beyond the competition, the Bol d'or brings together thousands of athletes, coaches, families and sports fans from all over Quebec and raises the profile of our community. On behalf of the people of Trois-Rivières and the entire Mauricie region, I say bravo to all the teams and congratulate the Cégep de Trois-Rivières on this success.

● (1405)

[*English*]

CANADIAN CADET PROGRAM

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the recent cuts to cadet programming were resoundingly rejected by Canadians. However, despite the Liberal government's pledge to reverse the decision, they have been underfunding the cadets program for years. In fact, cadets today receive $1,500 less, after inflation, per cadet than they did under the last Conservative government.

At a time when many families are struggling to provide affordable and quality programming for their children, the cadets program should be expanding, not shrinking. A promise to support cadets with the rising cost of facilities was pulled just weeks after being announced. The cadets were left with the bill from this broken Liberal promise, and it only gets worse.

Summer camps are at less than half their 2019 capacity. Thousands of cadets are stuck on wait-lists, and many do not even receive uniforms. Cadet instructor cadre officers are overworked and underpaid. Flying scholarships are down by two-thirds, while Canada continues to face an acute pilot shortage.

It is time for the Liberal government to end 10 years of neglect and restore the cadets to their former glory.

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NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE

Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this day 109 years ago, Canadian history was made. The National Hockey League was founded on November 26, 1917, in Montreal.

For over a century, hockey has been more than a sport in Canada. It is a symbol of our national pride. It is a passion that we all share. It is a unifier. No matter who we are or what we do, we gather around the TV to watch the biscuit with our loved ones.

Now, I will always be a believer, and I look forward to at least one win by the Toronto Maple Leafs this century. I am proud of our seven Canadian national hockey teams, from our Canucks to our Canadiens, and I am glad to celebrate 109 years of the NHL and our nation's favourite sport.

MELISSA BORTHWICK

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George—Omineca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, colleagues, I rise today to pay tribute to yet another fallen hero. Every day, first responders put on their uniforms, kiss their loved ones goodbye and leave their homes to protect us.

Tragically, on Tuesday, one of those heroes never made it home to her family. Ottawa paramedic Melissa Borthwick lost her life in a motor vehicle accident, driving home from her shift. She was more than a paramedic. Melissa was a loving wife, a devoted mother of two young boys, a cherished friend and a colleague who dedicated her life to helping others.

For our silent sentinels who spend their lives answering calls of others in their darkest hours, Tuesday was yet another unimaginable day of heartbreak. I want Mel's husband Matt, their two beautiful boys, her family and the entire Ottawa Paramedic Service to know that they are not alone in their grief.

We also pray for the full recovery of Melissa's colleague Jenny Plamondon who was injured in this horrible accident.

May we never take for granted those who dedicate their lives to saving and protecting ours. Rest easy, Mel. Her shift is over, and her brothers and sisters have it from here.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OATH TO THE PEOPLE

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a lawyer from the Ontario Bar Association came to Parliament yesterday to threaten the 127 members from Quebec. It was not the first time. On October 23, Mr. Corbeau came here to deliver a similar speech, the first 12 minutes of which was in English only. He said that the unanimous will of elected officials to swear an oath to the people posed an internal threat to Canada's sovereignty.

He also revealed the real reason behind his crusade. He said that the Parti Québécois was taking all necessary interim measures until a referendum could be held, the result of which would be 'no', and that Quebec would remain a province of our beautiful country, a strong Quebec within a united Canada. We already suspected that his motives were political when he fought alongside the English Montreal School Board against Bill 96 and the Charter of the French Language.

If Mr. David wants to get into politics, he should run for office. He should stop using the courts as a tool for his personal vendettas.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Fares Al Soud (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, solidarity is a commitment to standing alongside those who have fallen victim to injustice.

[*Translation*]

It means recognizing that some principles are central to our shared humanity and cannot be upheld selectively.

[*English*]

On November 29, we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It is an opportunity, not only to remember their story of displacement and loss, and their enduring fight for self-determination, but also to stand alongside those who have lost their lives in pursuit of the very basic human rights that we, in this House, are entrusted to defend every day.

The challenges facing the Palestinian people have scarcely been greater. The Palestinian struggle continues to be a reminder to the world that the pursuit of freedom cannot be extinguished by the passage of time, the weight of injustice or the silence of those who have a responsibility to speak. Freedom, dignity and self-determination are not privileges to be granted. They are rights to be upheld.

* * *

HOLODOMOR

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, Canadians will join Ukrainians around the world to remember the millions of innocent men, women and children who were deliberately starved to death during the Holodomor of 1932-33. Joseph Stalin sent his communist thugs to publicly execute Ukrainian clergy, academics and community leaders. The Soviets then confiscated all crops and livestock as food was deliberately used as a weapon against families. This was an act of genocide by Stalin in his attempt to exterminate the Ukrainian people, language and culture.

More than 90 years later, Ukraine faces another attempt by the Kremlin to destroy its sovereignty. Putin's brutal war is his attempt to russify Ukraine. Once again, Ukrainians continue to fight for their freedom, identity and very survival. Stalin failed in 1932-33, and Putin will fail now.

We stand with the people of Ukraine as they fight for their liberty, democracy and sovereignty. *Slava Ukraini*.

On Saturday, we remember the victims of the Holodomor. May their memories be eternal. *Vichnaya pamyat*.

Statements by Members

EQUAL VOICE ANNIVERSARY GALA

Chi Nguyen (Spadina—Harbourfront, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, I joined women from across Canada and across party lines to celebrate at Equal Voice's 25th anniversary gala.

Before I took my seat here, I had the privilege of being the executive director, advancing work to increase women's political representation. Our founding chair, Rosemary Speirs, believed that our democracy should look like the people it serves. When Equal Voice began, women held one in five seats in the House. Today, 40% of the Liberal caucus is women, the largest group ever elected to a federal caucus in Canadian history.

Behind the numbers are women still questioning whether or not they can afford to enter into politics and stay safe from harassment, and whether or not they will have the support they need to lead. We know there is still much work to do to achieve gender parity, and in an emerging new world order, women must be at the table. When women step forward, our democracy grows stronger.

Congratulations to Equal Voice on 25 extraordinary years of bringing women together across party lines, and for getting more women elected.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's jogging buddy got a sole-sourced contract worth $2.3 billion weeks before his company is forced to make a $2.3-billion debt repayment. The AI minister's brother got a $2.2-million gift from the Liberal government. Liberal insider Dominic Barton was appointed to lead Invest in Canada right before the government announced a $1.6-billion investment in a company Barton is invested in. A former Liberal premier sits on the board of a company that received a sole-sourced contract worth $200 million while that company's executives cashed in their stock options. Now, prime minister Brookfield is ripping up the Expropriations Act so a consortium of companies with deep Liberal ties can profit from taxpayer-funded infrastructure.

The corruption cases are piling up at a pace not seen before. Corruption is so brazen—

The Speaker: We must refer to members of the House by their proper titles and not by nicknames. We have gone over that a few times.

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

* * *

WORLD AIDS DAY

Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, soon it will be World AIDS Day, which is a day to remember the tens of thousands of young Canadians, and 44 million globally, who died of the disease.

The story of AIDS is primarily an overwhelmingly immense tragedy, but it is also, in a much smaller way, a tale of triumph over immense adversity. It is a triumph for those who battled the disease and survived but also a triumph for humanity.

For many years, HIV was absolutely a death sentence. Then came antiretrovirals. The first were not very effective. They were prohibitively expensive and financially out of reach for most people, especially Africans, but in an immense collaborative effort between government, NGOs and the global pharmaceutical community, the efficacy of ARVs improved dramatically and the price plummeted, so that now most people in the world can live long and productive lives with the disease.

AIDS Day will be the day to remember both the dark and horrible legacy of this terrible disease but also the ability of the human spirit to triumph over adversity when we all decide to work together.

* * *

● (1415)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has repeatedly refused to answer whether he has discussed Telesat with his long-time friend Dan Goldberg. Telesat has received a $2.3-billion contract from the Liberal government. Does the Prime Minister not think Canadians deserve answers?

Ecostrat is another company that received a $2.2-million contract from the government. The CEO of that company happens to be the brother of the artificial intelligence minister.

Cohere AI received over $1 billion of taxpayer money. That is another company with many investors with close ties to the Liberal Party.

As well, the Prime Minister appointed Dominic Barton to lead Invest in Canada, despite his company's record of supercharging the opioid crisis and violating procurement rules.

At a time when millions of Canadians are lining up at food banks, the Liberals continue lining the pockets of well-connected insiders. At a minimum, Canadians deserve answers on each of these decisions, and Conservatives will keep fighting to shine a light on the Liberals' ethical lapses.

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MOVEMBER

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am keenly aware that my moustache does very little to enhance my inherent natural beauty. I was worried it might be ruled out of order as a prop.

Close to 20 years ago, I grew a Movember moustache in honour of my father, who had prostate cancer. This year, I grew it for myself. A few months ago, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and despite constant vigilance, it had advanced to a stage where radical surgery was necessary.

I want to thank Dr. Amanda Hird and the great team at Sunnybrook hospital for their great care. I am an impatient patient and came back earlier than both my doctor and the Prime Minister suggested, but I needed to work, and I knew that my husband needed a break.

I want to remind the Speaker and all the men in this chamber to get their PSA checked. I ask the women to remind the men in their lives to take care of their physical and mental health. It is something we tend to ignore.

The good news is that the moustache will be gone in a few days.

The Speaker: It is wonderful to see the member back in the House.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night the ethics committee tried to shed light on a $2.3-billion untendered contract awarded to Telesat and Dan Goldberg, the Prime Minister's close buddy.

We wanted to hear from the people involved and give the public a chance to form their own opinion, since it is their money that is being spent. However, a major obstacle got in the way of Canadians and transparency: the Liberal government. That was to be expected. The Liberals voted against a study that would have brought everything out into the open.

What do the Liberals have to hide that would induce them to stop the ethics committee, an oversight committee, from doing its job?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the government could have chosen to invest in a non-Canadian company south of the border. However, in the interest of Canadian jobs and for the sake of developing scientific research and intellectual property in Canada, we decided to invest in Telesat Lightspeed.

We made that decision because supporting Canada's space telecommunications sector has been part of our industrial policy for years. We are going to keep doing that.

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals want to keep doing it, and they are doing it, because there is yet another ethical problem. Cohere is a company that just received $1.6 billion, and Cohere's investors are, once again, the Prime Minister's pals.

Dominic Barton, a founding member of the Century Initiative, is now the chair of Invest in Canada. He was appointed by the Prime Minister. Patrick Pichette, a former director at Cohere, is now the

head of Digital Transformation Canada. After the Prime Minister decided to give money to the company run by his pals, Cohere's market value jumped by 268%.

Will the government at least admit that there is, yet again, the appearance of a conflict of interest?

● (1420)

[*English*]

Hon. Jill McKnight (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the time to build and invest in Canada. For too long, we have relied on others for critical technologies. Our investment in Cohere will help a leading Canadian AI company grow here at home. This investment will create over 1,000 jobs and secure a commitment for $1.7 billion of investment in Canada over the next three years. We are backing Canadian champions to compete around the world.

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GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, would it make any sense at all to have Canada's newly appointed ocean envoy appear at the committees responsible for fisheries and oceans and the environment? Of course it would, but in the world of well-connected Liberal insiders, one does everything one can to prevent that appearance, because the new envoy is the Prime Minister's wife.

Liberals use the excuse that she is a volunteer and should not be subject to any scrutiny around her role and the potential conflicts of interest or lobbying violations or self-dealing already rampant in the Prime Minister's Office.

Why are the Liberals refusing to have Diana Fox Carney appear at these committees?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. The ocean envoy does not manage the $1.2 billion in ocean funding. The role is volunteer. It is not remunerated. This role has been cleared by the Ethics Commissioner.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister became volunteer economic adviser to Justin Trudeau, it allowed him to fly under the conflict of interest regime. Appointing his wife as a volunteer is the same play. Fox Carney gets full access to government resources and funding without being subject to the conflict of interest and lobbying regime and, with it, the potential for the Carney family to make millions implementing green schemes with the Brookfield Global Transition Fund I.

The Government of Canada is not a family-run business. Her husband may be the Prime Minister, but both are accountable to Canadians.

Why will they not let her come to committee?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. The $1.2 billion in ocean funding is my responsibility. If the member would like to know what is happening at the ocean conference, I am happy to speak with them.

Beyond that, it is a volunteer role. She has been passed through the Ethics Commissioner. She—

The Speaker: The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why are the Liberals always so determined to cover up the truth? Last night at the ethics oversight committee, they used their new, manufactured majority to block our efforts to hear witness testimony on the emerging Telesat scandal, the 2.3 billion taxpayer dollars given to the company of the Prime Minister's close friends just as it teetered on the verge of bankruptcy. Canadians, unsurprisingly, have a couple of questions.

If the Liberals have nothing to hide, when will they stop obstructing the committee and let Canadians hear the truth?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all those paranoid questions have been answered, but it is amazing the lengths the Conservatives will go to in order to deflect and detract from their bitter, craven, twisted, cynical flip-flop on Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. They would rather burn all environmental regulation to the ground than uphold Canadian standards and get big things done. The Premier of British Columbia supports the bill. The former future premier of British Columbia just flip-flopped.

Aaron Gunn (North Island—Powell River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, has anybody noticed that whenever it comes to questions about ethics, all we get from the Liberals is dodging, evading and refusing to answer very basic questions? I am going to give them a very simple one. On August 4, the Liberal government announced the $2.3-billion, taxpayer-funded, sole-source contract to Telesat. The CEO of Telesat is Dan Goldberg, the Prime Minister's close personal friend.

Why were Telesat and Mr. Goldberg not added to the Prime Minister's conflict of interest screen until three months after the contract was announced? I would like just the answer, please.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is just the answer: Canadian, homegrown, strategic sector, a procurement that has been in place since the Stephen Harper government, a company that has been around and that was birthed by the Government of Canada, and workers who are ingenious and put all their efforts into creating this Canadian, sovereign, world-leading technology.

We are investing in Telesat. We are proud of Telesat. We are going to keep investing in Telesat.

* * *

● (1425)

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is going too far with these new expropriation measures for Alto. It is creating second-class citizens all along the route. These people will no longer have the right to challenge their expropriation through a public hearing. They will have to pay $25,000 to have their case heard in arbitration. They will be required to allow Alto to start work on their property, without their consent, on the basis of nothing more than a notice. They may even be forced to surrender possession of their land before receiving compensation. These are no longer powers of expropriation; they are powers of seizure and intimidation.

Will the government back down?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Alto project is a promising undertaking, a project of national interest, a forward-thinking project, a project that will help transport Quebeckers from one city in Quebec to another far more quickly. It will reduce the need to expand highways. The Government of Quebec is grappling with an infrastructure challenge, and this project is part of the solution.

This project is not incompatible with agriculture either. We will treat the farming community with the utmost sensitivity. We will compensate them at fair market value for their land and for any economic losses.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government could not have done a better job of fuelling fear about Alto.

Rather than consulting citizens, it imposed the corridor. Rather than reassuring citizens, it introduced new abusive expropriation measures to intimidate them. Rather than reassuring farmers, the government announced that it is going to make them pay if they want to retain access to their land once it is split in two by two railway lines. That is not to mention the fact that the government is hiding the real cost of the project, which could double or even triple.

Do the Liberals realize that the way they are behaving only proves their opponents right?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there will be hundreds and hundreds of access points. There is not a single road that will lose access.

Do my colleagues know what expropriations have traditionally been used for? They have been used to build highways. What is the other reason why land was expropriated? It was to allow development on agricultural land. Alto will help prevent us from having to encroach on agricultural land for development or road construction.

This project is not incompatible with rural communities, and it is not incompatible with the agricultural sector.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the case of the high-speed train, Ottawa is getting around expropriation laws and giving Alto unprecedented powers to violate citizens' rights.

It is clear that the Liberals are using the same method for Bill C-39. There too, they are giving themselves permission to suspend laws. In that case, it is environmental laws.

They are putting restrictions on the right to strike. They are violating indigenous rights. The only difference is that Bill C-39 is about building pipelines instead of building trains.

Why is it that, everywhere the Liberals go, they grant themselves excessive powers by sidestepping laws and limiting citizens' rights?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives think that we are not doing enough to undermine our environmental laws, while the Bloc Québécois thinks that we are violating our environmental standards too much. We think we can have a balance. We can have the highest standards in the world and also carry out, implement and build major projects of national interest that create jobs for our young people and build a stronger economy.

We think we can do all of those things.

[*English*]

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Alto, the people being asked to give up their land are farmers and families in small towns. Working Canadians are being asked to sacrifice their family homes, everything they have worked for. Alto will tear communities such as mine apart geographically, emotionally, mentally and financially. These are the people I represent, and these are the people I will continue to fight for.

Will the Prime Minister scrap Alto and give Main Street the same attention he gives Bay Street?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do members know what tears communities, farmers and property owners apart? It is 10-year, 12-year or 15-year-long expropriation processes. We think there is a better way. We will treat people fairly. We will have negotiated settlements. We will pay fair market value, compensate for economic losses and mediate when there is a disagreement, while covering legal fees and while covering evaluation fees for that land. We will treat the agricultural community and farmers very fairly, and it is not incompatible with having high-speed rail for Canada.

● (1430)

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is dead wrong. History has shown us how wide-eyed Liberal prime ministers of the past used expropriation for their own nation-building projects. First it was Mirabel. Then it was the Pickering airport. Instead of points of Canadian pride, they are national scars. Families were uprooted and communities torn apart so politicians in Ottawa could say they were getting something done. It was wrong then. It is wrong today.

Will the government heed the lessons of the past, drop its plans to expand expropriation powers, and stop Alto in its tracks?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, well, indeed, many great Liberal leaders have done many great things, such as Robert Bourassa with James Bay. Can members imagine where this country would be today without Robert Bourassa's vision and James Bay? Let me give another one that the member will know very well: Louis St. Laurent and the St. Lawrence Seaway. We dreamt big. We created trillions and trillions of dollars in economic activity and jobs in Canada thanks to a great Liberal prime minister who thought big.

It is time to think big again for Canada.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only ones getting ahead in Canada right now are Liberal insiders and the Prime Minister's cronies. The Liberals are funnelling $1.6 billion in taxpayer money to Cohere, under the guise of supporting AI. This is a company worth $36 billion. It is the richest private tech company in Canada, and the Liberals still think it needs a helping hand. Maybe it is because the Prime Minister's buddies Dominic Barton and Patrick Pichette stand to cash in big time.

When is the Prime Minister going to start looking out for ordinary Canadians and not just his well-connected insiders?

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all week, the ministers of the government have answered those questions.

I know that the member is interested in encouraging his social media feed, but what we learned today is that the Conservatives will vote against our reasonable plan to build infrastructure right across this country. It is a betrayal. It is a betrayal of the hard-working men and women in the skilled trades, who put on the hard boots every single day and who shower at night, the people like my dad who built this country.

We are going to build Canada strong, even if the Conservatives decide to oppose us.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, $1.6 billion has been put into artificial intelligence, but we cannot even get a marginally intelligent answer from the Liberals.

Invest in Canada chair Dominic Barton's firm was an early investor in Cohere. Patrick Pichette, the Prime Minister's hand-picked digital transformation chief, was a Cohere board member, and get this: Pichette was the one who advised the Liberals to go all in on Cohere, and now he has been brought on to lead the Liberals' AI "transformation", just as the Prime Minister gives $1.6 billion in taxpayer dollars to, again, a $36-billion company. Pichette would not even say last week if he still has a financial stake in Cohere—

Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many by-elections the Conservatives need to lose to realize that Canadians want to back Canadian champions. That is exactly what the government is doing.

Cohere is a global leader in building AI technology. It is investing $1.7 billion to create jobs in this country: 1,000 jobs of high-skilled workers in this country working to build a world-class AI company that Canadians can be proud of and which Canadians own a part of.

Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal slogan of spend less to invest more continues to serve the Prime Minister's friends well. His Bermuda buddy, Patrick Pichette, the head of Digital Transformation Canada, has admitted that he had a conflict of interest due to his board seat and investment in Cohere. He was appointed by the Prime Minister anyway, and Cohere got 1.6 billion taxpayer dollars. Cohere was already raising private capital and did not need taxpayer money.

With the obvious conflict of interest, will the Liberals agree today to support the Conservative motion of the ethics committee to get to the bottom of this corruption once and for all?

● (1435)

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative MPs love to oppose, they love to find reasons to oppose and they love to get to "no". They are even finding reasons to oppose Bill C-39 now. They seem to have, under the opposition leader, entirely forgotten how to build this country.

Well, we are happy to build. We know what it takes to build this country at the speed Canadians expect and at the standard Canadians expect.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Fisheries and Oceans has shifted its main purpose from managing fisheries to managing oceans.

In September, the Liberal government created the position of Canada's ocean envoy and appointed the Prime Minister's wife to the role, and $1.2 billion of new funding was awarded to a new oceans protection plan.

Fishing industry stakeholders agree with our Conservative motion to have the envoy appear at the fisheries committee, so why is the government stifling democracy by stopping the Prime Minister's wife from testifying at the standing committee?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the third time, the ocean envoy does not oversee or manage the $1.2 billion in ocean funding.

However, I want to remind the member from Newfoundland and Labrador about the things that are happening through oceans and fisheries. There is the small craft harbour funding that we are starting to see roll out in communities now. I do not hear him speak about how important that is for his constituents. I hear them speak to me about this. There is the Atlantic fisheries fund, which is having tangible effects in supporting the sector in his community and across coastal communities in the country.

It is a shame that he is not truly dealing with the issues his constituents—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's response is cold comfort to an industry that's seen extreme measures taken against it in the name of ocean protection. Canada's oceans are already the most protected in the world by more than a dozen acts of Parliament. A known activist, the Prime Minister's wife, is now Canada's ocean envoy.

Why have Liberal members of the fisheries committee voted five times to stop the envoy from testifying? What are they hiding?

Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. On this side of the House, we are focused on building this country strong. At the same time, we are able to hold our environmental standards, something the member and apparently his caucus know absolutely nothing about.

I will tell members that the people in our province of Newfoundland and Labrador understand what we are doing, support what we are doing, welcome the jobs, welcome the new homes and welcome the prosperity.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a growing number of observers are noticing the Prime Minister's tactics in Bill C-39. In an effort to fast-track his oil projects, he is proposing to set aside environmental laws, including protections for ecosystems and endangered species. He wants to authorize projects without even waiting to see the results of assessments and consultations with indigenous communities. The government's approach is so heavy-handed that even the Conservatives are getting cold feet and will vote against the bill, despite supporting its underlying principles.

When even those who spend their days championing new oil projects believe this goes too far, does that not suggest that the government has gone completely off course?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is making sure we can build Canada and build it well by advancing projects that will provide Canadians with clean electricity. This is an area where Quebec has a strong track record.

I would have thought that the Bloc Québécois would want to do more. If Bloc members want to have a debate about environmental standards, they should talk about the Conservatives, who would dismantle everything. We, on the other hand, are maintaining environmental standards while we build our country.

Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, people are also realizing that Bill C-39 is not about measures to combat the tariff crisis. On the contrary, Bill C-39 is actually heavily inspired by Donald Trump. Today's Toronto Star notes that Bill C-39 bears a striking resemblance to Donald Trump's bill to fast-track his data centre projects. It includes the same circumvention of environmental laws, the same time limits on assessments, the same weakening of water protection and endangered species laws, and the same affronts to indigenous peoples.

Does the Prime Minister remember that he is supposed to be fighting Donald Trump, not copying him?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we are going to talk about copying, it is the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois who are copying each other. They are opposing what we need to do to build a strong country that will have major clean energy projects for our future. It is by building power projects that we will reach net zero. They are against that. The Conservatives are against it because they think there are too many environmental standards. Maybe people should join us.

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● (1440)

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as part of the Alto rail project, the Liberals are threatening to expropriate land from Quebec farmers and sacrifice land that has been farmed for generations. Who are they doing this for? It is for private companies and the Prime Minister's buddies.

Our farmers work their entire lives to build their legacy, and the Liberals want to snatch it out of their hands.

My question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and former chair of the Producteurs de lait du Québec. What does he think about his government taking our farmers' land?

Daniel Gobeil (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will always be there to protect farmers, to negotiate and to reach the best possible agreement to safeguard the land and to develop the Quebec and Canadian economies, while respecting the principle of negotiation by mutual consent. Building roads and promoting economic development always have an impact. We really need to strike a balance between farm income and, of course, a project that is for society, for the future of our young people, and for collective progress.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if my colleague wants to protect farmers, he should cancel the project.

Here is another one: Following the $2.3-billion contract awarded to Telesat—I am repeating myself—a company led by the Prime Minister's buddy, the Liberals are awarding another $2.2-million AI contract to Ecostrat, which is led by Jordan Solomon. Whose brother is he? He is the brother of the Liberal Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation.

I know that the Prime Minister enjoys a joke, but can he stop making Canadians the butt of them?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have noticed that whenever a new, cutting-edge Canadian company gets noticed, the Conservatives object to it.

That said, Canadians also know that we have the strictest ethical standards and laws in the world. The Prime Minister follows them, the ministers follow them and Liberal MPs follow them. I hope that all members of the House of Commons follow these very robust and stringent rules.

* * *

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the situation around Stellantis has been a lesson in mismanagement. When Stellantis announced the Brampton plant closure, the government failed to enforce its job guarantees. The Prime Minister then expressed outrage when he learned the plant was being sold, yet apparently government officials were facilitating discussions behind closed doors. Stellantis then cited a $1-billion carbon tax as one of the reasons it was closing the plant. The government threatened to sue to stop said sale. Today, we learned that Stellantis is suing Unifor to further the sale along.

Now that they have mismanaged this file at every turn, will they do the right thing and scrap the carbon tax?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the Conservatives go ahead and talk about the auto sector without talking about the American tariffs. How can they continue asking these questions without stating the obvious? The obvious is that there are 25% tariffs against automakers and auto workers. When will they stand up against American tariffs?

Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not that complicated. Stellantis is citing a $1-billion carbon tax bill as a reason it is closing its plant and why thousands of jobs are at risk. Just this morning, Premier Doug Ford and Unifor President Lana Payne called on the Liberal government to address the regulatory issues that are costing the industry lots of money. Conservatives have been calling for the removal of the industrial carbon tax for years. Premiers of provinces in this country want it removed. Industry leaders like Brian Kingston want it removed.

I have a simple question for the minister. When will she get rid of this regressive, job-killing carbon tax?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that we will stand up for auto workers. There are 8,000 Stellantis auto workers in Windsor and Brampton.

I have been clear that when it comes to Stellantis, we will get our money back if it does not protect the workers. There is $831 million of liabilities on the table against Stellantis if it lays off workers and sells the plant.

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough that Canadian automakers have to deal with unjustified tariffs, but it is the Liberal government's carbon tax policy that punishes Canadian automakers.

In fact, Canadian automakers represent 80% of the purchasers of the government's GHG emissions scheme and, guess what, 63% of those credits are sold by foreign automakers with no manufacturing in Canada, and 90% of those credits are sold by Tesla, hundreds of millions of dollars.

Is the entire auto strategy of the government to line the pockets of Elon Musk?

● (1445)

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Friday I was in Oakville. Apart from the Premier of Ontario, who is a good friend, I was looking around to see whether the federal Conservatives were there, and they were nowhere. Do members know why? We were announcing great news at the Ford plant, 2,000 jobs being secured and a new plant.

I can see that they are getting excited, but in reality—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I can hear the hon. member for Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, very loudly.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. minister may continue.

Hon. Mélanie Joly: Mr. Speaker, clearly there is good news at Ford. The federal Conservatives were nowhere to be found. We were there, celebrating more than $800 million in investment in Ford and Oakville, which was good news.

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[*Translation*]

TRANSPORTATION

Danielle Martin (University—Rosedale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian businesses and workers rely on our supply chains and critical infrastructure to connect Canadian products to domestic and international markets. We are proposing a more coordinated approach that will enable us to better understand how our transportation corridors perform and make improvements.

Can the Minister of Transport explain how Bill C-39 will promote a clearer approach to strengthening our transportation network?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for University—Rosedale for her question, her hard work on the committee studying Bill C-39, and her brilliant French.

The building Canada act will indeed enable us to streamline our transportation corridors through better data collection and clearer performance metrics. That is how we are making the changes needed to position Canada as a global leader.

Our geography is a blessing, but it is also a challenge we must overcome. Bill C-39—

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thornhill.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Michael Eckert was 39 years old. He was a gifted guitarist and a familiar face in the Toronto music scene.

Yesterday he was shot and killed in his own home, the place, the only place, where Canadians should feel the safest. This is not isolated. In Toronto, he is one of 120 families that have had their home invaded. Across the country, the sense of safety is absolutely shaken, and the minister knows that.

How many more lives will be lost before the government puts a stop to the epidemic of violence in our otherwise safe cities?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to offer my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Michael Eckert, and to everyone who knew him and loved his music. Michael was a beloved musician and a pillar of the music community in Toronto. He will be dearly missed.

This senseless act of violence is outrageous. Everyone deserves to be safe, and to feel safe, in their homes. The Toronto Police Service has my full support as it continues the investigation and in bringing those responsible to justice.

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the problem. The minister actually has the power to do something. He has the power to stop the next family from having to bury a loved one, and so far he has chosen not to use that power.

The solutions are already here on the floor of this Parliament. He can make violent home invasion its own criminal offence. He can impose mandatory minimums for them. He can actually tighten bail, and he can make sure that Canadians who defend their families are protected by the law instead of prosecuted by it.

Again, how many more Canadians will have to die in their home before the minister gets up and acts?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since we took office last year, we have made an unprecedented number of changes to the Criminal Code that will ensure the safety and security of Canadians. Bill C-14 strengthens bail and sentencing. Bill C-16 ensures victims' rights are protected. As we speak, Bill C-22 is going through the parliamentary process.

These are just some of the measures we are taking to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians.

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● (1450)

JUSTICE

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the minister is talking about. Home invasions are up 50% this year in Toronto. A deadly home invasion in midtown Toronto left residents fearing for their lives. A Toronto musician, Michael Eckert, was shot to death in his father's home. Conservatives warned the justice minister that his sentencing bill will fall short, and this year Toronto police report an increase in home invasions. Our friend Larry Brock tried to restore the mandatory minimum sentence for armed robbery. Instead, the Liberals gutted all mandatory minimum sentences.

I invite the minister to think about Eckert's family and ask if he will work with Conservatives to strengthen and increase mandatory minimum sentences.

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this was a cowardly act of violence and we condemn it in the strongest terms.

Yesterday, the Toronto police chief said that anyone who breaks into a home and shoots someone belongs in jail for a very long time. We agree. That is why we have made the changes that make this possible, but just as my colleague has said, Bill C-22, which is in the Senate right now, would actually help police investigations catch these criminals and put them behind bars.

Roman Baber (North York, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government made mandatory minimum sentences optional and now home invasions in Toronto are up year over year. Conservatives have two great bills before Parliament to deter home invasions. We have the stand on guard act by my friend from Newmarket—Aurora. That bill would protect home residents with criminal consequences if they use force against a home invader. There is the safe at home act proposed by my friend from Vaughan—Woodbridge. That bill would create a stand-alone indictable offence for home invasions.

I would like a clear answer from the minister. Will the Liberals get serious about home invasions and pass the stand on guard act and the safe at home act, yes or no?

Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this issue is under investigation currently. We hope that Toronto police catch the criminals involved. Depending on the charges laid, this person could serve a very severe sentence, and we hope this person does.

All along, we have been trying to make sure that our Criminal Code of Canada catches up and modernizes. However, the Conservatives along the way have been stalling and not allowing us to pass legislation that would help in these types of investigations.

Rhonda Kirkland (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three little girls will grow up without their father and a wife battling cancer must now face that battle and raise her girls without her husband.

Just last year, Andrew Cristillo was killed by a dangerous driver who fled the scene and was already facing charges in connection with an earlier collision. Yesterday, his grieving family learned that the driver has only four and a half years left on his prison sentence, yet this family will live with the consequences of this crime forever.

Will the government work with us and mandate tougher sentences for those convicted of dangerous driving causing death?

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we sympathize with that particular situation, and I want to reiterate that this government, in less than a year, has brought along three justice criminal bills, very bold action on the side of the government. We have made bail tougher to get and sentences harsher. Just last week, a Newfoundland judge said, “Not anymore” to an accused individual who said it was easy to get bail in Canada.

We are very proud of the work we have done, and we are looking forward to the work that is going to be done by the courts.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Christmas season is almost upon us. My children and family love Christmas. I recently learned that another person who loved Christmas was Heather Aspin Thomas. Heather was taken from us 25 years ago by sexual psychopath Shane Ertmoed. Those are 25 Christmases that she and her family would never celebrate together, and yet Ertmoed is now being released over the Christmas season to take cooking classes. This is completely unjust in our justice system.

Will the public safety minister commit right here and right now to change it forthwith?

● (1455)

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the government has brought forward tougher laws, tougher sentences and stricter bail conditions. We are now waiting for the provinces and territories and the court system to enact the new laws that the government has put forward.

Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am talking about parole, not bail. It is such an insult that the government does not take this seriously. What is worse is that the government is silencing victims. I ask members to listen to what the government recently sent to Heather's mom's representative. It says that the addressee should not make this information available to the public by any means. The government called the information privileged.

In what parallel universe is it okay for the government to tell victims to be quiet, for the government to tell them not to tell the public about her daughter's killer? Why is it putting victims second and the offender first?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today as a victim.

I am tired of hearing people exploit female victims' cases to score political points. Canada is governed by the rule of law. We seek to enact laws and strengthen them. That is what we did with Bill C-16. We get no support when we do things properly. I think exploiting the suffering of victims is reprehensible.

Joël Godin (Saint-Augustin—Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are spending taxpayers' money on advertising to claim that Canadians are safe, while families across the country fear having an intruder enter their homes. After 11 years in power, the Liberals can no longer hide behind announcements and empty rhetoric. Conservatives are proposing concrete solutions to better protect citizens who defend their homes.

Why are the Liberals hesitating to act? Will they support our bill or will they continue to turn their backs on Canadian families?

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that Canadians can feel safe in their homes. That is an absolute priority for our government. The Bail and Sentencing Reform Act is now in force.

Our government has strengthened the Criminal Code by introducing stricter bail conditions and tougher penalties, including for break and enter offences. Therefore, that work has already been done. As I said earlier, we look forward to the provinces and territories implementing these new laws so that there are more serious consequences when crimes are committed.

Joël Godin (Saint-Augustin—Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government actually bought ads to convince Canadians that they were safe. This is a waste of taxpayer dollars. Families need results to protect their families and their homes. After 11 years, the Liberals need to acknowledge that crime and home invasions are way up.

We, the Conservatives, want to work together to get Bill C-270 passed and to ensure that citizens are properly protected rather than criminals.

Will the government prioritize the safety of our citizens over costly and misleading advertising?

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, burglary is already a crime under the Criminal Code, so it is already enshrined in law.

Neither of the two bills replicates the provisions of the Criminal Code. We already have it, and I hope the provinces and territories will enforce the Criminal Code for any crime that is committed.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie and across the country, cadets are the pride of our communities. They learn discipline, leadership and a sense of duty. Given the growing popularity of this program, our communities are counting on our support.

Can the Minister of National Defence tell us today how our government intends to provide our cadets with the means to continue their commitment?

● (1500)

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 will always support young cadets to ensure they have the resources and support they need.

Participation in the program has increased by 59% over the past three years. In response to this growth, we have reviewed funding allocations and confirmed additional funding to support planned activities.

However, at this morning's meeting of the Standing Committee on National Defence, the Bloc Québécois and the Conservatives all voted against this funding.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Durham Regional Police recently charged 12 individuals in a human trafficking sting operation. These predators thought they were arranging to meet a 15-year-old girl. The undercover advertisement received over 8,000 views. Canadians are alarmed by the scale of online child exploitation.

Why has the Liberal government failed to take stronger action to protect children from sexual predators and human trafficking?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank the Durham Regional Police for its work to ensure the safety and security of our children.

Bill C-22 is the number one tool that law enforcement has been asking for on lawful access to make its job more effective. Every single police leader from coast to coast to coast has asked that Parliament, all of us combined, pass this legislation. This matter is before the Senate as we speak. Over the coming days, the party opposite will have another opportunity to demonstrate its willingness to support—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to CTV's W5 reporting, we know that corrupt airport insiders have switched innocent Canadians' bag tags onto luggage full of drugs, leaving travellers to face the consequences, yet the Liberals granted nearly 7,000 airport security clearances to applicants with criminal records, and they cannot even say what the offences were.

How did people with criminal records get access to the most sensitive parts of our airports? Why should innocent Canadians have to photograph their own bags to avoid a foreign jail?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada is one part of our security system at airports. We assess hundreds of thousands of applications for everything from restaurant workers to air mechanics. We assess for threats to aviation. These threats are all rigorously applied. People are all individually assessed. We are very confident in Canada's world-leading aircraft and airport safety regime.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I raised this with the minister six months ago, and he could not name one action he had taken. There was no apology and no action plan. We would not even know about the 7,000 individuals with criminal backgrounds if not for CTV's W5 reporting. We tried to improve his minimal and only attempt in Bill C-39 to force the minister to regularly report to Parliament, but the Liberals voted it down.

Is that because he does not think it is important to be transparent with the travelling public, or is it that he knows that the problem is only getting worse under his watch?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the members opposite just identify problems, but when there are solutions before the House, they absolutely fail to embrace them. We have a bill right now, Bill C-39, that would address some of the issues that my friend opposite is talking about. However, they decided not to support the bill. This is the doublespeak of the party opposite.

I think it is important, if they are going to be criticizing our legislation, that they come up with other solutions. What they are offering is hollow. I encourage everyone in the House to ensure the swift passage of the bill.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a year ago, I visited the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, along with the member for Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East and Senator Ataullahjan. We witnessed 1.2 million Rohingya living in squalid conditions within the camps. They are congested. The Rohingya are experiencing deep poverty and vulnerability.

Canada has been an early leader in responding to the Rohingya crisis. The International Court of Justice just issued a historic ruling on genocide against the Rohingya people. Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs speak to the ICJ's ruling and Canada's continued support for the Rohingya people?

● (1505)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada welcomes the ruling of the International Court of Justice holding Myanmar responsible for committing genocide against the Rohingya people. Canada has stood by the Rohingya people with $700 million in humanitarian aid and over 240 sanctions to support them.

After this judgment, we call on Myanmar to treat the Rohingya people with the dignity, the respect and the equality they deserve and to be held accountable for their unjust actions.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, the Liberals banned Arctic offshore oil and gas without consulting Nunavut. Then premier Peter Taptuna said the ban "puts us back at practically Square 1 where Ottawa will make the decisions for us."

Nunavut has more than 180 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, yet the energy used to heat their homes is shipped in. Premier of Nunavut John Main is asking the Liberal government to lift the ban, but the Prime Minister is refusing.

Will the Prime Minister listen to Nunavummiut and lift the Liberal ban, yes or no?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any discussion of the future of Arctic offshore oil and gas development will be guided by our existing commitment under the Tariuq Accord. I have met with northern leaders, including the premier and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, to better understand their aspirations and concerns. These conversations and decisions are ongoing, and they must be led by science and respect for indigenous rights.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. shamefully attacks the ICC and a Canadian judge, and Canada does nothing. The U.K. sanctions companies involved in illegal E1 settlements, and Canada does nothing. Prominent Liberals, including the PM's former chief of staff, meet with the Israeli president as the genocide in Gaza continues. Netanyahu flies through Canadian airspace despite an international arrest warrant.

If the cabinet will not uphold international law, is there a backbencher in the Liberal Party willing to stand up for international law today?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is forgetting that Canada is a founding member of the International Criminal Court and that Canada remains a strong supporter of international law, the International Criminal Court and its mandate. We recognize and support the essential role the ICC plays in the fight against illegal actions around the world, and we remain committed to upholding international law and the institutions that dispense international law. I urge—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

* * *

PARKS CANADA

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are offering free admission to our national parks while cutting the very workers who protect them. They plan to cut Parks Canada's workforce by roughly 20% and its annual budget by over 37%. This makes absolutely no sense.

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve welcomes over a million visitors annually. These cuts threaten visitor safety, conservation, local tourism and partnership with Nuu-chah-nulth first nations. Our national parks need investments, not cuts.

Will the minister suspend these cuts pending a full impact assessment of what they will do?

Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our national parks are a gem that Canadians care about deeply. Our government has been investing in our national parks, including in our most recent budget, where we invested $3.6 billion in the capital investments of what they require.

The member speaks about the workforce adjustments, but receiving an affected notification does not necessarily mean that an employee will lose their position. Some positions will remain as they are. Some will change. We are using every possible means to minimize involuntary departures.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1510)

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN SPACE LAUNCH ACT

The House resumed from November 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-28, An Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of the bill.

Call in the members.

● (1520)

[*English*]

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

(Division No. 209)

YEAS

Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Auguste	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Begum	Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)
Bendayan	Bittle
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blois	Bonin
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Caley	Carney
Carr	Casey

Chagger
Champoux
Chang
Chartrand
Chatel
Chenette
Chi
Church
Clark
Connors
Cormier
Coteau
Dabrusin
Dandurand
Danko
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Deschênes
Deschênes-Thériault
Desrochers
Dhaliwal
Dhillon
Diab
Duclos
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Earle
Ehsassi
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fancy
Fanjoy
Fergus
Fisher
Fonseca
Fortier
Fortin
Fragiskatos
Fraser
Fry
Fuhr
Gaheer
Gainey
Garon
Gasparro
Gaudreau
Gazan
Gerretsen
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
Gladu
Gobeil
Gould
Grant
Greaves
Guay
Gull-Masty
Hajdu
Hanley
Harrison
Hepfner
Hirtle
Hogan
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Idlout
Jaczek
Jeneroux
Johns
Joly
Joseph
Kayabaga
Kelloway
Khalid
Klassen
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lalonde
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lapointe (Sudbury)
Larouche
Lattanzio
Lauzon
Lavack
Lavoie
LeBlanc
Leitão
Lemire
Lightbound
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Ma
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacDonald (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)
Maloney
Martin
May
McGuinty
McKelvie
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McKnight
McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)
McPherson
Ménard
Mendès
Michel
Miedema
Miller
Mingarelli
Morrissey
Myles
Naqvi
Nathan
Nguyen
Noormohamed
Normandin
Ntumba
Oliphant
Olszewski
O'Rourke
Osborne
Perron
Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon
Powlowski
Provost
Ramsay
Rana
Robertson
Rochefort
Romanado
Royer
Sahota
Saini
Sarai
Sari
Sawatzky
Schiefke
Sgro
Shahnawaz
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard
Sodhi
Solomon
Sousa
Ste-Marie
St-Pierre
Sudds
Tesser Derksen
Thériault
Thompson
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villeneuve
Watchorn
Weiler
Yip
Zahid
Zerucelli
Zuberi– — 196

NAYS

Members

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

Shipley	Small
Steinley	Stevenson
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Warkentin	Waugh
Williamson	Zimmer– — 130

PAIRED

Members

Bailey	Champagne
McKenzie	Sidhu (Brampton East)– — 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

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

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

* * *

● (1525)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know, it is customary that on Thursday we ask the government for the business of the upcoming week.

I want to raise in the House a concerning development that has been a challenge for committees of the House. Over the last number of weeks, information has been shared with committee chairs that the following ministers refuse to go before a committee to defend their estimates. If these ministers do not appear before these committees, there is up to $22 billion that will be unscrutinized by these committees. These ministers include the Minister of Industry, the Minister of Jobs, the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Works and Procurement and the President of the Treasury Board.

It is absolutely unprecedented that this type of abuse of Parliament would be undertaken by any government, and obviously, any government that seeks to be transparent and accountable to the people must have ministers appear, as is customary, before committees to defend their estimates.

I would ask the Liberals if they intend to have the ministers responsible for these departments appear before their respective committees to defend their estimates in the upcoming week.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that ministers have the responsibility to appear in committee to defend the work they are doing. On many occasions, the many ministers that were mentioned have appeared in committee to answer for the work they are doing. I do not have a list of the times these ministers have appeared in committee, but I know that they have.

If the committees have requested a minister to appear on a date they are not available, it is up to the committee to make another request for another date when they are available to answer the questions.

What my hon. colleague is failing to mention is that the hon. Leader of the Opposition today has made a clear stance against what Canadians want. Canadians want us to build strong. They want us to build big and fast, and that means keeping the reviews to protect our environment in place. Now the Conservatives are saying they are going to vote against Bill C-39 because they do not want us to continue to review, to protect our air, our water and the lands we depend on as Canadians. However, our government remains steadfast in protecting our air and our environment in collaboration with indigenous communities across this country. This is what we are going to do because that is what Canadians want us to do.

I am going to turn to the business of the House.

[*Translation*]

This afternoon we will complete debate at third reading of Bill C-31, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025.

Tomorrow, we will begin debate at report stage and third reading of Bill C-39, the building Canada strong act. We will continue studying that bill next Monday and Wednesday.

[*English*]

Next week, while the House will be having extended sitting hours, priority will be given to Bill C-43, the budget 2026 implementation act, which was introduced earlier this morning; Bill C-36, the protecting privacy and consumer data act; Bill C-21, the Red River Métis self-government recognition and implementation treaty act; and Bill C-35, the ban on importing goods made with forced labour act.

I also want to inform the House that a ministerial statement will be delivered on Thursday, December 3, to mark the anniversary of the Montreal massacre.

* * *

BUDGET 2025 IMPLEMENTATION ACT, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-31, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on November 4, 2025, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

In 1962, Jean Lesage asked the people of Quebec to make themselves masters in our own house. He meant something concrete, that Quebec would take hold of the rivers, build the power and stop asking permission to prosper. Whatever one makes of the Quiet Revolution, it was an act of national will.

This budget is not an act of national will. It is a management of decline and its authors have the audacity to call it destiny. It fails three tests that decide whether a nation masters its destiny: its debt, its immigration and its sovereignty. The government borrowed that slogan for its latest budget. “Masters of our destiny”, the cover reads above Churchill Falls. It is a handsome image. The trouble is that the government borrowed far more than just a slogan. In this budget and the last, history will judge the Liberals by whether Canada answered American pressure with the imagination that founded our country.

When Washington ended reciprocity in 1866, the colonies answered with Confederation. Macdonald built a railway to the Pacific, settled the west and raised an industrial country on this side of the border. Laurier inherited that country and promised it a century. That is the standard. Measured against it, this agenda manages decline and calls it destiny.

The Prime Minister himself told Canadians in August that the United States now charges for access to its market. A confident country answers by naming its red lines in public and showing up wherever its industries are hit. When Washington held hearings this summer, Mexico sent its economy minister. Canada sent no one.

Let us start with debt. The Parliamentary Budget Officer reports that Ottawa will borrow $765 billion over five years, more than two and a half times the deficit the government advertises. It promised to spend less and invest more. The Parliamentary Budget Officer finds it spends more and borrows more. Debt charges are climbing from $60 billion this year to $85.5 billion by 2030-31, more than 13¢ of every dollar Ottawa collects. The deficit anchor the minister boasts of clears the bar by $2 billion and fails in the budget's own downside scenario.

Milton Friedman taught that the real burden of government is what it spends, however it pays. A deficit is a tax deferred onto people too young to vote against it.

Jack Mintz, who once chaired a Liberal government's own review of business taxation, put it plainly on budget day: A country cannot master its destiny before it masters its debt.

Productivity tells the same story. The C.D. Howe Institute finds business investment per worker nearly a quarter below its 2014 peak. Canadian workers are handed fewer tools each year and the government answers with a so-called investment supercycle directed from Ottawa. This is the sequel of the superclusters, the same bad theories, pumped-up results and a higher bill.

Hayek spent a lifetime explaining why no ministry can know what millions of investors know: Capital goes where it is welcomed, taxed lightly and permitted quickly.

Let us consider the windfall of cash that flowed into government coffers largely from soaring oil prices, which it spent almost in full, yet the tanker ban, the emissions cap and the job-killing industrial carbon tax stay. The oil that paid for this budget still cannot reach a port.

Young Canadians feel the hit first. Youth unemployment stood at 13.7% in October. Alberta shed 24,000 jobs in a single month. Nearly a quarter of the unemployed have searched for six months or more while wages grew just 2.2%.

Then there is immigration, which decides more than any budget line, because it decides who a country becomes. On page 216 of a 511-page budget, the government buried its immigration plan. It sets 380,000 permanent residents for 2027, adds a one-time intake of up to 200,000 and could bring in as many as 662,000 next year. The record, set in 2024, was 483,000. Two years ago, the same government promised 365,000 for 2027.

My colleague from Calgary Nose Hill asked what capacity in housing, hospitals and jobs justifies these numbers. The government will not produce the data. The Leader of the Opposition asked the House to tie admissions to the homes, wages and care Canadians can actually supply. This week, the government voted that down.

Friedman observed that a country cannot have open-ended immigration and a generous welfare state at once. Canada built its success on newcomers who became citizens of a shared inheritance. They deserve a country able to receive them. Admitting people faster than we can house, employ or integrate betrays newcomers and citizens alike.

All of this unfolds as the government tilts toward Beijing. Before the election, the Prime Minister called China our greatest security threat, yet in January he stood in the Great Hall of the People, announced a new world order and opened our market to 49,000 Chinese spy vehicles.

● (1530)

This month, in the People's Republic of China, he has traded Canadian autos for PRC autos, Canadian steel for PRC steel. This, with the regime that held two Canadians hostage for more than 1,000 days. This is not commerce. It is a security relationship in which dependencies are levers. It is a dangerous tilt towards Beijing. Sixty years ago, George Grant feared Canada would dissolve into a continental technocracy. He did not imagine its leaders would call that dissolution a virtue, as Justin Trudeau did when he named us the first post-national state. This budget is that idea's extension. Its authors are the masters of our managed decline.

A real Canadian nationalism would read differently. It would deliver a budget that put our people at its core, instead of a self-dealing club of Liberal insiders. It would get government out of the way, get the budget under control, and get the regulators and the taxmen off the backs of our workers and their businesses. It would unlock our resources in months, and build the strategic reserves of energy and critical minerals this country already holds, for tariff-free trade with Washington and the world on its own terms.

It would build corridors to every coast. It would trust free enterprise over central direction, and submit spending to parliamentary scrutiny rather than stashing billions inside unaccountable Crown corporations. It would admit newcomers at the pace a country can make citizens. It would refuse strategic dependence on any hostile regime. It would move at the speed worthy of the fierce national resolve Canadians demand, putting our interests first in a moment that threatens to divide our people between generations and regions, and in the headwinds of neo-Marxist ideologies and moral equivalencies.

Conservatives have the self-respect to fight for our existence, our history and heritage, our workers and our people. We will vote against this bill. It is a budget of managed decline, not one of true national will. A nation cannot master its destiny before it masters its debt. It cannot run open-ended immigration and a generous welfare state at once. It cannot call itself sovereign while trading dependencies with a regime determined to deindustrialize and displace our free market with its own state-backed one.

In Canada, government is servant; citizen is master. That is what it means to be masters of our destiny.

I will take the remaining minutes to close by turning to the member who follows me, because today is the last time he will rise in this place. The member for Parry Sound—Muskoka was elected to his town council at 21. He has served his community for 30 years as councillor, as mayor and, for seven years, as its member here. He never came to Ottawa for Ottawa's sake.

In December 2021, as labour critic, he crossed the aisle to the Minister of Labour and struck a deal to write my colleague from Calgary Shepard's bereavement bill into a government bill. The minister himself called it a rarity. He took the worst loss a father can suffer into a bill to make bereavement a little lighter for others. He has held the housing file for the official opposition across four housing ministers.

This budget quietly dropped the government's own promise to double homebuilding. He saw that coming long before anyone else in this House.

His farewell letter speaks directly to the constituents he disagreed with but promised passionate representation. That is the whole job in a sentence. When he rises in this chamber, others quiet down. When I need honest judgment and a dear friend, I turn to him.

On behalf of my colleagues, I thank him for his service and for the way he served. I look forward to hearing from my friend, the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

● (1535)

Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by also expressing my admiration for the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

I want to talk a bit about our colleague's speech here. I think my colleague would agree not all deficits are bad, after all seven of nine Harper fiscal years had them. What is important is that those deficits are being put towards good work. The plan that the Liberals have is to grow the economy, diversify trade, be our own best customers and support people while doing this.

I want to talk a little about some of the early results in our home province of Alberta. Employment is at 83,000 full-time jobs in the last year and 4,000 youth jobs since the start of this year; rents are down; housing prices are down; and non-U.S. trade is at its highest level in 40 years.

My question to my colleague is simple. How can so much growth be called managed decline?

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way is pretty rich. He knows very well that high oil prices have created an artificial boom in government coffers across this country, including in Alberta.

If the member took a minute to think about the constituents he represents, unleashed our resources and acted with speed over the last two years to build pipelines in every direction and get job-killing and industry-killing taxes out of the way, if he took just a few minutes to actually represent the people of Calgary with the ambition he should have brought here, members can imagine the kind of transformational growth this country could have achieved. Could members imagine the kind of budget we would be looking at, which would turn to balance? Could members imagine a kind of government that is actually committed to reducing the deficit so that taxes on future generations, in Calgary and well across the country, are no longer dependent on his government's largesse?

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a number of the measures in Bill C-31 open the door to giving the government more power with less transparency. For example, it limits who may file complaints with the procurement ombudsman and which complaints may be reviewed.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

[*English*]

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked a very thoughtful question about the government's commitment to so-called transparency. We have watched the government at every turn reduce the opportunity for Parliament to reign supreme.

The Prime Minister's presence in the House is questionable at best. It is something that has created a sense of a lack of accountability. I will withdraw that if I crossed the line.

The Speaker: I think that crosses the line, but the member may continue.

Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, transparency is not something the government has embraced with ambition. We do not see it in committee, and we do not see it in this chamber. We certainly see that in the budget, where the Prime Minister has curtailed opportunity for Parliament to exercise his dutiful oversight, and he has curbed the ability of ombudsmen, like the hon. member mentioned, to do their job successfully.

Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank my colleague from Calgary Heritage for saying some very nice things about me. I encourage everyone to leave. It is a very nice feeling when people say nice things.

It is, though, a profound and humbling moment for me to stand in this chamber for my final time. When we first walk through the doors, we pinch ourselves to make sure it is real. We look up at the glass ceiling, see the names and the history etched into the walls and really feel the weight of it all. We wonder if we will be worthy of it, and in time we come to understand that it is a question that no member of Parliament should ever stop asking themselves.

As I prepare to leave, I am reminded, though, that the true measure of this place is in fact not found in the walls, but in the work we do together and what is woven into the lives of others. Before Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald stood in the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada and offered remarks that echoed through every generation of Canadian public life when he said that we are all mere politicians today, men of the day, but we are laying the foundations of a great state. We must look to the future and work together as friends and fellow labourers for the common good.

One may look back to 1867 and think of it as a uniquely dramatic moment in our history, a time when a handful of colonies facing economic disruption from the south and geopolitical instability across the ocean sought the courage to build something of their own. Today is a nation-defining moment, every bit is consequential, and we are called upon to act again.

The world we took for granted for 80 years, a world of predictable alliances and open trade and relative stability, is rapidly shifting beneath our feet. The great powers are redrawing the map of global influence, and our comfortable assumptions of the past no longer serve us. To the south, our closest ally and largest trading partner has openly threatened our economic sovereignty, questioned our borders and diminished a century of shared sacrifice and mutual prosperity. For decades, we have witnessed China weaponizing commerce using supply chains and economic coercion to bend smaller nations to its will while interfering in the democratic institutions of free societies. In Europe and across the digital landscape, we see Russia waging a brutal, unprovoked war of aggression against a sovereign democracy while simultaneously engaging in online disinformation campaigns designed to poison our public square.

These are wake-up calls in which Canada can never again afford to be complacent about its own strength or independence. These are not distant theoretical problems. They are at the kitchen tables of the people we represent. They are in the anxiety of the factory worker wondering if their plant will survive a trade war. They are in the exhaustion of a parent who anxiously scrolls through their social media worried about the impact that anger will have on their own kids. They are in the quiet questions being asked at homes across the country, such as, will the Canada our children inherit be as strong, as free and as full of promise as the Canada we inherited?

The question before us in this world-changing moment is simple. How will Canada respond? Will we shrink back and divide into our corners and let cynicism win, or will we rise to the occasion and decide that, at this moment, we will build a stronger, kinder, confident and more prosperous Canada? That question strikes to the heart of why this chamber matters so very deeply. It is perhaps understandable for some to be cynical about our Parliament, watching the clips on social media of the heckling and the partisan digs, and conclude that this place is broken, but we must never lose sight of what the House actually is.

For all its imperfections, for all its noise, for all the frustrations that accompany a democracy, this is the place where Canadians have their voices heard on the issues of the day. Whether debating the price of a postage stamp or the price of freedom, this is where Canada's voice is forged. When the world is shaking, this is where the farmers, nurses, teachers, tradespeople, energy workers and small business owners all have a seat at the table. Just as importantly, this is where the government of the day is held accountable to the people. Accountability is not a nuisance. It is not an obstacle to getting things done. It is, in fact, the singular instrument that produces the very best of Canada. It is how power is reminded of its limits. It is how public trust is earned. It is how a democracy corrects its own mistakes without surrendering its freedoms.

● (1545)

When an opposition asks tough, principled questions to test an idea, expose a flaw or demand better for the people we serve, Canada becomes stronger. When a government is forced to defend its decisions in the light of day, policies get sharper, spending gets smarter and our democracy demonstrates its awesome power.

There is no dishonour in disagreement. There is no weakness in compromise. More and more, we have come to expect less and less of each other, and that must change. It should never be our goal to appeal to the lowest common denominator. It must be our goal to raise it.

[*Translation*]

We must always keep in mind that the person sitting across the aisle is not our enemy. They are a fellow Canadian who loves this country too.

[*English*]

We may very well have different ideas how about how to build it, but if we can debate these ideas fiercely, honestly and with respect, we honour the very best not only of this chamber, but also of who we are.

Being a sovereign, prosperous Canada requires us all. It requires us to tear down the barriers that have made it harder to do business between provinces than across oceans. It requires us to build the infrastructure that will allow us to get our world-class resources to global markets so no single foreign power can ever hold our economy hostage. It requires us to rebuild our military and defend our Arctic sovereignty, not because we seek conflict, but because a nation that cannot defend its own borders cannot truly call itself free. It requires us to build homes, millions of them in fact, so that young Canadians are no longer locked out of the dream of owning a piece of the country that they are working so hard to build. We cannot ask a generation to believe in the promise of Canada if it is no longer available to them.

In a world that is growing harsher and more transactional by the day, kindness is an act of real strength. It is the strength to listen when it feels easier to shout. It is the strength to reach across an aisle or a fence and find common ground. It is the strength to build a country where we look out for the vulnerable, where we celebrate hard work and where we refuse to let the algorithms of outrage define how we treat one another. Let us never confuse cruelty with courage, anger with leadership or the loudest voice with the strongest argument.

As I leave the House today, my challenge to all who remain, and for all who have yet to arrive, is for each to heed the call, not to anger, but to action. The truth I learned long before I ever arrived in Parliament is that nation building does not belong exclusively to Ottawa.

[*Translation*]

Yes, it happens here in the House of Commons. Yes, it happens in provincial legislatures from Victoria to St. John's. Yes, it happens in city council chambers. Most importantly, however, it happens in coffee shops and community halls, at the Royal Canadian Legion on Friday nights and at the arena at six o'clock in the morning.

● (1550)

[*English*]

These are the places where the fabric of Canada is woven. These are the places where a neighbour's hardship becomes a community's concern; where service is given without expectation of reward; where the bonds of citizenship are renewed, one small active neighbourhood at a time; where we define what it means to be Canadian.

If we are to meet this nation-defining moment, we must bring a little more of the coffee shop and the community hall into this chamber, because the strength of Canada has never rested solely in the hands of its governments. It has always rested first and foremost in the character of its people.

Before I conclude, I do also need to say, first, for seven years, the thousands of voters in Parry Sound—Muskoka have entrusted me to be their voice in the Parliament of Canada. They placed that trust in me three times, and I have never forgotten that this seat was theirs, never mine. I return it to them today with the sincere hope that I have honoured their confidence, served them faithfully and left it just a little better than I found it.

None of this could have been possible without the many campaign volunteers' constant energy and support.

My staff, past and present, many of whom are here, all had the unenviable task of managing me. They deserve an award. I thank them very much.

My team who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help constituents navigate some of their hardest days are the unsung heroes of this democracy. I thank them.

To the team who turned the audacious notion of a leadership race into a respectable and dignified national campaign of ideas, I will be forever proud of what we did together. I thank them.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank my colleagues on all sides of this House. I thank them for the debates, for the friendships and for our shared commitment to this extraordinary country.

[*English*]

I want to thank my family, many of whom are here today. They have all sacrificed so much so that I could stand in this place. I owe them more than I could ever repay.

My thanks to my beloved Denise. I am coming home.

Sir John A. reminds us still that we are all mere politicians of the day, tasked with laying the foundations of a great state, working together as friends and fellow labourers for the common good.

Our foundations are being tested right now. There will be days ahead when the challenges seem greater than our capacity to overcome them, days when division will seem easier than unity, when retreat will seem safer than resolve and when the temptation to doubt ourselves will be strong, but we must remember what kind of country this is, because every time throughout our history when we have been tested, we have met the moment and showed the world who we truly are. We are resilient, we are resourceful, we are compassionate, and we are fiercely proud of this magnificent nation we all share.

The future of this country has never belonged to those who doubted its possibilities but always belonged to those who believed in them with enough vigour to do the hard work of making them so.

As I take my leave of this chamber, I do so not with a sense of sadness or of conclusion but with a renewed sense of obligation. I leave this chamber today with a heart full of gratitude for the profound honour to have served here with so many remarkable Canadians and with an unshakable belief in what we can and will build together.

Titles may change, the chambers will differ, but our work of building our beloved true north, strong and free, never ends.

Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the House that it has been a pleasure to work with my colleague from northern Ontario. I have always found him to be a formidable opponent but equally a formidable ally.

A perfect example of that was when we worked together on the electoral boundaries review that took place a few years ago. Northern Ontario was being threatened with the loss of a seat. All three parties worked together, in collaboration, in advocating for us to keep that seat. We did editorial board letters together, and interviews, spoke with our constituents and did a lot of consultations. That speaks to the MP's ability to work alongside everyone in this chamber.

I can also tell colleagues that the MP for Parry Sound—Muskoka was always the benchmark I used in having to do those early morning interviews on CBC's *Morning North*. His answers were always so complete. He was critical but always fair. That is something I truly respected, and it is a style I have adopted as my own.

He will be greatly missed in this chamber. He will be missed in these halls of Parliament. Most of all, I know that he will be missed by the constituents of Parry Sound—Muskoka.

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, shortly after I was elected in 2021, I do not know what my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka had done to deserve it, but they seated him right beside me here in the House. I assume it was a punishment and that he has improved since then.

I quickly got to know an intelligent, diligent and deeply kind man who loves a good debate and, above all, loves speaking French. He is a bit of a rascal, a bit of a prankster. I remember him coming over to our side of the antechamber to needle me about any number of things, particularly supply management. I think I may even have convinced him of the need to protect that system.

Time will tell, but beyond all that, he is a colleague who has worked hard to push back against polarization. We saw that during his leadership campaign, but he remains someone who enjoys debate and recognizes that, if Parliament exists, it is because, in the end, we may not always agree.

The member started out as a city councillor and then served as a mayor before coming here. He has made a lifelong commitment to public service. From what I understand, he may be continuing that commitment in a new role. I think that the people who elected him can be proud of him.

I wish him the best of luck. He will always be welcome in Mirabel, unless he is campaigning with the Conservatives.

If Quebec becomes independent one day, we will give him an honorary passport.

[*English*]

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am lucky enough to have spent an exorbitant amount of time with the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, particularly in the summertime. We ended up all over the riding, and it sort of went like this.

When I would introduce him, sometimes, to his own constituents, people would ask, “Who is that fellow?”

I would say, “Well, he's your member of Parliament.”

They would say, “Well, he seems nice.”

Usually, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka would answer, “I am nice.”

Therein lies the problem. He is too nice for this place. He is one of the nicest guys to have ever served, and for a long career.

As a colleague, I am really sorry to see him go. As a friend, I am so happy, and I cannot wait to see how he will contribute to what comes next.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all New Democrats, it is easy to say that the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka is one of the kindest, most thoughtful and most respectful colleagues we have seen in this place. These are not words that New Democrats normally share about Conservatives. He shared values with us when it came to mental health and when it came to understanding the importance of supportive and non-market housing.

He came here to work to improve Canada. He showed that every day in his wanting to sit down despite our differences. He even made friends with our lobby staff. Our former lobby person, Anthony Salloum, became really close friends with him. I felt like the member was part of our caucus, in a sense, as he worked so closely with our team behind the scenes.

We are going to miss him. We are going to miss him greatly in the House. I hope each and every one of us takes a bit of the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, of the way he carries himself, in the way we do our work. If we do that, we will have a stronger, better Canada.

● (1600)

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. Seven years, where does the time go?

I had the privilege of sitting with the member on HUMA for the better part of two years. We worked together collaboratively. We did not always agree on everything, of course, but we put through some major legislation through HUMA.

To the people who are watching today, I am dating myself when I say this, but I think of the Bugs Bunny cartoon, of the sheepdog and the coyote who checked in, beat each other up and then checked out and went to have a beer, and they were friends. What a lot of people do not see in Ottawa is that outside of the House, many of us are friends. Many of us have deep respect for each other. Many of us will sometimes even hang out.

Yes, we all have a job to do here. Things get partisan in here. One thing about the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka is that he is authentic, hard-working and absolutely committed. Each and every one of us is here for one reason, to represent our riding and to work together to build the beautiful country that we are in. Like I said, we can agree and disagree on some things. I just want to thank the member for his friendship and his great work on behalf of his riding, and Canadians, as housing critic. I think he did an amazing job keeping us to account. He did the job amazingly well, and he is going to be missed.

Like the member for Thornhill said, he is such a nice guy. One could argue that he is probably too nice for this place, but I will tell him sincerely, from me, that I thank him for his friendship. I thank him for his contribution to Canada.

Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that we are saying goodbye to my good friend today.

He had some of the best policies within our party, but he also had an open-door policy, which was his best policy, at his office. Members may not realize it, but a couple of rednecks from Saskatchewan, myself and the member for Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, became very close friends with the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. It is really one of the best parts of the Conservative Party of Canada. We come from different parts of the country, and he, with his leadership and veteran attitude, brought so many of us together. We were elected in the same year. Some of my best memories are of a few of us having conversations in the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka's office and just having the time to get to know each other.

He got to do something that each and every one of us in the House wants to do at some point in their life, which is to look up at the gallery and say, “Honey, I'm coming home.” I am so happy he gets to go home to his family.

Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not take the opportunity to congratulate and thank the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka for his service to all Canadians.

A lot has been said. I know the time is short, but I would simply say that the way he conducted his affairs in this place, and outside of this place, is honourable. It was honourable and continues to be honourable. It is exactly what we should all aspire to, which is to advocate, to fight for our constituents and to fight for a better future for Canadians, but to do so with a level of decorum and respect that is absolutely becoming of this place.

I would like to congratulate my friend, wish him all the best in the days ahead and thank him for being a great member of Parliament.

The Speaker: I too would like to wish the hon. member the very best. His collegiality in this place is legendary. I knew about it even before I met him, so everyone knew about it.

I also want to congratulate him on an extraordinary speech, which brought together so many strands of what this country is about and what we are doing here.

I wish all the very best to the hon. member.

● (1605)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Bourassa today.

[*English*]

I am rising to speak to the budget implementation act and to share my thoughts in terms of some of what I have heard during this debate over the day.

I had the opportunity to be in the House to listen to the debate, as well as watching it from my office. I will say that I heard some things that seem to be quite repetitive in terms of the language coming from Conservatives. In particular, I heard the member for Barrie South—Innisfil continue to talk about the conflict of interests with the Prime Minister that the member has been trying to drum up for months if not years now.

I could not help but just think to myself how this seems to be an ongoing trend. This is something that has happened over and over. Conservatives just seem relentless on refusing to talk about actual policy. Instead, they talk about the perceived conflicts they can find and drum up because they think that is going to discredit the individual.

We just heard very passionate speeches from members moments ago, talking about the importance of this place, the collaborative nature around it and why it is so important for us to get to the point of the debate rather than trying to attack individuals. I could not agree more. However, in my 11 years of being here, I have witnessed the same thing over and over.

Previously it was with Justin Trudeau. The Conservatives used to come in here calling him a "trust fund baby" and accusing him of this and that. They would do everything they could to discredit the person. It is almost as though they have such a hard time talking about the policy that they turn it into a game of talking about the person and how they can make Canadians feel that person is a dishonourable individual.

The member for Barrie South—Innisfil has been on this for quite some time now. They take one issue and see how that sticks, and then they take another issue. Their approach is very obvious: death by a thousand cuts, just trying to continually pace this narrative that the Prime Minister is doing something wrong, this minister is doing something wrong or that person is doing something wrong. The Conservatives keep coming back to it over and over, with the little sound bite clips, hoping that eventually people will think there must be something wrong with that person because they are always bringing something up about them.

Even the media has become just so tired of it. I am sure the Speaker caught the clip of the member for Barrie South—Innisfil out in the lobby. I think it was yesterday. He went on one of his tirades again about a perceived conflict. Of course, he never lays any evidence out, because there usually is no evidence that actually supports what he is saying. He laid it out there, and then the media said they had another question to ask him about the Leader of the Opposition. He used explicit language to respond, basically saying that he did not give a "blank" about that. He wanted to try to bring people back to his trumped-up, fake outrage.

This is the problem. Conservatives do not understand that if they keep going back to that, over and over, they have to give the media and the public a little bit of slack when they start to ask if they are just doing the same thing over and over again, not providing any evidence but just continually attacking somebody's character. Unfortunately, that is what we see, so these games continue.

Today there was another perfect example of the games Conservatives play. Conservatives came out this morning, and the Leader of the Opposition stood there with the members who were on the special legislative committee for Bill C-39 standing behind him. He said that they will not be supporting Bill C-39.

The committee had over 24 hours of witness testimony, then debated clause by clause for over 100 hours. During that 100-hour debate of clause-by-clause, Conservatives voted for almost every single clause. Conservatives brought forward amendments and in some cases got governing members to actually agree with some of those amendments and negotiated with them to change the legislation. We were there doing it in good faith the whole time. Our members spent over 125 hours on that committee with the Conservatives, listening to them, thinking we could work together, trying to collaborate, and, on occasion, actually finding common ground and supporting something together.

● (1610)

The Conservatives voted for almost every single clause in the bill, but then, all of a sudden, the Leader of the Opposition came out this morning, with Conservative members of the committee standing behind him, effectively saying, "We will never vote for this bill. This is the worst bill ever." They were the ones doing all the talking in committee. My point is that it is just a game to them. They do not treat this place and what their role is here seriously. Members have heard me say this so many times before, but it bears repeating, because it just seems to go on and on.

I am certainly not in the mood to give political advice, but they can take it as they will. I have great confidence in knowing they will not listen to my political advice, so I will say it anyway. If Conservatives actually tried to debate policy sometimes, recognize when something is good, such as Bill C-39, which they voted in favour of routinely in committee, and then tried to explain to Canadians why they thought it was good or what parts they thought they should change, they would be so much more effective at this.

Likewise, if they did not spend all their time on continual personal character assassinations, they might actually be successful in getting somewhere with policy. They did this for years with Justin Trudeau; they attacked his character over and over. Then what happened when they actually had an opportunity to form government as soon as Justin Trudeau, the person they were attacking over and over, was gone? They just plummeted in the polls, because if all they have to offer is personal attacks on people, what can they possibly expect when that person is gone?

They spent all their time doing that. They could have spent the time actually putting forward policy and showing Canadians what they would do other than using those god-awful, cheesy slogans such as "your home, my home, our home, let us bring it home", after which he would do twirls. It was just ridiculous, but that is what Canadians were subjected to. It is bumper-sticker politics.

I will not belabour this any longer than necessary. People are probably tired of listening to me say it, because this is certainly not the first time I have given this speech, but I really encourage the opposition, in particular the member for Barrie South—Innisfil, to try a different approach, one that actually talks about policy and what they will do differently, because then, guess what. When a time comes when they might have the opportunity to form government, they will have something to stand on, unlike now with their current approach, which is actually providing nothing.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was fascinated by the member's speech. I would just like to point out that if we did not have anything to run on, the Liberals would not have any ideas to steal. Will the member not admit that they have been stealing lots of our ideas?

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, did we steal their ideas? The member wants to call it theft. He can call it whatever he wants. I did not realize that the objective of this place was to come here and hold onto our ideas, keep them close to our chest and not show them to anybody.

If the Conservatives had a good idea and the government said, "Hey, that's actually a good idea. Let's do that", the member is criticizing that. It is as if he is saying, "How dare you take our idea and implement it?" Man, that is their whole job. Their whole job is to be here and tell us what they think we should be doing differently. However, the moment we take one of their ideas and say, "That was a good idea", they say, "How dare you steal our idea?" It is unreal.

● (1615)

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, things are obviously getting heated.

One thing is certain: If there is one party that opposed this bill from the very beginning, it is the Bloc Québécois. We quickly realized how much harm it does to environmental rights, democratic rights and worker's rights, and we have been against Bill C-39 from the start.

We did our work in committee responsibly. We took part in the study and questioned witnesses. I was there to question union representatives. I even replaced my colleague from Joliette—Manawan on Sunday morning at 7 o'clock. I got a cup of coffee and joined the meeting online to participate in a study that led to a result like this one. This bill does not in any way meet the aspirations of people who still hope to protect environmental rights, democratic rights and labour rights.

How can the government be so out of touch and so intent on rolling back fundamental rights that took so many years to secure?

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the entire question was about Bill C-39, and this is Bill C-31, but I am happy to answer the question. I am happy to have a whole debate about Bill C-39.

I will say to the member that she is absolutely right. The Bloc Québécois members did come to the table, and they put forward their ideas and talked passionately about them. I saw a lot of it too, and I actually saw the member when she was participating on committee. That is what we are supposed to do, and it is what they did.

The outcome produced might not be satisfactory to her, and I totally understand and appreciate that. That is democracy, but at least they did, she is right, come with their ideas about protecting the environment. I have a great deal of respect for the Bloc Québécois members, and if they have any great ideas about how to protect the environment that I can see eye to eye with them on, I am happy to talk about those ideas.

Just as I said in the previous question with the Conservative member, I do not have a territorial approach to ideas around here. I think it is our job to come with those ideas. Sometimes we produce the result we want, and sometimes we do not, and that is actually what the entire system is intended to do: produce a result that is supported by the majority.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the idea of character assassination that the member made reference to. It seems to me that the Conservative Party members start thinking that, well, there is this thing over here and another thing over here, and then there are those things there, there and there. They think, when they tie it all together, "Oh my God, we have a scandal." Their focus seems to be looking for scandals where there are none, at great cost.

I wonder if my colleague can provide his thoughts on why it is important that the government does not lose focus and that we stick to the economy, affordability and other important issues.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is absolutely right. The member for Barrie South—Innisfil comes in here with a new scandal he has drummed up almost every week. I jokingly said today that it is like I am watching another episode of *Columbo*. I am just expecting him to have a cigar hanging out of his mouth at some point and to say, "Oh, there's just one more thing" before he wraps up. It is genuinely as if I were watching another rerun or another show based on the exact same premise, the exact same storyline, just with different characters and different elements to it this particular time.

While the Conservatives do that, if they feel that is the important thing to do, which I completely disagree with, we will continue focusing on and providing for Canadians, especially in a time when our economy is being attacked the way it is.

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-31, which deals, among other things, with our national defence, our economic security and the north.

Not that long ago, many Canadians viewed national security through a different lens. They saw it as a distant concern, something for generals, diplomats and strategic maps. That is no longer the case. Today, a conflict on the other side of the world can be felt at the grocery store. A decision taken in a foreign capital can disrupt a supply chain. A mineral can also become a source of leverage.

The world has become more dangerous, more unstable and, above all, more unpredictable. That is why Canada has made choices. We did not choose this new reality, of course, but we have made other choices. We have a duty to respond as a nation that is committed to preserving its sovereignty, protecting its interests and defending its territory. It is in that spirit that I am speaking to Bill C-31. I will focus on four measures that will give Canada the tools it needs to act quickly and, above all, effectively.

The first initiative will focus on defence. We must begin by looking at Canada's ability to defend itself. In today's world, it is no longer enough to simply equip our armed forces better. We must also do so more quickly, because recent events have shown just how rapidly the situation is changing. Our government has made clear and sound choices. Last year, we met the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence. We are continuing our efforts to reach 5% by 2035. We have also launched Canada's first-ever defence industrial strategy, aimed at protecting our sovereignty and strengthening our strategic autonomy.

However, investing money is one thing; turning those investments into real capabilities is another. Too often, defence procurement projects have taken years to advance. In the current context, we no longer have that luxury. That is why Bill C-31 proposes the creation of the Defence Investment Agency, an agency responsible for all national defence production, procurement and investment. From now on, there will be a single point of contact, streamlined processes and faster decision-making.

The government has committed $103.8 million over five years beginning in 2026-27, and $22.3 million annually thereafter. This is a necessary investment. It supports our military, promotes economic growth and creates well-paying jobs across the country, including in Quebec. Close to my riding of Bourassa, as elsewhere, whether in the north or on Montreal's south shore, we will see new companies emerge and jobs and wealth created for the benefit of all Quebeckers and Canadians. This investment will strengthen our partnerships with our allies.

The second initiative concerns mobility and supply chains. Being prepared is not just about procuring equipment more quickly. It is also about having access to the resources we need when we need them. The past few years have brought that reality into sharp focus. Families in Bourassa, like families across the country, have seen just how fragile global supply chains can be.

As we all know, one does not inspect the roof during a storm; one inspects it beforehand. The same logic applies to defence. We cannot wait until a crisis arises to discover that a supply chain is no longer holding up. That is why Bill C-31 proposes to modernize the Defence Production Act. The proposed amendments would give Canada better tools to build up defence stockpiles, including stockpiles of critical minerals.

● (1620)

In practical terms, this means three things: more resilient supply chains, closer collaboration with trusted allies and partners, and a greater ability to meet our own needs when Canadian interests are at stake. Of course, we want to act proactively to reduce our vulnerabilities and weather any storms. That is what it means to be prepared as a nation.

I will now move on to the third initiative, which involves the north and our sovereignty.

When we talk about strategic resources and sovereignty, we have to talk about the north. The Arctic is rich in natural resources and minerals that are essential to our economy and our security. Its strategic importance continues to grow. Protecting the north means protecting our sovereignty and ensuring that Canadian resources serve our national interests. Bill C-31 proposes to amend the Territorial Lands Act. The government would have new tools to cancel certain existing mineral rights or prevent the acquisition or holding of mineral rights on Crown lands in Nunavut when the national interest is at stake. That is the condition attached to those powers.

Why is this necessary? It is because right now there is a loophole. In some circumstances, rights could be acquired by certain individuals or in certain areas in a way that is contrary to our economic security or our sovereignty. Let us be clear: This is not about calling into question mining development in Nunavut. On the contrary, these powers would be reserved solely for situations where Canada's national interests are at stake. That is a sine qua non condition of this change. If a Canadian resource could be used against Canada's interests, then we need to be able to act. It is a matter of common sense.

The fourth initiatives concerns the integrity of the financial system. Protecting our economic security also means protecting the integrity of our financial system. Bill C-31 addresses bearer instruments. A bearer instrument is a security that belongs to whoever physically holds the certificate. There is no registry, no name attached to it and no record of transfers. Imagine a certificate of ownership passing from hand to hand like a banknote, with no way of knowing who holds it. Such anonymity can facilitate money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities. Of course, these instruments are not always used for criminal purposes, but their anonymity creates a vulnerability. Bill C-31 closes that loophole by prohibiting federally regulated financial institutions from issuing new instruments that confer, among other things, the right to acquire a bearer share. Granted, that it a technical measure, but the principle is simple: Anonymity must not become a shield for criminal activity in general, or for terrorism. Economic security is also national security.

In conclusion, Canada did not cause the shockwaves rippling across the world, but we obviously can decide how to respond to them. Bill C-31 strengthens our defence capability, makes our supply chains more resilient, protects our sovereignty in the north and maintains the integrity of our financial system. Here we have four measures and one firm conviction: that our economic security and our national security go hand in hand.

Families in Bourassa like families across the country want one simple thing: to know that their country is ready to respond quickly as the situation demands, and prepared to rely on its own resources when necessary. This is how we are going to build a stronger, more resilient and, most of all, safer Canada. For that reason, I support Bill C-31, and I call on all members to vote for it.

● (1625)

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to the member's speech. Right off the top, he talked about the defence spending and how the government claims that it has met the 2% defence spending.

Can the member square the circle a bit around how the Liberals are bragging about their defence spending while, at the same time, cutting spending for cadets, for the reserves and for the northern rangers?

[*Translation*]

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, I will begin with the last part of my colleague's question. I believe the defence minister has been very clear when it comes to the cadet program, and I do not think there should be any confusion on that point.

As for the first part of the question, as I explained in my speech, if my colleague was listening closely, the agency will bring defence production, procurement and investment together under a single organization. That will make the process simpler, faster and, above all, more practical.

Furthermore, we have met the 2% target. As I mentioned earlier, we will reach the 5% target in 2035. Those are concrete commitments. Bill C-31 is about ensuring that these investments translate into real capabilities: the ability to defend our country and the ability to achieve a degree of economic sovereignty and national security.

● (1630)

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from Bourassa for his speech.

I always enjoy hearing him speak when he talks about legislation. It is always like a poem. It is always beautiful. It is always the best thing since sliced bread.

He talks about defence. In reality, there is a great deal more in the bill, including the issue of handling airline passenger complaints. The government is outsourcing that to the private sector, but in committee we called for clear criteria to determine which companies would qualify. However, the Liberal members refused and instead chose to give the minister full authority to decide which companies could do the work. We said that if more than one company could receive complaints, the complaints could be assigned at random among the companies authorized to handle them, to ensure that an airline could not selectively choose the company that would deal with its complaints. The Liberal members refused and voted against that proposal.

I therefore wonder why he left that part out of his highly poetic speech about Bill C-31.

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely delighted that he found my speech poetic. That is great, but once again, I think we need to clear up this ambiguity and really make a distinction between efficiency, which is the intended aim of Bill C-31, and lack of transparency. We are not talking about a lack of transparency because, as I said earlier, procurement processes these days are very lengthy and fragmented.

We are not avoiding transparency. On the contrary, we want to streamline these processes and make them more efficient and effective. We are investing $103.8 million in this. This will create a lot of jobs in Quebec. I said this earlier and I will say it again. This will create jobs, especially in Mirabel.

My colleague talked about the poetic side, but I think we need to stand up for jobs in Quebec, and especially in Mirabel. People in his riding will have jobs.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to wish my colleague a happy birthday.

Since we have been in government, starting with budget 2025, followed by budget 2026, the economic update, and the two budget implementation bills, including Bill C-31, which we are discussing today, I have seen a consistent guiding principle: that of building Canada strong.

These major initiatives enable us to continue building on our various strategies, such as electrification, critical minerals, industry, and defence, to name a few.

I would like my colleague to tell us about the role that Bill C-31 plays in our government's broader approach to building Canada strong and strengthening our economy.

Abdelhaq Sari: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and his birthday wishes. They are greatly appreciated.

I will respond with one sentence: Economic security, which he referred to so eloquently in his question, is also national security.

As I said in my speech, we cannot inspect the roof of our house during a storm. We have to be proactive. Bill C-31 takes a very proactive approach to creating a simpler and, of course, more transparent supply chain that is easier to access.

I will say it again, because I cannot say it enough: This is about creating jobs. It is about creating value. Above all, it is about creating jobs in my Quebec.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Climate Change; the hon. member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River, Ethics; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Artificial Intelligence.

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago, Stephen Harper launched an ambitious agenda to make Canada less dependent on the United States. He signed 42 free trade agreements around the world. Members may be interested to know that the Liberal Prime Minister of today brags often about the MOUs that he has signed with other countries around the world. One of the reasons he is signing MOUs with other countries is that, in most instances, we already have a free trade agreement with many of these countries.

Twenty years ago, the Conservative Party and Stephen Harper were making the argument that we were too dependent on the United States as a market for our product, particularly energy, so we pursued an aggressive agenda of building pipelines to each of the coasts, something, I would point out, the Liberals opposed, and we pursued free trade agreements around the world. That agenda had been effectively implemented, and six major pipelines were built to get our resources to market. Free trade agreements were signed all around the world. One of those free trade agreements that was worked on extensively was CETA. I will admit that the Liberals got to sign that one, because Conservatives did not get that one across the line. I think that was signed in 2017. I am looking at my colleagues to get a nod or not on that, but it may even have been 2016. It was shortly after the Liberals took power that they signed CETA.

Do members know that CETA has still not been fully ratified in the EU? I think there are still six countries that have failed to ratify it. I had a meeting with someone from the Belgian embassy, and we were talking about importing honey. Even though the federal Parliament of Belgium has ratified CETA, it is still waiting for one of the sub-regions of Belgium to ratify it. There is still work to do to get CETA over the line, and the Liberals have been working on this for 10 years. Speaking as a European, as the Prime Minister likes to say, one would think that he, with this new relationship, would have gotten CETA fully ratified at this point. He has been the Prime Minister for a year. He seems to be popular in Europe. What is he waiting for? Instead of signing an MOU, why do we not get the CETA deal completely finished, get it over the line, get it fully ratified and make it so CETA can be fully implemented and our products can get to Europe.

That being said, several European countries, particularly Germany and Hungary, I know for a fact, have been asking us for our LNG. When Stephen Harper left office, there were 14 LNG projects that were approved and waiting to be built in this country, and when Justin Trudeau took power, one by one, those projects disappeared.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, a great new member. I look forward to his speech, which I know will be excellent, no doubt.

It has been interesting for me, having been here for 11 years, to watch the dramatic shift, to watch the Liberals eat themselves whole in terms of the total adoption of the Harper agenda in moving away from the American market and trying to sell our products to the entire world. Now, lo and behold, they wish they had some LNG ports on each of the coasts. Now they are in this mad scramble to build LNG ports.

I ask Liberal members often if they are willing to apologize for the last decade, in which they failed to get many of these projects built, failed to be concerned about the energy security of the world, failed to ensure that our forestry products had other markets than just the United States and failed to enhance the rail infrastructure so that our crops can get out. I do not know what they were all busy with during the last 10 years, but it certainly was not this.

● (1635)

When the United States suddenly was not the reliable trading partner it had been for decades since the NAFTA, which, I would point out, was another free trade agreement signed by Conservatives, the Liberals said that Stephen Harper was right and that his aggressive agenda of trading with the world and moving away from total reliance on the United States was a very good idea. Therefore, I am excited to hear the rhetoric coming out of the Liberal Party but terribly disappointed in the lack of speed and the fact we have lost a decade on many of these things.

To shift a bit, I want to talk a bit about Parks Canada. The budget implementation bill has a lot to do with it. It appears to be losing funding. I do not know if members know this, but Jasper and Banff, the two Parks Canada flagship parks, are located in Alberta. They are easy driving distance from my house. They bring in a lot of the revenue for Parks Canada. I do not have the number completely nailed down, but somewhere between 700 and maybe 2,000 Parks Canada employees have been laid off because of budget cuts. The same Liberal government that is laying off Parks Canada employees is funding forest rehabilitation or the creation of new parks in Brazil, 560 million dollars' worth. It appears to me that the $560 million would fund Parks Canada and allow these Canadians to maintain their employment. The logic of that I do not understand whatsoever.

One would think that is maybe a one-off event, but then we discovered that our military cadets, our reservists and the northern rangers have all had their funding cut as well and are having to operate with more volunteers and do their own fundraising. This comes at a time when we have heard Liberal after Liberal give speeches here today, bragging about meeting the 2% NATO target for military spending. It baffles me. How do they get to brag about the increase in spending in the military when the cadet, reservist and northern ranger programs are facing budget cuts? This does not make sense. They are bragging about all this money they are spending and then, I would argue, cutting the most important part of our military: personnel and recruitment. If our military does not have the people and cannot recruit the people to fill the military, we have nothing. We can buy all the equipment, but if we do not have the people to operate it, it does not matter. Therefore, I am supremely baffled that, on the one hand, the Liberals are saying that they are increasing military spending to generational investments and, at the same time, we are hearing of budget cuts to personnel who could feed the military.

We have heard from the chief government whip that he is frustrated that we continue to bring up scandals the Liberals have been involved in. Of course he is frustrated about that. He would much rather that democracy did not work and that the Liberal Party could just operate with impunity, hand out money to all of its friends, backstop the Prime Minister's personal wealth when they run into trouble, and ensure that the Canadian taxpayer is on the hook for liabilities that Brookfield has incurred around the world. We will continue to point out where we feel the Liberal government is wasting money, where we feel it is being corrupt and where it is paying its friends.

● (1640)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member just made reference to part of the problem with the Conservative Party today, the far right. At the end of the day, its members seem to be more preoccupied with character assassination than substantive policy issues.

I question much of what the member has said, because his numbers do not jive. At the beginning he said that the Harper government got 40-plus trade agreements. He went on to say that it includes the CETA agreement, which is 20-plus countries in one deal. Then he criticized us because we did not get it across the line. He is totally inconsistent. Fast-forward to today, and we have over 22 security and trade agreements.

● (1645)

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, the 42 trade agreements that I referenced are 42 trade agreements. I do include CETA and TPP in that. Those include multiple countries but are two individual trade agreements. The member says that we did not sign it, and it was said in our speeches that we did not sign them. However, that CETA deal was well in the works by the time the Liberals came to power.

The other point is around the Liberals wanting to talk about character assassination. That is because they cannot defend their actions on a whole host of these things. The Liberals cannot defend their record of the last 10 years, so they are going to divert from that and complain about Conservatives and our behaviour.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois asked the government to eliminate oil subsidies. That would have saved nearly $26 billion over five years. We know how big the deficit is, and we know that oil companies do not need subsidies. What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, Alberta, because of our oil and gas revenue, has put a net $200 billion into this country, and the hon. member's province has been a great beneficiary of that.

If my Quebec colleagues do not think we should have fossil fuels in this country, they should stop selling F-150s over there.

Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke of Parks Canada and the layoffs there. I know one of the workers personally who, ironically, fights fires out west. He is from the Essex area, and he fights fires out west when the wildfires get going.

Now we see that the government has decided to give $565 million to Brazil. My question is, why does the member think that the Liberal government is more concerned about other countries than about Canada?

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for bringing that up. This is something I hear a lot about at home, that the Prime Minister seems more concerned about what is happening in other countries, spending money in other countries, than what is happening right here at home.

Canadians are having trouble putting groceries on the table. They are not feeling safe in their own communities because of Liberal crime policies in this country. They are very convinced that the Prime Minister is not putting Canada and Canadians first.

Conservatives will stand up for Canada. We will always put Canada first.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I hope this can be a brief question.

I track, very closely, the snarl that has kept so many countries from signing on to CETA. I do think we could get to a solution if we re-examine the investor-state provisions in that agreement and come to a compromise. I wonder if he is interested in looking at that.

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is consistent, if nothing else. She has brought this up over and over again.

I am not fully briefed on the investor-state provisions, but I do believe that every time it has been used, it has found in Canada's favour.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a relative who is always on the verge of making some grand change in his life. He announces it with tremendous enthusiasm, and for a while, that is all he can talk about. He explains what he is going to do, why he is going to do it, how he is going to do it and all the wonderful things that will happen once he finishes doing it. He can actually be pretty convincing.

He does not stop talking about it and does not ask what we think about it. He just talks. The more he talks, the more complicated the idea gets, and pretty soon, he starts debating with himself about the wisdom of the plan. Members should keep in mind that we have not had a chance to ask him anything. He is just talking. Eventually, he is conducting a full-blown debate with himself and, because he can see both sides of the story, he becomes increasingly confused about which side he is actually on.

I thought of him while reading division 16 of Bill C-31, the budget implementation act, and its successor proposal, Bill C-40.

In October 2025, the Prime Minister established the DIA to speed up purchasing. He recruited Doug Guzman from the banking world to cut through Ottawa's notorious procurement. By spring, the Liberals changed their mind and proposed to make it a standalone agency.

Within a year, Mr. Guzman was so frustrated by the bureaucratic mess that he was prepared to rage-quit. In October, before Parliament had finished with that proposal, the Liberals introduced C-40 to make it a Crown corporation, with a board and a different ministerial structure. Now they are confused, because Bill C-40 anticipates repealing division 16.

That is three versions in roughly a year. The government has started debating itself and Parliament is left to sort out the mess.

My relative would recognize the process immediately, but at least his confusion does not cause taxpayers tens of millions of dollars.

Mr. Guzman is still there, riding this merry-go-round and making more than any federal bureaucrat ever has, but let us consider the absurdity. The government creates an agency to eliminate delays, but the agency is so slow that the CEO loudly wants to quit, so the next thing we get is another organizational structure, another board and another minister. If this is supposed to reduce bureaucracy, why are we expanding it and why is the bureaucracy so structurally confused?

Division 16 would give the minister extensive powers. It would make competitive contracting the general rule and then provide 13 categories of exceptions. Exceptions for supporting industry research, interoperability and further regulations go well beyond emergencies. Parliament needs to know why competition was bypassed and what exactly taxpayers received for it. The legislation would also allow suppliers to be excluded on national security grounds without ever being told the reasons and without any appeal process, short of going to court.

Moving to a Crown corporation raises further question about watchdogs' jurisdictions. Then comes the financing powers: loans, guarantees, advance payments and investment in company shares. We need Canadian ammunition and critical parts production, but an agency that finances companies while awarding contracts needs strong conflict of interest rules. We need to measure factory output and equipment delivered, not promising conversations.

The confusion does not stop at procurement. The Canadian Coast Guard has been transferred to National Defence while remaining a civilian service. The government promotes closer military co-operation while saying the vessels remain unarmed and civilian. In peacetime, that is possible. In war, it is not.

At committee on November 16, I asked Vice-Admiral Topshee about Coast Guard vessels brought into naval service. Unlike the bureaucrats in Ottawa, he told the truth. He acknowledged that they could become “legitimate military targets” in the event of hostilities.

Under the laws of armed conflict, the relevant question is what a vessel actually does, not whether Ottawa calls it civilian or whether there is a gun bolted to the deck. A civilian ship making an effective contribution to military action or under the control of the military is a legitimate military target.

We have heard the idea of training naval personnel aboard Coast Guard vessels someday, maybe, but right now, at this moment, we have civilian Coast Guard members floating around in the most inhospitable conditions in the world with targets on their backs. This is an example of the kind of confusion afflicting the Liberal government. We cannot just place civilians aboard vessels being used for wartime military purposes unless we decide who commands them, what protection they have and whether their crews have been trained for those risks. That is not morally right.

● (1650)

The fact that bureaucrats in Ottawa have historically claimed the Coast Guard is made up of civilian vessels is not going to change international law, and it is not going to stop the Russian and Chinese attacks on legitimate targets in an armed conflict.

I do not blame the navy for this dangerous situation. I blame a Liberal government that announced it was going to expand the forces to 2%, then searched frantically for ways to do it. Then, it shoved the Coast Guard into DND and left it to worry about the practical consequences later. It is the same with the GlobalEye purchase.

After years of political reversals over the F-35, the government is reviewing the purchase again. Apparently, the fastest way to procure an aircraft is to select it, pay for its development, reconsider it, select it again and then reconsider whether reconsidering it might be necessary.

The Prime Minister's foreign policy has much the same flavour. He continually invokes President Trump as though a short-term, lame duck American president defines our relationship with the United States forever. Meanwhile, he is cozying up to Beijing and Brussels, without giving Canadians a full explanation of what that shift means for our North American market or continental defence.

We already have free trade with the EU through CETA. Regardless of the fact that it is not entirely signed, it is still in effect for those countries that have signed it. Except for energy, we already trade to absorption with China. Why do we need to become an associate member of the EU? Why do we need a security arrangement with China?

Not everything is bunged up. During his January pilgrimage to China, Qatar and Davos, aircraft catering alone was more than $175,000. It is reassuring to know that some government deliveries are arriving on schedule, but others have not. The Auditor General found that $695 million was committed toward strategic ammunition stocks in that same fiscal year, but none of the ammunition tied to those commitments had arrived by March 31. Another $656 million in ammunition inventory was overdue for required counting.

While army plans contemplate thousands more reservists, we are hearing about reserve employment contracts and training being stopped. As someone who served in the reserves, I know that experience takes years to build. We cannot make our way to a larger, better trained force by repeatedly interrupting and stopping the training, and driving morale into the basement.

I do not demand that every defence problem be solved overnight. I demand that the government stop confusing itself.

That brings me back to my relative. He is always planning to improve. He has been announcing grand plans for as long as I can remember, but every plan becomes a discussion with himself, every discussion becomes a debate, every debate produces more confusion and eventually, he talks himself right back to where he started. As a result, he has been in the same dead-end job for 30 years. It is not because he has not wanted to change it, and certainly not because he has not announced his intention to change it; it has been 30 years of ambitious announcements, elaborate explanations and absolutely no change.

The difference between the government and my relative is that my relative is only wasting his own time. The government is wasting ours, and it is doing so at an enormous public expense, while the defence of our country hangs in the balance.

Canada does not need any more grand announcements or another agency to implement the recommendations of the committee studying the last agency. We need a government that can make a decision, stick to it and actually end up delivering something.

● (1655)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I feel somewhat sorry for the member's family member, but having said that, it is quite the opposite in terms of the government.

If the member were to be more, I do not want to say honest, so let us say transparent, I am sure he would recognize that there are many different initiatives that the government has been acting on over the last 18 months that are having a profoundly positive impact by working collaboratively with many others, things such as the increase of net jobs by tens of thousands for Canada.

The member wants to talk about the military and the procurement process. Evolving it into a Crown corporation is a good thing. There will be more accountability and more transparency through a Crown corporation. The Conservatives do not understand the concept of what a Crown corporation—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee.

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, there was no question asked, but I will answer anyway. Let us take defence procurement, the defence drone initiative, for example. I asked today at committee exactly where that is at and was informed that “speeds not seen in generations” means that we have actually created a marketplace. We do not have any drones. We do not have any contracts for drones, but we have a marketplace. That is the stunning advancement that we have made so far. The hon. member on the other side should realize that announcements are not the same thing as actuality.

● (1700)

[*Translation*]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague talked a lot about procurement and the importance of defence. That may be of interest to businesses in Shefford. I am thinking, for example, of Prinoth, which would like to get a contract.

This bill creates an agency that should be used for procurement, but it is far from being completely independent. That is one of the problems we see. What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, the DIA has a board of possibly three people, most of them government, and as many as seven, which is still an incredibly small board for a Crown corporation. I see the government retaining control over what the DIA does. The appeal is the board, but the board itself, in spite of its fiduciary duty, is made up of possibly three government people. I do not even feel that the oversight exists.

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member about the government's increasing reliance on accounting trickery. In the member's speech, he talked about the reclassification of the Coast Guard as a military expense. The Liberals did not change the nature of the Coast Guard. They did not increase its budget. They did not increase its capability. They did not undertake anything that would change the force readiness and force posture of the Canadian Armed Forces. They simply moved its budget number from one column to another to make it a defence expenditure.

I would like the member's comments, if he has anything further to say, about how accounting trickery does not make the country more secure and it does not increase our capabilities for our allies.

Scott Anderson: Mr. Speaker, my main consideration with this is we have civilians floating around up north. Recently, I was able to go and take a look at our bases up north. It is not the place where someone would want to be attacked in a ship, especially if they have no way of fighting back. We might as well have moved the Girl Guides into DND. It is the same kinetic addition to our forces, which is zero. We have no kinetic addition to the CAF at all, but it does, along with all the pensions and everything that carries over into DND, certainly puff up our numbers.

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-31, the government's budget implementation bill. This bill proposes to make a long list of changes, and I could spend a lot longer than 10 minutes going through quite a few of them. However, I am going to zero in on just a couple of sections, as well as the overall message the bill is sending to Canadians. I do not have a copy of it in front of me here, but it is 352 pages long. It is 352 pages of changes that complicate an already overly complicated tax system, 352 pages of changes that I, as a chartered professional accountant of more than 26 years, had to spend weeks deciphering.

Now, there may be some good ideas in the bill, but overall, the way this is presented and the way the government has put so much into this bill, is not practical. The government keeps adding more rules to a tax system that is already too complicated. It keeps adding more exemptions and boutique tax credits.

The Liberal government keeps moving the goalposts, and it is Canadians who suffer every single time. Canadians are asking for the exact opposite. They want a tax system that is simple, fair and easy to understand.

Families want to know how many taxes they owe. Small business owners want to spend less time dealing with paperwork and more time running their own businesses. Farmers want clear rules so they can plan ahead. Instead, the government continues to add more rules, more forms and more costs.

As a chartered professional accountant who has worked with our tax system for a couple of decades, I have seen how complicated our system has become. The Income Tax Act and its regulations are already about 3,500 pages long. The cost to operate that tax system is in the billions, and that is without taking into account the costs outside of government.

Every time the government adds a new tax rule, someone has to figure it out, what it means, how to follow it and how to report it. For a large company, that means hiring maybe more internal accountants and staff, but for a small business in Yellowhead, it may mean another bill from their accountant, more paperwork at the end of the day or less time spent running their own companies. That is why tax reform is so important.

That is also why I have made it a priority to hear directly from Canadians, particularly those from communities in my own riding in Yellowhead. Over the past several weeks, I have held some tax reform town halls in Edson, Hinton, Jasper and Grande Cache. We are also planning some in the future, next month, in Carstairs, Canmore, Banff, Rocky Mountain House and Springbank.

I want to thank everyone who has taken time to attend and share their concerns and tell us what needs to change. The message has been clear. Canadians are tired of a tax system that is hard to understand, expensive to follow and constantly changing. People have raised concerns about their tax brackets, which are the highest in North America; deductions for workers and businesses that do not make sense; and the cost of growing a business.

We have also heard from farmers and ranchers, small business owners and families. They want a fair tax system that does not make it harder to work, save, invest or pass their business on to the next generation. Tax reform should not be decided behind closed doors in Ottawa. It should be shaped by the people who deal with the system every day.

I have also made a tax reform questionnaire available online now for Canadians who cannot actually attend town halls to have access to share their ideas. I would like to invite all Canadians across the country to fill out the questionnaire on my website at williamstevenson.ca/taxreform.

My goal is to bring these ideas back to Ottawa. Unlike what I have seen from the Liberal government, which has been taking its own ideas and forcing them onto the public, the public actually wants it to be more fair and more competitive. We should be making the system easier to use, not adding layers of rules every time the government brings forward a budget.

One part of Bill C-31 that deserves some special attention is the changes to the rules around trusts. Under the current rules, trusts recognize gains every 21 years, which often leads to a tax bill. This is meant to prevent people from using trusts to defer paying taxes indefinitely. The change in Bill C-31 would extend some of these rules to indirect transfers.

● (1705)

Trusts can be used for many reasons, including planning how a family business will be passed on to the next generation. Although rarely used in family farm situations, it can also be applicable there. While I agree that people should not be able to use a complicated tax arrangement to avoid their tax obligations, we need to make sure these rules are clear and do not create unnecessary costs or problems for families and businesses that are following the law. If the tax system was fair and easier for Canadians to navigate, many would not go to such lengths.

Businesses should not be treated as just a source of government revenue. They provide jobs, support local communities and help keep our rural economies strong. Families need to be able to plan for the future without worrying about changes in the rules that create unexpected costs. We should be going after the people who deliberately avoid paying taxes. We should not be making life harder for the Canadians who are simply trying to run a business and plan for the future.

I also want to talk briefly about bare trusts. The government is forcing the use of bare trusts where they were not being used before. In 2024, the government planned on instituting new rules for bare trusts. At the last minute, the 11th hour, it cancelled the changes because it said they had unintended consequences. This is kind of a theme with the government, which has dealt with tax changes in the past. The Liberals have a theoretical idea they never seem to think through, and it is Canadians who pay the price. Although they have amended these rules since 2024, we still have many problems.

The separate reporting rules for bare trusts have caused concern, because many Canadians are unsure whether they need to file a tax return, another T3, or provide more information to the CRA, even though they are not going to actually owe tax. For many people, these are not complicated tax arrangements, but they are part of normal family or property matters. Canadians should not need to hire an accountant or a lawyer just to find out whether an everyday arrangement means they have another tax form to file.

The government needs to provide clear rules, clear instructions and reasonable expectations. We need to make sure ordinary Canadians are not stuck with extra costs because they cannot understand what the CRA expects of them.

Before giving the CRA more powers, the government should also ask whether the agency is doing a good job serving Canadians. Anyone who has tried to solve a tax problem with the CRA knows how frustrating it can be. I can pretty much confidently say that I have probably spent the highest number of hours on hold with the CRA of any member in the House. The CRA phone line music still haunts me. People can spend hours on hold receiving different answers from different employees, or have to wait too long to have a mistake fixed.

Small businesses and individuals should not have to fight their way through a complicated system to get a clear answer. The government should focus on improving CRA services, fixing existing problems and treating taxpayers fairly. It is not enough to give the agency more power. Canadians deserve an agency that is accountable and works for them.

When I look at Bill C-31 as a whole, I see a government that keeps adding more rules without ensuring the rules act as they should and accomplish what they are supposed to. We need a different approach. We need to make the income tax easier to understand. We need to lower the cost of tax compliance for small business, farmers and families. We need a CRA that provides better service and is held accountable. We need a tax system that encourages people to work, save, invest and build businesses—

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt my colleague, but I rise on a point of order. Would you mind doing a quorum count?

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the clerk to count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We now have quorum.

[*English*]

The hon. member may continue.

William Stevenson: We need a tax system that encourages people to work, save, invest and build businesses here in Canada. We need a government that spends taxpayer money carefully and shows Canadians where that money is going. This is what I have been hearing from people across Yellowhead. People are not asking for more complicated tax rules. They want a system that is predictable. For Canada to be competitive, we need a plan to retain the best and the brightest by lowering the highest tax bracket and raising where taxes actually start.

As a CPA, I believe we should be able to explain our tax system in plain language. If ordinary Canadians cannot understand the rules they are expected to follow, then we need to take a serious look at those rules. The government should not measure success by how many pages of new legislation are passed and how many forms it has created. It needs to measure success by whether Canadians can afford to follow the rules so they can grow.

I will continue to bring the concerns of Yellowhead residents to Ottawa. I will keep listening to the businesses, owners, families—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

● (1715)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, virtually since I was first elected back in 1988, I have heard about the need for simplifying and making our tax systems easier, or more consumer-friendly, if I can put it that way. There have been changes over recent times.

I am sure the member opposite is very much aware of the productivity mega deduction, which is a significant tax break to help small, medium-sized and large businesses look at the opportunities to expand their companies, whether it is through technology or bringing in new capital, new equipment. All of these types of things are going to feed into the bigger picture of where we are now starting to export more than we ever have to other countries. I wonder if he could provide his thoughts on that particular tax deduction.

William Stevenson: Mr. Speaker, the mega deduction was actually required to bring us up to what the United States has done, and has already done for a couple of years, to keep us in a productive capacity.

The Liberals are touting the mega deduction as a great thing they are going to be using, but it is just a matter of timing. People can already write off all the different classes of depreciation on their taxes, but the Liberals have complicated it, because there are certain things that are applicable, and certain things that are not applicable. Unlike many of the classes that are already in there, we can still depreciate all the same, but it is a matter of the timing they have. Sure, they can do it in one year instead of over five. That is about all this is going to change.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as we know, the federal government used to fund 35% of health care spending by Quebec and the provinces through health transfers. That percentage now stands at 22%. In Quebec, we send 50% of our income tax to the federal government. Elsewhere, the distribution is different.

We asked that the health transfer escalator be locked in at 6%, but the government chose to disregard that request, with the result that the 2028-29 minimum escalator will be 3%, while the natural increase in system costs, factoring in population aging and growth, will be 5% to 6%. What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

William Stevenson: Mr. Speaker, government spending has increased so much. The amount the government is going to spend on debt alone is growing exponentially, which is taking away from what the transfers can be to the provinces. The Liberals are going to be reducing what the federal government can contribute towards health and education to the provinces. They have to readjust where they are going to spend the money so that they do not have a reduction of what they are spending on services.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank my colleague for Yellowhead for the expertise he provides in the House. I think he has some experience on taxes that no one else really has here, with him being a CPA.

One thing the member talked about was how, in the budget, the tax system is not practical. More rules are added and it is complicated. I wonder if he could speak to how that affects small businesses. There are lots of Canadians watching right now and lots of small business owners. How would this complication affect whether someone even starts a business or if someone is successful in their business?

William Stevenson: Mr. Speaker, a lot of my clients in the past would come in, and they were no longer doing what their business was meant to do because they were spending so much time with the new rules and the red tape. It was slowing down their productivity. It is the biggest thing that the government is hindering small businesses with. It is slowing down what they are actually doing. If the government were to reduce the requirements, those small businesses would probably have a better business model and earn more money. That would actually be more tax revenue to the government, which would be helpful.

● (1720)

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I know I will not have a full speaking slot, but I thank my hon. friend, the member for Yellowhead, for splitting his time with me.

The bill we have in front of us this evening, Bill C-31, is the second of two omnibus budget bills to implement the budget of November 4, 2025. The first of these omnibus budget bills, Bill C-30, passed earlier this year and was a surprise, in that buried in an omnibus bill about finance, there was a significant rollback of pesticide protections for human health and the environment under the Pest Control Products Act.

Amazingly, with Bill C-31, which was introduced for first reading on May 6, going back to the point made by other colleagues, implementing a budget that was tabled November 4, we would again have a significant rollback of pesticide regulations in this country. Neither of these changes in Bill C-30 or Bill C-31 was portended in the budget.

It was not at all clear, when looking at the budget of November 4, that we were about to see implementation acts for that budget that would significantly reduce protections for public health and safety, and environmental protections against some of the most toxic chemicals used in Canada, those that are developed for the purposes of killing insects, plants, rodents and so on. The Pest Control Products Act deals with the full range of pesticides: insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides and so on.

Why is this important? I want to step back from it because, of course, this being an ominous budget bill, there are many other provisions, and most of the members today have spoken to the other sections, such as the proposed changes in the Defence Investment Agency, the changes in foreign charities and the treatment of those donations. There are myriad different sections, so many that I could not list them even if I had a full speaking slot.

What makes this particularly offensive from the point of view of a member of Parliament who diligently reads everything and tries to adjust and to prepare amendments to everything of significance is that when changes to the Pest Control Products Act are made in the context of a hidden set of measures in an omnibus budget bill, it means they never get studied properly.

I make this contention very clear. An omnibus budget bill goes to only one committee of Parliament, the Standing Committee on Finance. There are fine people on the Standing Committee on Finance, but one of the reasons we have the Standing Committee on Environment and the Standing Committee on Health is so they can develop some expertise and have the time, as a committee, to call witnesses forward, such as witnesses from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment who would like to have testified on this bill and who are shocked by this rollback.

Expert witnesses from the David Suzuki Foundation, from Environmental Defence Canada and health and safety organizations are concerned that what is happening here is the most significant reductions of pesticide regulations in this country in our history, but they are hidden.

One might say they are not hidden. We can look at the table of contents, and once we get down to division 13, we can see they would make changes to the Pest Control Products Act, but they were not discussed in the budget in any detail at all. They are a complete surprise, and they are in an omnibus budget bill, which means that none of the witnesses who wanted to provide substantive testimony on the bill were called as witnesses before the finance committee.

I tried to amend the bill in clause-by-clause to stop the reduction of regulations. Let me be very specific. Bill C-31 would eliminate the mandatory cyclical review of pesticides every 15 years. This is a key measure to understand what effect is really happening in the environment from the use of pesticides. It has been proven over time that this 15-year review is an essential element of pesticide regulation. Why would it be removed? What does it have to do with the budget?

We do not have any information as to why these things are claimed to be connected. They are not connected. It is just convenient for a government that has had massive lobbying from pesticide manufacturers. The pesticide lobby group CropLife has had significant access to government ministers, and that is why it is not coming forward as it should.

● (1725)

If the government of the day thinks the Pest Control Products Act, which is regulated under Health Canada, needs reform, the Minister of Health should step up with amendments to the Pest Control Products Act that are stand-alone, that are subjected to proper scrutiny in this place and that are not put in an omnibus budget bill, one that will, as I said, be studied only by the finance committee of the House of Commons.

This is an abomination, and it is too frequent, too much the order of the day from the new government, which still calls itself Liberal. I ask the Liberal members of Parliament what it sounds like to them that any piece of red tape must be removed. That does not sound like anything I have ever heard a Liberal government say, that we need to make sure that if there is anything that gets in the way of the profits of the pesticide makers, we are going to get rid of it.

That is why there is a coalition of groups about this. If anyone is still listening to the speech and wants to look it up, one can find it easily. They are now called the “silent spring” provisions of Bill C-31, which would gut federal pesticide regulations and protections. These protections are to protect human health. They are to protect the environment. They were not onerous. Every 15 years, there would be a review. If 15-year mandatory reviews are too much for the government in an effort to expedite the access to dangerous toxic chemicals—

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:27 p.m., pursuant to order made Monday, November 23, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the amendment.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, November 30, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m. so we could begin private members' hour.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-255, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief — religious property), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-255.

Before I begin, I would like to point out that many members of the House are wearing various symbols to support important causes.

As members know, we are currently in the midst of the 12 days of activism against gender-based violence. It is 12 days in Quebec and 16 days in Canada. That said, the difference in the number of days does not make this cause any less important, and it is something that deserves our attention year-round. The white ribbon, which many members of the House are wearing, shows solidarity and support for this extremely important cause.

The other cause that I would like to draw attention to is the bow tie worn by some members of the House, particularly those from Quebec. This is part of the Bowvember campaign, which raises funds for prostate cancer research. Bowvember is organized by Procure, an organization that gratefully accepts donations made through the purchase of a bow tie or via their website. I just wanted to point that out because people may be wondering why members are wearing different symbols on different occasions. The House of Commons allows us to do this, and I think it is a good way to make use of the exposure that we get here.

Let us now return to Bill C-255. As a general rule, the Bloc Québécois has always opposed the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences, regardless of the context. That is exactly what is being proposed here. We are talking about mischief in relation to religious property.

The Conservatives' proposal is worded as follows:

> Everyone who commits mischief in relation to a building or structure, or part of a building or structure, that is primarily used for religious worship — including a church, mosque, synagogue or temple — an object associated with religious worship located in or on the grounds of such a building or structure, or a cemetery is guilty of an indictable offence or an offence punishable on summary conviction and is liable

This is where mandatory minimum penalties are imposed, for example a minimum fine of $1,000 for a first offence or a term of imprisonment of up to 10 years, depending on the frequency and severity of the offence.

If we have a problem with this, it is not because we do not consider it a serious crime or because we think it is acceptable. I think we have all been deeply troubled in recent years by the very concerning increase in acts of vandalism, attacks, threats and even by the atmosphere of anxiety surrounding places of worship. Indeed, we have seen absolutely intolerable incidents across Canada and Quebec.

Closer to home—we naturally relate better to our own reality—in the Montreal region, in Outremont for one, Jewish schools were the target of protesters, threats and vandalism. That is absolutely disgusting. I chose that word to make sure it really sinks in.

This is not an attempt to minimize the seriousness of these crimes. Yes, some people may find these criminal acts more serious or more significant than other types of crimes. We are not disputing that. We are not here to judge the relative severity of different crimes based on our own convictions or values.

However, our concern is that there is an existing legal framework. The Criminal Code already contains provisions to punish this sort of crime. It also recognizes aggravating factors in cases involving hate-motivated crimes. We can reasonably assume that there is an element of hatred at the root of these crimes, these acts of vandalism, these attacks committed against temples, synagogues, mosques or churches.

I believe that members of Parliament should not seek to take the place of judges in such cases, given that the judges already have all the tools they need at their disposal and will, moreover, be able to take into account various factors that we do not have access to here when deciding on such a law.

● (1730)

Imposing minimum sentences in the process is like stepping in to do part of the judge's job and taking away the judge's ability to evaluate the various factors at play that will, in fact, differ from one case to another. Some cases may involve a thoughtless act committed by someone who was in an altered state and whose actions were not motivated in any way by hatred toward a particular group. In another case, however, the offence may indeed have been motivated by hatred of a particular religious group, whatever the source of that hatred. It is therefore up to the judge to make that determination and assess each case on its own merits, and part of our job is to ensure that judges have the proper tools to do so. I do not believe that imposing minimum sentences simply because we are convinced that these crimes deserve harsher penalties or a certain level of severity is a good way for us to do our job as parliamentarians.

We are sensitive to the events that have taken place. We probably know a number of colleagues here in the House who have personally known people whose families have been affected by these acts. It is a very emotional issue. It is a very sensitive issue when we are discussing and debating it. There are differences of opinions and beliefs. That is why I do not think this debate should be held in the House of Commons. It is why judges are generally in the best position to make these judgments and come up with sentences.

I want to make an analogy. We are talking about crimes committed against religious property. In the values and belief systems of the members who introduced this bill or who will vote in favour of it, religion holds a predominant and important place, so everything surrounding religion deserves extra protection. Personally, I am passionate about culture, and I know many members who are also passionate about culture and for whom cultural property has enormous value, a value that must be preserved and protected, because these assets will be evidence of our time in the future.

We were outraged by what the Taliban did, for example, to monuments and to historical, cultural and heritage property. I feel the same way about certain cultural property, whether works of art or, as I was saying, heritage assets. However, I cannot imagine introducing a bill in the House of Commons to call for mandatory minimum sentences if, for example, protesters were to target works of art in a museum, which I consider absolutely outrageous, indecent and unacceptable. It makes me extremely angry when I see reports of such acts in the media, but it does not lead me to come to the House and say that we absolutely must impose harsher mandatory minimum penalties because, in my view, according to my values and my convictions, those acts are more serious than other offences of the same nature.

That is pretty much where we stand and why this makes me a little uncomfortable. However, I would remind the House that this is an extremely sensitive issue, one that the Bloc Québécois approaches with all the sensitivity and care it deserves, because we have tremendous respect for everyone's convictions. We also have the utmost respect for the fact that some people are more sensitive to these situations for various reasons. We therefore agree with the spirit of Bill C-255, I would say, and wish to join in strongly condemning any and all attacks on places of worship.

We also want to reiterate our solidarity with all the communities that have been targeted by acts of violence and vandalism in recent years. We are just as outraged as every other member of the House when crimes of this nature are committed against these communities. However, I think what we need to emphasize and really focus on here is that we need to continue to allow judges to impose sentences after taking into account all the factors presented in every case brought before them.

● (1735)

[*English*]

Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me start from before the beginning. In 1774, a Catholic in England could not vote. He could not sit in Parliament and he could not hold public office. This was not because of anything he had done, but because of how he prayed.

In the same year, on this side of the ocean, the Quebec Act guaranteed the Catholics of Quebec the freedom to practise their faith in the open and opened public office to them. This was 55 years before Catholics in England received the same right.

That is who we were before we were even a country.

We kept building on it: full rights to Jews in 1832, a quarter century before Britain; freedom of worship in 1851; protection of religious schools in our Constitution in 1867; Diefenbaker's Bill of Rights in 1960; and in 1982, a charter that put freedom of religion at the very top. Each generation laid another stone on that same wall. I fear that we are part of the generation watching that wall crack.

We are here today to support some very simple ideas: that we should not have to hide our faith, apologize or make ourselves smaller to accommodate hate; that we should not have to look over our shoulder every time we go to worship, whatever worship might look like; and that a place where we do that worshipping is a sanctuary that should be protected, because an attack on that place is an attack on our fundamental freedom.

That is what my friend from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek believes and that is why she made this bill happen. I am lucky to stand in her shadow to support it. She did this because there was a time when these ideas were simply normal, and we all knew what that looked like.

Normal was someone's grandfather getting off the boat in Halifax and knowing that Canada was different, not perfect, but different. Normal was a country where someone could put a mezuzah on their door and nobody would touch it, where they could send their kids to a religious school and not worry that they would come home, or where they could wear a turban in the streets and the only thing anybody would say was nothing, because it was none of their business, because that was the agreement in Canada. That was the covenant this country made to every single family that came here carrying whatever survived. For a long time, imperfectly and incompletely, with failures we should never sanitize in this place, Canada kept it, until now.

In 2015, police reported 1,362 hate crimes. Last year, it was more than 4,700. That is up more than 245%. It more than tripled in a single decade. Those are just the ones that we know about. Here in this country, that was supposed to be different. Things were supposed to be different. Hate crimes targeting religion more than doubled in just three years, and last year, seven in 10 were aimed at Jewish Canadians.

B'nai B'rith recorded 6,800 anti-Semitic incidents last year, or nearly 19 every single day. It warned that this hatred was becoming "normalized." "Normalized" was the word, not "rising" but "normal," as in a new floor or as in a number that everybody stops gasping at.

Let me tell members what that looks like. The list of synagogues firebombed, shot at, vandalized or desecrated grows longer every single day while we sit here: Beth Tikvah in Montreal, Schara Tzedeck in Vancouver, Shaar Shalom and Beth Israel in Halifax, Chabad in Richmond Hill, the BAYT in my own community and many more just south of me in Toronto.

In Brampton and in Edmonton, Hindu temples were defaced, with one message calling the congregants terrorists. In Vancouver, a Sikh gurdwara was vandalized. In Mississauga, the windows of an Islamic institution were smashed. More than 100 churches have been burned or vandalized and nobody says anything. They have been desecrated since 2021 and 33 of them burned to the ground.

What was the message behind all of them? The message is very clear: "We know where you are, we know where you gather, we know what you hold holy and we are not afraid of you."

Every time we wake up to another church in flames, every time a bullet flies through the door of a synagogue, every time the windows of a mosque are smashed and every time a temple or a holy place is desecrated, people ask, "Am I going to be safe if I pray here?" People in my community told me that they have stopped going because they are afraid that maybe they will not come home.

● (1740)

We recently welcomed a daughter into our family and just had her baby-naming ceremony. It should have been one of the happiest mornings if I had not noticed what I noticed. It was a happy morning, but what I noticed around the place is there were security guards at the door, cops around the building and a list that one had to be on in order to enter the sanctuary. Before my daughter could even lift her own head, she was carried through a security perimeter to be welcomed into her own faith. That is not normal. I want my daughter to grow up as proud as I am in my faith, where her friends are equally proud to be Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh or whatever else they might be. I want her to grow up in a Canada where nobody thinks twice about putting a mezuzah on their door, sending their children to religious schools or simply walking into a place of worship. That does not happen if we write this all off as normal, if we treat this rising tide of hatred like the elephant in the room and if we do not give ourselves the tools to stop it.

This bill is one of those tools. It says that if one vandalizes a place of worship, they will pay for the damage. If they do it again, they will go to jail with a mandatory minimum sentence. We have to do something about it if we want it to stop, not with performative legislation like Bill C-9 that gives governments the tools to censor actual religion while ignoring the criminals and the terrorist groups that have flourished in our streets over the last decade, but with real measures like this one, clear, specific, enforceable tools that every prosecutor in every city right across the country can use.

Let me return to exactly where I started, to a country that decided again and again that a member's faith would never cost them their place here and that the concept of normal is real. There is nothing normal about gunshots being fired into a synagogue in the darkness of night. There is nothing normal about a century-old church going up in flames over and over again. There is nothing normal about hateful slurs spray-painted on any temple of any kind anywhere in this country. Those are the things that become normal only if we allow them to become normal, if we greet them with a shrug instead of real action, if we get used to the next headline, the next attack or if we stop expecting things to just change. Otherwise, I would ask respectfully what the point is of being here.

When someone asks me in 20 years what it was like in 2026, I want to be able to say that we did something concrete, that when people were afraid to go to their places of worship we stood up for them and that when religious institutions, no matter which religion, were being targeted, we did not look the other way. That is the covenant this country made with its people. That is the covenant this country is now breaking. I want to know that we did our part to keep it. It will take more than thoughts and prayers. It will take action. It will take accountability. It will take the courage to say that this is not normal and we want normal back.

The member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek has deep convictions in her faith. They run even deeper because she wants to protect everyone, even if they are not part of her faith. I want to say this to end. If we break that promise of protection to one community, it is not an exception in this country, but a broken promise to everyone. I am proud to know her.

I hope that every member of this House supports this important piece of legislation, because it has real tools that will have real effects on deterrence and will give judges the ability to apply the law the same way everywhere on everybody.

● (1745)

Hon. Mona Fortier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful today for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-255, an act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief—religious property).

It proposes to amend the Criminal Code to enact a new and targeted mischief to property offence aimed at more specifically protecting religious property. In particular, the offence would prohibit mischief committed in relation to a building or structure, or part of a building or structure, that is primarily used for religious worship; objects of religious worship in or on the grounds of these buildings; and cemeteries. The proposed offence would be subject to a penalty that would require the offender to pay the owner of the property in question a minimum amount of $1,000 for a first offence. The bill further proposes mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment of 14 days for a second offence and 30 days for a third or subsequent offence.

While I appreciate and share the concerns of the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek with respect to crimes committed against religious communities, I do not believe this specific bill is the answer to this serious problem. As such, I am unable to support the bill despite its laudable goal, for the following three main reasons.

First, the proposed penalties risk overcompensating certain victims when the damage to their property is less than the $1,000 minimum penalty. The bill would introduce a sentencing mechanism that may not result in appropriate sentences. Second, the proposed financial penalties are not necessary. Victims of crime can already be reimbursed by the offender for damage to property resulting from a criminal offence, and the proposed penalties could create confusion with existing sentencing approaches in the Criminal Code. Third, it would result in duplicative mischief offences in the Criminal Code.

At the outset, I wish to be clear that I agree with the sponsor of the bill that crimes committed against religious communities are of significant concern and have no place in Canada. Freedom of conscience and religion is enshrined in the charter, and it is fundamentally important that our country is one where anyone can practise their religion without fear of hindrance or reprisal.

Like all members, I am devastated by the horrifying events that recently occurred in Belleville during the attack on the Sons of Jacob Synagogue. In other parts of the country, religious communities have also been victims of criminal acts. Examples include the recent stabbing of two men at the Nanaksar Gurdwara Gursikh Temple in Edmonton, the targeting of synagogues like the Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Westmount, and the vandalism of mosques and cultural centres that has prompted the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City to issue a public reminder of security measures.

These threats and violence do not, and never will, represent who we strive to be, and crimes committed against all religious communities must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. I say this to make clear that I believe the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek and I both share the same serious concern with crimes that are committed against religious communities, but as I indicated previously, I do not believe this bill would achieve its objective of offering greater protection.

To begin, mischief to property is already a criminal offence that can be committed in a number of ways, including by destroying or damaging property; rendering it dangerous, useless, inoperative or ineffective; and obstructing, interrupting or interfering with its lawful use, enjoyment or operation. While it therefore includes damage to property, the offence also captures broader conduct.

Bill C-255 would create a sentencing scheme that may not result in just sentences, in particular considering the different ways an offence of mischief can be committed. A core concern I have is that it would require all offenders convicted under the new offence to pay a minimum of $1,000 directly to the owner of the property targeted by the offence in all cases. While there will be cases where property damage by a mischief offence will exceed this amount, we can also think of cases of a very minor act of vandalism, for example, where the damage done to property could be much less than $1,000.

● (1750)

This bill would still require those mandatory payments, even if they were much greater than the amount of the damage. In addition, given that the existing mischief offence captures situations where property is also obstructed, the mandatory payment could also apply in cases where no property damage was done at all.

Considering all this, enacting an offence that would include as part of the sentence a mandatory financial payment directly to the victim that is not connected to the actual losses they suffer is not likely to result in just sentences.

This brings me to the second reason I cannot support the bill. Victims of crime can already be reimbursed by the offender for damage to property resulting from a criminal offence. The proposed penalties could create confusion with existing and long-standing sentencing approaches in the Criminal Code.

Again, I believe the sponsor and I agree that it is important for a criminal justice system to have a mechanism by which offenders can provide reparations for the harm they have done to victims of crime. However, I would add that this mechanism already exists in the Criminal Code. Under paragraph 738(1)(a) of the Criminal Code, a court is already able to require an offender to pay for damage they have done to property as a result of a criminal offence.

That said, the existing provision contains important limits that are not reflected in Bill C-255, specifically that the amount paid for damage to property cannot exceed the replacement value of the property. For example, the amount to be paid must be “readily ascertainable”. These limits link the restitution payments directly to the damage that an offender has created, resulting in a clear link between the conduct and the sentence imposed.

The bill would also create inconsistency and confusion with respect to the sentencing frameworks as between the existing mischief offences in the Criminal Code. It is not clear, for example, if the compensation payments under the bill would be intended to replace restitution for the damages suffered or if a compensation order would be intended to be imposed in addition to a restitution order in a given case. This could lead to confusion for courts and an inconsistent application of the law.

Further, the bill would create inconsistent approaches between various mischief offences. The mischief to religious property offence proposed by the bill would be subject to a unique kind of mandatory minimum payment to the property owner, while the mischief to religious property offence that already exists in the Criminal Code under subsection 430(4.1) would not be subject to a mandatory financial penalty at all. Police and prosecutors may be unsure of which offence to pursue in a given case, given the significant overlap between the two. New sentencing mechanisms and offences in the Criminal Code should be considered in the context of the overall law and its underlying principles.

I hope that my remarks today have shown why, though I share the sponsor's concern for this important issue, I do not believe that Bill C-255 offers the right solution. The mandatory payment this bill would create could risk being applied to situations that would not result in just outcomes and would not interact logically with the existing mischief offences in the Criminal Code.

● (1755)

Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to rise today to speak to the bill from my good friend, the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek. She has put forward a great piece of legislation.

A place of worship can be where a newcomer first feels at home in Canada. It can be where a family has gathered for generations, where neighbours find support through hardship, where a couple gets married, a child learns a tradition, or a family says goodbye to someone they love. As Conservative national outreach co-chair, I believe that understanding these connections is essential to the work we do. Understanding each other begins with listening, respecting people's traditions and taking their concerns seriously.

When someone damages a place of worship, the consequences reach beyond the building. People can begin to question whether they are safe and whether they truly belong. Our response must reinforce a clear promise: “You belong here, your freedom matters, and your safety deserves protection.”

That promise is why I rise today in support of Bill C-255, the proposed protecting Canada's places of worship act.

The freedom to worship must mean something in everyday life. It must mean that parents can bring their children to a religious service without scanning the parking lot for danger, that Canadians can practise their faith openly without fearing for their safety, and that congregations can gather without discovering broken windows, damaged doors or sacred objects covered in graffiti.

My colleague, the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, has brought forward the bill before us to strengthen accountability for people who commit mischief against religious property, and this deserves our support. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Canadians of every religious tradition deserve the same protection of the law. That protection cannot depend on whether we share someone's beliefs.

When Canadians raised concerns about attacks on their places of worship, the Liberals responded with Bill C-9, which does not provide enough protection and creates more uncertainty about religious freedoms. That is precisely why Bill C-255 is so important. It focuses on criminal conduct, victim compensation and meaningful consequences for repeat offenders. We should be holding criminals accountable for what they do to places of worship, not creating uncertainty about what Canadians can say inside of them.

These principles become especially important when we consider what happened at a synagogue in my own city of Saskatoon. On August 1, eggs were thrown at the Congregation Agudas Israel during a Sabbath service. Police later charged a man with mischief. The congregation's fear is real. Is this just kidding around in a mischievous way or is it an anti-Semitic hate crime aimed at Saskatoon Jews due to the animosity emboldened by Hamas's October 7 terrorist attacks?

This is more than just cleaning eggs off a building. They are worried about what might happen next. Would someone return with a brick? Would another person arrive with worse intentions? Parents should never have to ask these questions before bringing their children to worship. Jewish Canadians belong here. Their children belong here. Their institutions deserve protection.

The concern about safety extends to other congregations in Saskatoon, including a church in Fairhaven, in my riding of Saskatoon West. In May, police reported that a man had allegedly used an axe to strike an exterior gas line at Westside Pentecostal Church. Thankfully, the line was not severed, and nobody was injured. The police hate crime unit assisted, because the incident happened at a religious gathering place.

Let us just imagine the concern for families who attend that church. Imagine having to consider additional cameras or protective equipment because someone allegedly attacked the gas line to the building.

These two Saskatoon incidents differ in their circumstances and potential consequences. Each must be assessed on its own evidence. Both show how damage to religious property can shake a community's sense of safety. They also raise a practical question for Parliament: When an offence is proven, who should be responsible for the harm?

When someone vandalizes a place of worship, the congregation should not be left carrying the financial burden alone. Volunteers have to arrange repairs, deal with insurance and find the money. Donations intended for building maintenance or community activities may have to be redirected.

Bill C-255 would require someone convicted under its proposed religious property mischief offence to pay the property owner at least $1,000 in compensation. That recognizes a straightforward principle: If a person damages someone else's property, they should take responsibility for what they have done. The people paying for repairs are often the same people who gave their time and money to maintain the building in the first place. They did nothing wrong, yet they inherit the expense and all of the disruption. Compensation would help address that unfairness.

The bill would also establish additional consequences when an offender commits the offence again. Repeat offending requires a serious response. Under Bill C-255, a first offence, under the proposed provision, would require at least $1,000 in compensation to the property owner. For a second offence, that minimum compensation would be accompanied by at least 14 days in jail. For each subsequent offence, it would be at least $1,000 in compensation and at least 30 days in jail. These are proposed minimum penalties following conviction.

● (1800)

The approach recognizes that someone who repeatedly damages religious property must face additional consequences. Congregations deserve a justice system that takes their losses seriously and requires offenders to accept responsibility. Members can examine the details at committee and hear evidence about how these provisions would operate. As we do that work, we should remember what those losses include. A repair bill captures only part of what a congregation has experienced.

As a former home builder, I understand that repairing a building takes time, coordination and money. Someone has to secure the site, arrange the work, obtain materials and pay the people doing the repairs. A damaged entrance can disrupt access. A broken window can leave a building exposed. A sacred object may require specialized restoration. Even when the work is finished, people still may feel uneasy. A parent remembers discovering the damage. A volunteer wonders whether it will happen again. A senior feels anxious entering a building where they have worshipped for, potentially, decades.

This is why accountability matters. It tells the people affected that their losses count and that the law takes that offence seriously. The same respect must extend to other places that carry deep personal and religious meaning, including cemeteries, and the sacred objects that would be protected by the bill. Imagine visiting a loved one's grave and discovering that someone has vandalized it. A cemetery holds family histories, memories and the names of people who helped build our communities. People go there to grieve, to remember and to maintain a connection with someone they have lost. Damage to that place can reopen grief in a deeply personal way.

Religious objects can carry a similar significance. Their meaning may come from generations of devotion, far beyond their replacement value. Bill C-255 includes cemeteries and objects associated with religious worship within its proposed protection. That scope recognizes the people whose lives are connected to these places. Protecting them is consistent with a fundamental Canadian principle: People with different convictions should be able to live together peacefully. That requires us to defend the freedom of expression while holding people responsible when their actions damage the property of others.

Canadians must remain free to debate religion, question beliefs and express strong opinions. Those freedoms are essential. They do not give anyone special permission to smash a window, damage a sacred object or vandalize a place of worship. People can disagree strongly while respecting one another's rights. Bill C-255 would address mischief involving the religious property described in the legislation. Its proposed offence would not require proof that the damage was motivated by hatred. That matters because a congregation can experience real loss and real fear even when a hate motive has not been established.

Every case must be decided on its evidence. Our responsibility as legislators is to ensure that the law provides an appropriate response when guilt is proven. We now have a concrete proposal before us. The next step is to give it the serious examination that affected communities deserve. After a place of worship is vandalized, the headlines eventually move on, but the congregation is still there. Volunteers are still arranging repairs. Families are still asking whether they feel safe. Donations are still being used to cover the damage. Parliament must keep those people in mind.

My colleague has brought forward a proposal centred on compensation, responsibility and additional consequences for repeat offending. I will support sending Bill C-255 to committee so members can examine its provisions, hear evidence and consider its practical operation.

As the Conservative national outreach co-chair, I want every faith community to hear this very clearly. People do not have to share our politics to deserve our protection. They do not have to share our faith to deserve our respect. Let us stand with communities in Saskatoon and across Canada. Let us defend religious freedom consistently and hold offenders accountable for the harm they cause.

I am proud to stand with my colleague from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek and support this bill.

● (1805)

The Deputy Speaker: The right of reply goes to the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise to close the debate today and reply to all those members who have participated. I want to start by thanking each one for taking the time to weigh in on such an important issue. I would also like to reiterate a few points I made during the first hour of debate.

First, this is not a partisan issue, and I have been steadfast in ensuring that this bill was not used for partisan purposes. My sole purpose in introducing it was to provide additional tools to protect faith communities across Canada.

Second, the concern has been raised about the point that the bill contains a mandatory minimum sentence and would therefore be ruled unconstitutional by the courts. In my speech during the first hour of debate, I addressed this question, as I anticipated the issue would be raised. Bill C-16, which came into force this past summer, addresses the question of the legality of mandatory minimum sentences. It introduced a statutory exemption that would allow the courts to impose lighter sentences than the law states in exceptional circumstances. Personally, I believe the minimum penalties outlined in Bill C-255 are so modest that the need for a judge to use this authority would be rare.

However, regardless of whether such a scenario will ever occur, opposing the legislation because it contains modest mandatory minimum penalties is nullified by Bill C-16. I do hope this clarification will address the members' concerns about the sentences prescribed in Bill C-255.

Lastly, we heard from members of the governing party that the bill is redundant. Once again, I would assert that this is disingenuous and a mistaken view. I believe these objections were clearly addressed in my opening speech, which outlined the specific amendments being proposed to the Criminal Code of Canada. Simply put, the sections of the code that address mischief directed at places of worship currently require that police and prosecutors prove that the mischief was motivated by hate. Bill C-255 would eliminate that requirement. Let me repeat that. Bill C-255 would eliminate that requirement. As I noted, bias, prejudice and hate are difficult to prove. Having to prove these motivations is an unnecessary barrier for police and prosecutors when doing their work. This would be a significant change to what is currently contained in the Criminal Code.

In closing, I would like to remind the House why I chose this topic for a private member's bill. Mischief against property used by identifiable groups remains a serious, persistent and growing issue across Canada. In 2015, Statistics Canada reported 66 incidents. In 2025, there were 263. That is nearly a 300% increase in the past 10 years. This truly is a sad reflection on our society.

While the bill alone would not fix the problem, passing it would help to reinforce our commitment to mutual respect and tolerance and our fundamental freedoms here in Canada. I have been encouraged to hear from leaders of diverse faiths from across the country who support Bill C-255. I have heard from many individuals who support the bill. I was also pleased to receive strong support from the Canadian Police Association.

Every member who introduces a private member's bill hopes that his or her colleagues will support it. I admit I was disappointed to hear the speeches from some members who are simply looking for a reason to vote against the bill. I am not looking for a political win for the Conservative caucus or for myself. I am hoping for a win for the Canada we know and love, where individuals from every faith feel secure and safe as they meet for worship.

● (1810)

The Deputy Speaker: 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 participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 2, 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*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pursuing a question that I originally asked on September 25. It is rare that I ask a question where the answer does not even fall in the ballpark of the question itself. I will not dwell on the answer because it was not responsive to the question. I will repeat the question and hope that, this evening, whoever is being put forward to answer my question will get at least in the ballpark of the topic.

We just had the Prime Minister's summit in Toronto, the investment summit, which was proclaimed a success because investors showed up. I had a sense of déjà vu. I had been at COP26, in 2022, when the United Nations special envoy on climate action and finance, our current Prime Minister, announced something grand. I was on my feet applauding.

It was called the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero. Similar to the Toronto investment summit, our Prime Minister has an impressive Rolodex of friends and former work colleagues, an impressive network of investment bankers and so on. The Prime Minister, then not our Prime Minister, announced at the Glasgow COP26 that he had created the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero. It even had the unfortunate acronym of GFANS and it was just a roster: BlackRock, Brookfield, Goldman Sachs, the world's big banks and big investment firms.

The Prime Minister announced that he had accumulated a total of $128 trillion available for the transition off fossil fuels. As members can imagine, the red carpet was rolled out and champagne was flowing. People thought that this was going to be enough money not only to deal with the climate crisis but to help the poorest of the poor with losses and damages from the impact.

It took some time for it to sink in, of course. These firms are not charities. They have investment dollars and they want a return on investment. The entire thing had a website. It had a board of directors. It looked like the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero. The only thing that was net zero about this enterprise was the money that flowed to any clean energy project or anything to do with climate change. In fact, it was a bust. Despite the razzle-dazzle announcements of $128 trillion of investment funds assembled by the special envoy for António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, it actually came to nothing.

My question on that day, on September 25, in question period, was the following: How would the investments promised at the recent Toronto summit differ from the Glasgow promises assembled by the same person with the same goals of an astonishingly shock-and-awe announcement of enormous amounts of funds available for Canada's economy? Will they materialize or is this another update on GFANS?

In other words, it is potentially another bust. That is the question I asked. I would like an answer to that question.

● (1815)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I attempt to answer the question, I just wanted to pay a compliment to the member from the Green Party. She said something that really stuck with me when she talked about the loan that was given to Brazil. When we think about that loan, we realize it is important for us to contribute to the world. What stuck with me was when the member mentioned that the Brazilian rainforest is the lungs of the world.

I think it gives a sense of a being very strong environmentalist, recognizing that we have to think outside Canadian borders. I know that my daughter, who is a local MLA, is probably a whole lot more sensitive on environmental issues than I am, but I am trying to improve, and I did appreciate the member's comment on that.

Two things come to mind right away. One is the net-zero legislation on emissions. I believe it was in 2020, maybe in 2021. The member probably knows when it was. There were some targets set to get to net zero by 2050. I realize she asked the question and I am providing the answers, but I am interested in her thoughts on that particular issue and whether she does believe the target is still achievable.

Having said that, I do believe that today's Prime Minister and the prime minister then, under COP26, are committed to the environment. I do not say that lightly. She made reference to unbelievable amounts of money at the COP26 conference and just recently in Toronto. That is why I appreciate the fact that she is making reference to the Toronto investments. Again, we heard of unbelievable, unheard of amounts of money that are being discussed. We are talking about a half-trillion dollars.

I think the critical thing is to recognize that we can in fact support and invest in economic development while at the same time being sensitive and respecting our environment. That is why I asked the question about the member's thoughts on the 2050 net-zero targets. I am actually trying to be genuine in making these comments. I look at plans being put into place. Earlier this year, there was comprehensive mapping for an environmental plan that was put in, a collection of information, working collaboratively with other levels of government and indigenous people. I know the member has some reservations in regard to that indigenous component.

That aside, it seems to me that there are other political entities fostering these developments. I am referring to other progressives, such as the NDP government in B.C. and the NDP government in Manitoba, that are fostering these developments, for example, LNG in the member's home province. I know she has real concerns about that, but there are progressive-minded people who seem to be of the opinion that it would still be okay to move ahead on that, so I am wondering if she could provide some clarity on that issue.

As for my providing clarity on the member's issue, I like to believe the Prime Minister is very much concerned about environment and the economic development of our nation.

● (1820)

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, as much as I enjoyed the remarks from our hon. friend, the parliamentary secretary, he also failed to get into the ballpark of the question that was asked, which was, why should we believe the financial investment summit in Toronto will provide any more investment than the Glasgow financial alliance for net zero?

However, while I am at it, I will answer his question. I did not vote for Bill C-12, as it then was, the climate accountability act, in 2020, because it was flim-flam. It was nonsense, because it was premised on net zero by 2050, which was not part of the Paris Agreement. It in fact takes us so far beyond a livable world that it is fraud.

I do not think that net zero by 2050 is in reach, because the point is that we have to achieve the targets that are legally binding, which are by 2030, which was a Harper target, and 2035. We are nowhere near achieving our legally binding commitments on climate.

No, I do not believe the Prime Minister anymore.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, when I think of Toronto and the types of investments the government is hoping for, they are, in good part, based on major projects, many of which I would ultimately argue will, in fact, be clean projects and friendly to our environment. I would like to see, for example, an expansion of our electrical grids and hydro development. There could be some debate coming from the member with respect to nuclear energy, but I think we need to move toward it in a way that Canada can contribute. I use the example of the Philippines, where there is a serious energy issue and the government is moving ahead on nuclear power.

I am already running out of time. I would have appreciated a few more minutes to go on.

ETHICS

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a cloud of conflict, corruption and self-dealing surrounding the Prime Minister and his cronies.

Under his government, Brookfield has benefited from billions of tax dollars. Canadians are expected to believe that it is just a coincidence that he stands to make tens of millions of dollars from Brookfield in the way of future bonus pay and stock options.

Then there is the $5-billion strategic partnership and the $2.3-billion contract with Telesat, whose CEO just happens to be a close personal friend of the Prime Minister. I suppose that is just another coincidence.

Here is another supposed coincidence for members. There was $2.2 million in tax dollars that was handed to a company whose CEO just happens to be the brother of one of the Prime Minister's besties, the Minister of Artificial Intelligence.

Then there was $1.6 billion in tax dollars funnelled to Cohere, another company with close ties to the Prime Minister.

On and on it goes, the conflict, the corruption and the self-dealing.

To top it off, we have the most conflicted Prime Minister in Canadian history who is hiding potential conflicts of interest from Canadians. He and his personal department, the PCO, are refusing to turn over records to the ethics committee regarding the administration of his so-called ethics screen. More specifically, he is refusing to turn over records that document instances where potential conflicts of interest involving him were flagged by officials. However, he proceeded to make a decision, or decisions, where he may have had a conflict of interest.

Canadians deserve transparency. They deserve to know that the Prime Minister is not making decisions where he has a conflict of interest. If the ethics screen is working, which no one believes, and if he is in fact not making decisions where he has a conflict of interest, which no one believes, then what exactly is he hiding? Why will he not turn over the records to the ethics committee?

● (1825)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would go back to 2014, when Justin Trudeau was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. Instantly, we started to see the Conservatives in government criticize the person of Justin Trudeau, not the policies that he was talking about, but the person he was. There were all sorts of allegations.

Then the Liberals formed government, and it amplified. All the Conservatives wanted to do was assassinate the character of Justin Trudeau. Everything was a conflict of interest. Corruption was rampant. They just did not let up. They focused their attention on personalities.

Fast-forward to today, and I do not know how many times we hear about many issues, concerns, conspiracy theories and speculations. If the Prime Minister goes to a grocery store and buys something, Conservatives will say that he got that from a friend, and this and this, and, oh my God, it is a conspiracy, and the Prime Minister should resign. It is becoming crazy, the way the Conservative Party, day in and day out, tries to paint this huge conspiracy.

Our Prime Minister has abided by the conflict of interest rules, which were actually put in place by Stephen Harper. I believe the member who posed that question was working for Stephen Harper back when they put in the rules. We abide by the rules. They are focusing so much attention on looking under all those little pebbles and rocks. It is incredible; we should do a word count of the times members on the opposite side talk about corruption and conflict of interest. It is truly amazing.

Just because they say it does not make it true. The Conservatives can continue doing that, but what is important is how the government reacts. I believe the government continues to be focused on the issue of building that stronger economy, on ways we can expand the economy through things like trade beyond the Canada-U.S.A. border, and on ways we can invest in small and medium-sized businesses and the like to encourage them to grow, so they can meet things like exporting.

By doing that, we are adding more value and more jobs to the economy. Building a stronger economy allows us to provide more opportunities, in terms of issues like health care and other affordability issues. We need to look at the larger picture out there. Canadians want to see us working more collaboratively.

It is time to take off the tin hats and start looking at being a little bit more constructive in opposition. It does not mean they have to agree with everything the government does. They could come up with the odd idea. If there are good ideas, as the Prime Minister has demonstrated, we will look at and pass them. We have actually passed private members' bills coming from opposition members, because we recognized that they were good. Opposition members all have an opportunity to provide good ideas. Maybe they could focus a little less on mischievous conspiracies of corruption and so forth. A little more work on helping Canadians would be good.

● (1830)

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, here are some basic facts. Upon the Prime Minister taking office, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner identified 500 conflicts involving the Prime Minister, 100 or more of which involved Brookfield.

The Ethics Commissioner ordered the Prime Minister to set up an ethics screen, because he is the most conflicted Prime Minister in Canadian history. The Prime Minister and his department claim that for the purpose of transparency, they have documented each time conflicts of interest are identified, and yet there has been zero transparency when it comes to releasing those records, specifically those records in which conflicts of interest were identified but the Prime Minister made a decision anyway.

If the ethics screen is working and if Canadians are to have confidence that the Prime Minister is not making decisions where he has a conflict of interest, again, why not release those records?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will take anything and try to twist it into a conflict of interest. I am quite serious about that. If I really wanted to, I could talk about conflicts of interest and corruption in the Stephen Harper era. There was a piece published that was entitled “Harper, Serial Abuser of Power: The Evidence Compiled”, about a huge number of conflicts of interest and corruption.

At the end of the day, as I say, we serve Canadians better with a little less attention on character assassination and more attention on public policy. If someone has good ideas, let us talk about those ideas. Let us look at what the government is actually doing, as opposed to purely twisting things.

There must be a half-dozen or more members in the Conservative caucus who try only to investigate how they can twist things. They are doing all sorts of backflips trying to find something and trying to make a connection somehow, because they have to use the word "corruption" that day. All we have to do is follow what takes place in question period and we get a very good sense of it.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today on behalf of the people of Edmonton Strathcona.

I am going to start with some statistics. I am going to tell members what the potential cost to Alberta families is if the Meta data centre goes forward: $267 to $462 per person of additional annual household electricity costs from Meta's proposed Alberta data centre. This was outlined by a study by the Pembina Institute, which also said that the annual electricity demand of Meta, 1,800 megawatts of data in Sturgeon county, would be more than the electricity demand of the entire city of Calgary. Ninety-three per cent of that will be coming from fossil fuel energy, and 7% from other types.

I also want to tell members a little about some of the scenarios put forward. A new gas plant associated with Meta's Alberta data centre will use 300 million tonnes of emissions. That is the equivalent of 652,000 cars. For the announced fossil fuel data centre power projects across Canada and the U.S., if those are built, that would be 160 million tonnes. That is equivalent to 34.8 million cars.

I start with these numbers because we need to take a pause. I think we need to think about the way we are moving forward in this country. On November 5, I asked the government a very simple question: Would it guarantee that Canadian families already struggling with the cost of living, the families that already cannot afford to pay their bills, rent and grocery bills, would not pay higher electricity bills to subsidize American tech giants?

The minister's response was poor. His response was not to worry, that it was fine and that they have got this, but for people in my constituency of Edmonton Strathcona and for people across Alberta, I feel obliged to stand up and say that is not good enough. People are, rightly, worried. They are worried about the use of water and electricity and the impacts that will have on their life. The people of Sturgeon county deserve to know that their rights will be protected.

Here is something even more shocking, which I learned just recently: The data centre is going to be built by PCL and other construction companies that often use CLAC and other company unions to do their building. We do not even have the guarantee that these massive data centres, which will increase the cost of electricity for Canadians and will use the fresh water that Albertans so rightly are dependent on and concerned about, are not even going to use good unionized labour to build these data centres.

● (1835)

Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for her question, and I want her to know that many of the concerns she has raised are concerns that have been raised by my constituents and many others. It is important, at the outset, that I say to her and her constituents, as I say to my own, that our government agrees that ratepayers, everyday Canadians, should not bear the cost on their electrical bills for data centres. On that we agree, and we are all very clear.

The member opposite also knows that AI is transforming economies and our lives in countless ways, many for good and many for ill. Countries around the world are working to ensure that their businesses, researchers and workers can access the computing capacity they need to be able to develop and deploy these technologies, but how we develop these resources and what we do to make sure they are built in a way that Canadians can be proud of is critical. That is why our government is working with the jurisdictions that are responsible, municipalities and provinces, to make sure that responsible development of these things is how we move forward.

It is because we recognize the importance of the issue and of the concerns that members opposite and others have raised, including on our side of the House, that our government established clear principles for how data centres should be developed. We worked with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, with 2,000 municipalities across the country signing on to those principles.

The principles are clear. They state that projects must avoid shifting electricity costs onto families, that they minimize water use and environmental impact, that they create lasting local benefit, that they be transparent and that they bring benefit to Canada. These principles provide local communities with clear, nationally recognized baselines by which to address these projects. We have worked with industry to make sure they also support these proposals. To date, 45 companies and organizations from across technology, infrastructure and energy have committed to these principles. These principles emphasize that projects that should be developed responsibly, that local interests are taken into account, and that Canadians actually see the benefit from these investments.

We know that data centres are getting built. The question is how we build them, which is going to be our legacy. This is why it is important for us to work across levels of government and across sectors to ensure that those protections, those requirements that have been laid out, those regulations and these principles we have put forward are adhered to. They are in the best interest not just of Canadians, but they are also in the best interest of the private sector, municipalities, provinces and, of course, all of us.

We have to recognize the importance of ensuring that the new infrastructure we are building in this country supports our long-term economic and technological interests. Our economic growth and responsible stewardship, however, have to go hand in hand. We believe fundamentally that Canadians can and should have both.

Our approach is guided by a broader objective, which is ensuring that Canadians and Canada have access to sovereign AI infrastructure. Our researchers, our entrepreneurs and our businesses are demanding this of us. They need access to this advanced computing capability located in Canada so that they can remain globally competitive and can drive innovation here at home.

We run a tremendous risk. If we are not able to provide these resources in a responsible way to Canadian researchers and Canadian businesses, they will move. The cost of their moving, to our economy, to our futures, is one that we should not have to bear, because we have the ability right now in this country to make sure that we are building a responsible infrastructure in a responsible way, and that is what we are going to do in partnership with municipalities and provinces.

● (1840)

Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, the member will forgive me for questioning whether or not we can actually trust the Liberal promises on this, because they have broken promise after promise when it comes to protecting the environment, protecting our water rights and protecting the rights of workers in this country. Bill C-39 is a perfect example of that.

The member talks about the principles that have been published on data centre development. I have some very quick questions. On binding protections against higher electricity costs for Canadians, will the government commit to that? On comprehensive assessments of water use and greenhouse gas emissions, will the government commit to that? On full disclosure of public subsidies and enforceable community benefit agreements, will the government agree to that? On making federal financial support conditional on meeting these requirements, will the government agree to that?

Canadians deserve to know these answers. Principles are not enough.

Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member that, in her home province of Alberta, there are municipalities and a provincial government to whom she should be addressing many of these questions.

We are working proactively to lay out principles and guidelines in partnership with the 2,000 municipalities who have agreed. They are responsible for making sure these things get built in the right way. They are the ones with the enforcement mechanisms. They are the ones with the levers when it comes to permitting.

I would encourage the member opposite to speak to those municipal governments in her home province who have signed on to explain to her why it is they have undertaken this responsibility, why they have chosen to adhere to these principles and why they see this as being important for their communities. If they have made those investments and that personal commitment to doing this, I am certain, and I am hopeful certainly, that she will see benefit in this work.

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

(The House adjourned at 6:43 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, November 26, 2026

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Budget 2026 Implementation Act, No. 1

MacKinnon (for the Minister of Finance and National Revenue) ... 11967
Bill C-43. Introduction and first reading ... 11967
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) ... 11967

Committees of the House

Exercise of Powers Under the Building Canada Act

Allison ... 11967
Stubbs ... 11967
Bonin ... 11968

Petitions

Salmon Fishery

Johns ... 11968

The Environment

Blanchette-Joncas ... 11968

Shen Yun

Chagger ... 11968

Ukraine

Chagger ... 11968

United States Ambassador to Canada

May ... 11969

Questions on the Order Paper

Lamoureux ... 11969

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Budget 2025 Implementation Act, No. 2

The Speaker ... 11969
Michel (for the Minister of Finance and National Revenue) ... 11969
Bill C-31. Third reading ... 11969
Lavoie ... 11970
Viersen ... 11971
Gaudreau ... 11971
Lamoureux ... 11971
Johns ... 11972
Viersen ... 11972
Lamoureux ... 11972
Bezan ... 11973
Amendment ... 11975
Lamoureux ... 11975
Gaudreau ... 11975
McCauley ... 11976
May ... 11976
Duclos ... 11976
Johns ... 11976
Garon ... 11977
Duclos ... 11979
McCauley ... 11980
Thériault ... 11980
May ... 11980
Deschênes-Thériault ... 11981
Lamoureux ... 11981
Lewis (Essex) ... 11984
Thériault ... 11984
Duclos ... 11984
Johns ... 11985
McCauley ... 11985
McCauley ... 11985
Gladu ... 11987
Gaudreau ... 11987
Patzer ... 11987
Lamoureux ... 11988
McLean (Calgary Centre) ... 11988
Gladu ... 11989
Bonin ... 11989
May ... 11990
Deschênes-Thériault ... 11990
Viersen ... 11993
Gaudreau ... 11993
Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles) ... 11994
Johns ... 11994
Lamoureux ... 11995
Brassard ... 11995
Lamoureux ... 11996
Thériault ... 11997
Moore ... 11997
Moore ... 11997
Schiefke ... 11998
Gaudreau ... 11998
Morrison ... 11999
Duclos ... 11999

Privilege

Ability of Member to Represent Constituents

Kwan ... 12001

Budget 2025 Implementation Act, No. 2

Bill C-31. Third reading ... 12001
McCauley ... 12001
Duclos ... 12001
Bonin ... 12002
Dancho ... 12002
Petitpas Taylor ... 12002
Johns ... 12002
Lamoureux ... 12003
Genuis ... 12003

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Steel Industry
Rana ... 12003

Tyrone Magbitang
Kirkland ... 12003

Lung Cancer Awareness Month
Chang ... 12003

Employment
Allison ... 12004

Bol d'or
Desrochers ... 12004

Canadian Cadet Program
Lloyd ... 12004

National Hockey League
Khalid ... 12004

Melissa Borthwick
Doherty ... 12005

Oath to the People
Barsalou-Duval ... 12005

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
Al Soud ... 12005

Holodomor
Bezan ... 12005

Equal Voice Anniversary Gala
Nguyen ... 12006

Public Services and Procurement
Gallant ... 12006

World AIDS Day
Powlowski ... 12006

Public Services and Procurement
Melillo ... 12006

Movember
Oliphant ... 12006

ORAL QUESTIONS

Public Services and Procurement
Hardy ... 12007
Joly ... 12007
Hardy ... 12007
McKnight ... 12007

Government Appointments
Brassard ... 12007
Thompson ... 12007
Brassard ... 12007
Thompson ... 12008

Public Services and Procurement
Gunn ... 12008
MacKinnon ... 12008
Gunn ... 12008
MacKinnon ... 12008

Rail Transportation
Normandin ... 12008
MacKinnon ... 12008
Normandin ... 12008
MacKinnon ... 12008
Garon ... 12009
MacKinnon ... 12009
Kramp-Neuman ... 12009
MacKinnon ... 12009
Kramp-Neuman ... 12009
MacKinnon ... 12009

Public Services and Procurement
Lawton ... 12009
Zerucelli ... 12009
Lawton ... 12009
Noormohamed ... 12010
Patzer ... 12010
Hogan ... 12010

Fisheries and Oceans
Small ... 12010
Thompson ... 12010
Small ... 12010
Thompson ... 12010

The Environment
Ste-Marie ... 12011
Dabrusin ... 12011
Ste-Marie ... 12011
Dabrusin ... 12011

Rail Transportation
Groleau ... 12011
Gobeil ... 12011

Public Services and Procurement
Groleau ... 12011
MacKinnon ... 12011

Carbon Pricing
Guglielmin ... 12011
Joly ... 12012
Guglielmin ... 12012
Joly ... 12012
Chambers ... 12012
Joly ... 12012

Transportation
Martin ... 12012
MacKinnon ... 12012

Public Safety
Lantsman ... 12012
Anandasangaree ... 12013
Lantsman ... 12013
Anandasangaree ... 12013

Justice
Baber ... 12013
Sahota ... 12013
Baber ... 12013
Sahota ... 12013
Kirkland ... 12013
Lattanzio ... 12013
Caputo ... 12014
Lattanzio ... 12014
Caputo ... 12014
Provost ... 12014
Godin ... 12014
Lattanzio ... 12014
Godin ... 12014
Lattanzio ... 12014

National Defence
Ntumba ... 12014
McGuinty ... 12014

Public Safety
Roberts ... 12015
Anandasangaree ... 12015
Albas ... 12015
MacKinnon ... 12015
Albas ... 12015
Anandasangaree ... 12015

Foreign Affairs
Zuberi ... 12015
Anand ... 12015

Oil and Gas Industry
Zimmer ... 12016
Chartrand ... 12016

Foreign Affairs
McPherson ... 12016
Anand ... 12016

Parks Canada
Johns ... 12016
Dabrusin ... 12016

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canadian Space Launch Act
Bill C-28. Second reading ... 12016
Motion agreed to ... 12018
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) ... 12018

Business of the House
Warkentin ... 12018
Kayabaga ... 12018

Budget 2025 Implementation Act, No. 2
Bill C-31. Third reading ... 12018
Majumdar ... 12018
Hogan ... 12020
Beaulieu ... 12020
Aitchison ... 12021
Lapointe (Sudbury) ... 12023
Garon ... 12023
Lantsman ... 12023
Johns ... 12023
Long ... 12024
Steinley ... 12024
Blois ... 12024
The Speaker ... 12024
Gerretsen ... 12024
Viersen ... 12025
Larouche ... 12026
Lamoureux ... 12026
Sari ... 12026
Viersen ... 12028
Garon ... 12028
Deschênes-Thériault ... 12028
Viersen ... 12028
Lamoureux ... 12030
Beaulieu ... 12030
Lewis (Essex) ... 12030
May ... 12030
Anderson ... 12030
Lamoureux ... 12032
Larouche ... 12032
Kelly ... 12032
Stevenson ... 12033
Lamoureux ... 12034
Beaulieu ... 12035
Konanz ... 12035
May ... 12035
Division on amendment deferred ... 12036

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Criminal Code
Bill C-255. Second reading ... 12036
Champoux ... 12036
Lantsman ... 12038
Fortier ... 12039
Redekopp ... 12040
Block ... 12042
Division on motion deferred ... 12043

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Climate Change
May ... 12043
Lamoureux ... 12044

Ethics
Cooper ... 12044
Lamoureux ... 12045

Artificial Intelligence
McPherson ... 12046
Noormohamed ... 12046

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