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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga will be leading us in the singing of *O Canada* today.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### HOUSING

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is in a national housing emergency. Rents are skyrocketing, home ownership is slipping out of reach and encampments are growing in every city. This did not happen by accident, and it is not inevitable; it is the result of a government that has failed to act with the urgency and the scale that this crisis demands.

Housing is a human right. We need public builders, real investment in non-profit and co-op housing, strong tenant protections, indigenous housing led by indigenous communities and homes people can actually afford.

The Liberals do not get it. Their budget offers only half of what the Prime Minister promised during the election, and they are delivering only a fraction of the of the half-million homes they promised. Canadians need real leadership, someone who will declare a national housing emergency to mobilize resources, to protect renters and to measure success by homes built and lives changed.

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### VI RODEN

**Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the extraordinary life of Vi Roden, who recently passed away at the age of 102. A World War II veteran, mother, friend and tireless community activist, Vi believed that if we see injustice, we must act, and she lived by that principle.

In 1978, after learning of abuses in the women's prison system, she famously phoned the Attorney General at home and made it clear that she would go to the press if action was not taken. He called back and listened, and a royal commission was launched, leading to meaningful reform.

In 1980 Vi raised the funds to establish British Columbia's first counselling centre for sexually abused children. That initiative grew into Act 2 Child and Family Services, which is now a \$25.5-million non-profit serving Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Even in her later years, Vi never slowed down. At the age of 101, she volunteered during the federal election campaign, as she had throughout her life, making hundreds of calls because she believed participation mattered.

The world needs more people like Vi Roden. May we honour her life by carrying her compassion forward.

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### WHARVES IN PORT COLBORNE

**Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the government is really serious about building faster, it should start with opportunities already in front of it. I have one that is truly shovel-ready: restoring wharves 17 and 18 on the Welland Canal in Port Colborne.

For more than 20 years this critical infrastructure has sat broken. During that time the City of Port Colborne, shipping companies, port authorities and private investors have all been ready to move, but they are still waiting on the St. Lawrence Seaway and Transport Canada to act. Federal funding has already been partially committed. The Liberals talked a good story for over 10 years on this project but failed to hit the finish line. In the meantime, we are waiting.

Every year of delay costs us real economic opportunity. Restoring the wharves could create well-paying local jobs, strengthen domestic supply chains and position Port Colborne as a strategic industrial hub while helping protect Canada's economic sovereignty. This project is shovel-ready, the partners are ready and the benefits are clear. It is time to pull the trigger and get the job done.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**ANDRÉ PROVENCHER**

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on January 1, my friend and canoeing and camping buddy, André Provencher, left us far too soon after a courageous battle with cancer. Mr. Provencher was passionate about local news and a staunch defender of Quebec culture and he held executive positions at TVA, Télé-Québec and Cogeco.

He also launched *La Presse Télé*, which produced popular television series such as *Les Parent*, *Les chefs!* and *En direct de l'univers*. He led the digital transformation of the daily newspapers *Le Nouvelliste* and *Le Soleil*, and he oversaw the creation of the Fonds Capital Culture Québec.

Passionate, honest and loyal in friendship and in business, André knew how to spot people with talent and help them to succeed. On behalf of all members of the House, I want to offer our deepest condolences to his wife, Rachel, and his sons, Paul, Bruno and François.

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[English]

**FINANCE**

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago the government campaigned on a promise to “run modest...deficits of less than \$10 billion...to fund historic investments in infrastructure” and then let the budget balance itself. For 10 years the Liberals ran increasing deficits, failed to build the infrastructure, ignored their promise and claimed that all that really mattered was declining debt to GDP. In 2024, the then finance minister said that the then \$42-billion deficit was a line she would not cross, but then she crossed the line and resigned when the deficit hit \$60 billion.

Last year the Prime Minister ran as the guy who would finally rein in spending, reduce debt to GDP and build at speeds not seen in decades. Today the deficit is \$80 billion, debt to GDP ratio is rising and nothing is being built. Canada's economy is under attack, and Canadians need their government to succeed, but a strong, sovereign, self-reliant and fiscally sustainable Canada cannot be built out of recycled, broken Liberal promises.

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[Translation]

**CANADA'S ECONOMY**

**Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Parliament resumes, Canada is facing a new reality. The challenges ahead of us are clear: a world marked by a breakdown in the international order and economic pressures affecting our families, workers and businesses.

To deal with this change, our government is choosing to act, not simply endure. We are strengthening Canada domestically by supporting our businesses and securing our supply chains. We are building a more resilient economy that is focused on innovation, energy and diverse trading partners. A strong economy is critical to our sovereignty, our security and our ability to defend our values in an increasingly unstable world.

In this new year, we encourage all parliamentarians to work together constructively. Canadians expect us to be united and focused on the national interest.

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[English]

**OXFORD**

**Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, despite our differences, one truth still unites Canadians: the strength, resilience and the talent of our people. Oxford is home to many of these superstars. From the hallways of Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute, astronaut Jeremy Hansen is reaching beyond the stars as he looks to make history as the first Canadian to go to the moon. Ingersoll's Ella Shelton will be representing Team Canada as part of the women's hockey team at the Olympics in Italy.

For them it is more than just a milestone; it is more than just a personal celebration. It is about reflecting on our community and what we stand for. We work hard. We stand strong. We help one another. We innovate. We lead, and we create opportunities for others to succeed.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Jeremy and Ella every success in the exciting weeks ahead because we are proud of Canada, and the best is yet to come.

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● (1410)

**ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS MONTH**

**Leslie Church (Toronto—St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for many families across Canada, Alzheimer's is not an abstract illness; it is a daily reality, lived in small moments and carried by loved ones who show up with patience and care. January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month, a time to wear the forget-me-not as a symbol of hope, and a time to recognize the more than 750,000 Canadians living with dementia and the millions of family members and caregivers who walk alongside them every day. Alzheimer's affects far more than memory; it touches relationships, independence and dignity.

I want to praise the vital work of the Alzheimer's societies across Canada that provide support, education and advocacy for people living with dementia and for those who care for them. As our population ages, this issue will touch more families. This is why awareness, research and compassionate care matter now more than ever.

To everyone living with Alzheimer's and to the caregivers and advocates beside them, I say that we see them, we value them and we will keep working to support them.

### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Beijing's foreign interference is the biggest threat to the security of Canada; that is what the Prime Minister told Canadians last spring. Less than a year later, the Prime Minister has entered into a so-called strategic partnership with Beijing, yet we still have no foreign influence transparency registry.

When the bill was being debated, the government said it hoped to have the registry up and running in 12 months, ahead of a federal election. It is now 19 months and one election later, and there is still no registry. Another election could pass without the protection of a registry. One wonders if the government delayed the registry until now to avoid offending Beijing's leadership, and for the same reason Liberal MPs were told recently to cut short their trip to Taiwan.

Canadians deserve a government that treats foreign interference seriously as a threat to our national security. The government needs to implement the foreign influence transparency registry now.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### HENRI DORION

**Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a great wordsmith has left us. Although his work may not appear in any collections, it echoes throughout our land.

Henri Dorion was a geographer, toponymist, professor, diplomat and architect of the Quiet Revolution. As the first president of the Commission de toponymie du Québec, he recorded and standardized place names throughout Quebec. He chaired the Commission d'étude sur l'intégrité du territoire du Québec, the first major effort to define our borders in detail, a task that remains unfinished to this day.

Henri Dorion made a name for himself internationally as Quebec's delegate to Mexico, Russia and Ukraine, and as the chair of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to offer my condolences to his four daughters and all his loved ones. His memory will live on throughout our vast homeland.

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[English]

### CANADIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATO

**Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, I was in New York when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center. I saw the bravery and solidarity and shared the anguish first-hand. As a Canadian, I was incredibly proud of how we rose to the occasion to support our closest friend and ally. From the hospitality showed by the people of Gander to fundraising campaigns to support the victims, to our government being the first one to suggest that NATO invoke article 5, we were there for the United States. As we have for generations, our troops bravely fought side by side with Americans in Afghanistan. More than 40,000 Canadians served in the conflict; 158 of our soldiers died, and over 2,000 were injured.

### Statements by Members

I know members of this place will want to join me in extending our deepest respect and gratitude to the men and women who served. Canadians will never forget their sacrifice. Our American friends should not forget it either.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

### THE ECONOMY

**Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, announcements are easy. One can organize a press conference and tell the hungry crowd of reporters all the great things one is going to do. Getting things done requires work. Were the Liberal government to be judged by its announcements, the country would be riding a 10-year wave of success. Sadly, this is not so. For announcements to translate to results, economic activity and paycheques for Canadians, something has to be delivered. Over 10 years of not delivering has left Canada as the economic laggard of the developed world.

Conservatives worked with the government to amend and pass Bill C-5, giving the Prime Minister incredible powers to approve projects quickly. What are the outcomes? No projects have been approved, and they have not removed a single regulatory barrier. This smoke-and-mirrors show must end, and action must begin. We have introduced a motion to pass the Canadian sovereignty act. Will the government work with us and agree to support our motion to repeal the federal industrial carbon tax and the oil tanker moratorium act?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### ARTEMIS II

**Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, next week, Canada will write a new chapter in our space history with the Artemis II mission. For the first time in over 50 years, humans will leave the earth's orbit and head for the moon. This is an important moment, not only for science, but for Canadians and all of humanity.

[English]

For Canada, Artemis II represents the next great chapter in Canadian space exploration. Following in the footsteps of great Canadians like the late Marc Garneau, Roberta Bondar, Chris Hadfield, David Saint-Jacques and so many more, and built on the unprecedented collaboration between NASA and Canadian space engineers and scientists, Colonel Jeremy Hansen will break barriers by becoming the first Canadian, and the first non-American, to travel around our moon.

On behalf of all members of the House and all Canadians, I wish Colonel Hansen and the Artemis II crew a safe journey and a successful mission. They carry the pride of everyone in the House and all Canadians with them. Godspeed.

*Oral Questions***SASKATCHEWAN FARMLAND**

**Jeremy Patzer (Swift Current—Grasslands—Kindersley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has the highest food price inflation in the G7. That is the Liberal record on full display for the whole world to see. Instead of fixing it, the Prime Minister raises taxes on fertilizer, manufacturing and transportation, all of which lead to higher food prices. Reversing Liberal policies that punish Canadian agriculture would be a good start, but we could also grow even more food here at home.

Saskatchewan is already the breadbasket of the world, but there is still room for us to grow and expand the available farmland. Right now, there are shovel-ready irrigation projects waiting for approvals, like the ones around Lake Diefenbaker. The Westside irrigation rehabilitation project alone would open up 100,000 acres of irrigated land to grow more food and specialty crops. Studies show this project will add \$13 billion to our GDP, create 80,000 jobs and generate over \$1 billion in tax revenue.

The Liberals have so much to learn from rural Canada. This is one of many promising and resourceful projects we want to build in Saskatchewan. All the government needs to do is let our farmers and industry do what they have always done best and lead the way forward.

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[Translation]

**59TH QUEBEC GAMES**

**Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, my colleague and I would like to highlight the exceptional work done by the organizing committee for the 59th Quebec Games, which took place last summer in Trois-Rivières and brought together more than 3,500 young athletes from across Quebec.

The committee's goal was to raise \$100,000 to donate to Excellence sportive Mauricie, but thanks to the committee's efforts and the private sector's commitment, a total of \$350,000 was raised for that organization, which supports talented athletes in their development. The games also generated nearly \$29 million in economic spinoffs for the Mauricie region, an achievement that earned the organization the regional award of excellence.

I especially want to point out that none of this would have been possible without the dedication of the 2,318 volunteers who were central to the games' extraordinary success. I would like to recognize François Parent and Caroline Poulin, who won the outstanding volunteer team award at the most recent sports awards gala.

In closing, I wish Blainville every success and challenge the organization to do even better for the benefit of our young athletes across Quebec.

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[English]

**NATION-BUILDING PROJECTS**

**Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives supported the passage of Bill C-5, which gave the Prime Minister extraordinary authority to approve nation-building projects fast.

The Prime Minister claimed that with these powers, the government would unleash our economic potential. He claimed that we would build at speeds not seen in generations. Sadly, the Prime Minister's promises are not reflected in reality. Canadians in the mining sector, the oil and gas sector and other sectors tell me the Liberal government has not lifted a finger to make it easier to get permits and build projects.

That is why Conservatives are calling for the passage of the Canadian sovereignty act, which would remove the barriers and cut the red tape that is stopping these projects. We want the Prime Minister to live up to his promises. Conservatives are giving him the tools to get the job done. Why is he not using them? The Prime Minister has no excuse. The time for fancy rhetoric is over. The time for action is now.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

**CANADA-IRELAND 180**

**James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the close and growing relationship between Ireland and Canada. Today, the Irish Minister for Culture, Communications and Sport, Patrick O'Donovan, and our Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture launched Canada-Ireland 180. This initiative, planned for 2027, will commemorate the 180th anniversary of the Great Famine migration in 1847, when over 100,000 Irish people landed on our shores.

Irish Canadians have become a core part of Canada's history, national identity and culture. This initiative will celebrate that shared heritage through events, art, screen and sport. Nothing grabs the heart more than creative storytelling, so the collaboration between screen industries in both countries will be moving. I make a special mention of the Canadian industry, which has a strong presence in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

We will celebrate Gaelic sports, but the gloves might come off if we meet in the World Cup. However, we will hug and toast each other after the competition, as family does.

*Slàinte.*

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**CARBON PRICING**

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the primary concern for all the families watching us right now is the cost of groceries. Unfortunately, Canadian families are being hit hard by food inflation, which currently stands at 6.2%. That is the worst result in the G7.

*Oral Questions*

One of the contributing factors is the Liberal fuel tax. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, this tax could cost families an extra \$1,000. We, the Conservatives, want to work for families. We want to work with the government.

Is the government prepared to abolish the Liberal fuel tax to give Canadian families some relief?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. We know that the Conservatives are allergic to good news. I will remind them of what we announced on Monday.

In addition to the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, we announced the following measures: \$500 million from the strategic response fund to help Canada's supply chain; immediate expensing for greenhouse buildings to have more food grown here at home; additional funding for food banks; and a national food security strategy that will standardize labelling in Canada.

I hope the Conservatives will join us—

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

**Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the minister talks a good game, but he does not get results.

Let us not forget that, just two years ago, he was boasting about meeting with grocery executives. What came out of that? The result was the worst food inflation in the G7. The Liberals' plan is not working. It is not surprising that 2.2 million Canadians are using food banks. The charitable organization Amélie et Frédérick on Bastien Boulevard in Neufchâtel has seen a 3% increase in users.

We need to provide families with direct assistance. One of the best ways to do that is to do away with the Liberal fuel tax. Will the government do that for the good of all Canadians?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is known for his rhetoric, but, on this side of the House, we are known for taking action.

On Monday, we announced the Canada groceries and essentials benefit. The Conservatives may be laughing today, but 12 million Canadians will see a difference at the end of the month. Canadian families expect members of the House to be responsible.

Will the Conservatives rise to the occasion and support the government in helping Canadians in need?

[English]

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada now has the worst record for food inflation in the entire G7, with grocery prices up 6%. That is an extra \$1,000 for an average family in Canada to buy groceries. Costs have doubled since the Prime Minister has taken office. That is twice the rate of food inflation than in the United States. Over two million Canadians a month are having to go to food banks.

The Liberals continue to pile on the costs with their industrial carbon tax and the fuel standards tax. When will they finally deliver real and permanent relief for Canadian families?

• (1425)

**Hon. Julie Dabrusin (Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleagues might want to know that the member for Battle River—Crowfoot represents the second-largest canola-producing riding in all of Alberta. Advanced Biofuels Canada said that the clean fuel regulations will create or preserve “average farm revenue by \$60,000”. That is money in the pockets of farmers in that riding.

Why is the member not standing up for the farmers in his riding? We are.

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have heard this all before, band-aid solutions that most Canadians will not even qualify for. Families need real action that actually lowers the cost of food at the grocery store. Conservatives are ready to fast-track any legislation that will help deliver real results for Canadians.

When will the Liberals get serious about tackling food inflation and introduce legislation to permanently scrap the industrial carbon tax and the fuel standards tax that are driving up the costs for farmers, truckers and every family trying to put food on the table?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are good talkers, but I can tell members they have a short memory, because on Monday, Canadians noticed what will be happening. They are going to have a rebate for groceries and essentials.

In addition to that, let me help the Conservatives with their householders, so they do not forget to tell their constituents. There will be \$500 million for the strategic response fund to strengthen food production in the country, the immediate expensing of greenhouses, additional funding for food banks and a national food strategy, and we are working toward a standard price per unit.

Instead of shouting in the House, the Conservatives should get on board, support Canadians, and make this country—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Middlesex—London.

**Lianne Rood (Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, food inflation is up 6.2%, the highest in the G7, and grocery prices are rising twice as fast since the Prime Minister took office. Families will pay over \$1,000 more this year just to eat. Farmers, truckers and food processors have been clear: The Liberals' industrial carbon tax and their new fuel standards tax are driving up costs from field to fridge.

*Oral Questions*

Conservatives are ready to act, so will the Liberal government work with us to scrap these taxes, boost grocery competition and cut red tape for our farmers?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all fall, the Conservatives across the aisle quoted Food Banks Canada time and time again in their litigation on the cost of food. Now, when the government steps up to help 12 million families with up to \$1,900 to pay for those very costs of food, the Conservatives are fighting against it.

Why can Conservative MPs not listen to their constituents, get out of the way and help those very Canadians they claim to care about?

**Lianne Rood (Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is the cold, hard truth: If two parents work full time and they make over \$14.87 an hour, their families get nothing. That is right. Members heard me. Most families will not even qualify for this rebate.

Once again, the Liberals gaslight Canadians while we see 2.2 million visits to food banks every single month. Liberal taxes and policies are what are driving up the cost of food. Recycling their broken policies does nothing to lower it. When will the government stop pretending that rebates will fix inflation and, instead, deal with the root cause?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives like to talk about making life affordable, but every time Canadians ask for help and the government provides that help, whether it is through affordable child care, which, by the way, saves families up to \$16,000 a year; the school food program, which reaches families all across the country; or this new tax benefit that will help 12 million Canadians, they say, “Oh, that is not exactly the right thing.”

They have no answers, not for their constituents, not for any Canadian.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister told us that China had committed to lifting its tariffs on Quebec pork. The pork industry, which did not know about this, was both surprised and very happy, understandably so.

This morning, Antoine Trépanier reported that this is not in fact true. The government should not treat people this way. It should not be creating false hope.

Can the government confirm that there is, in fact, no agreement on pork with China?

• (1430)

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we remain committed in our partnerships

with all industry stakeholders in the beef and canola industries, in the agriculture industry.

At the same time, we will continue to diversify our supply chains for our domestic economy. That is in the national interest and that is our plan on this side of the House.

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the words “pig”, “hog” or “pork”. There was no reference to pork in the answer. My question is simple. The Prime Minister, who is the new incarnation of God, told us yesterday that we now have a deal with the Chinese, who are lifting tariffs on pork.

Can the government at least include the word “pork” in its answer? Can it quickly commit to ensuring that lifting tariffs on Quebec pork is a top priority? After all, Quebecers are the leading buyers of electric cars in Canada, and the government is bringing in 50,000 of them.

**Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have had discussions with China about several sectors of our economy, including pork, beef and canola. Each time, we continue to say that it is in Canada's interest to have a “friendly” agreement for our pork sector and for our economy. That is our strategy on this side of the House.

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**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, she is talking about a “friendly” agreement. The pigs will be thrilled.

That said, the minister responsible for the negotiations was interviewed on Radio-Canada this morning and he said that, while we are focusing on history, he is focusing on Quebec's forests. My goodness, what a day of revelations it has been. It is the Epiphany.

Can someone tell me what this government has done for forestry, apart from rejecting the industry's proposal, or is this government as bad at economics as it is at history?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague that we are as good at economics as we are at history.

If there is one thing I can say, it is that we worked with the forestry sector, and I think everyone is aware of that. I know that some folks like to forget these things, but we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to help the forestry industry. I come from a region that understands that.

We have always been there for workers. We have always been there for the industry. We will always be there to defend Canada's interests.

*Oral Questions**[English]***TAXATION**

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are critical statistics every member of Parliament must take seriously. There are 2.2 million visits to food banks every single month. Canada's food inflation is 6.2%, and that is double that of the U.S. This year it will cost \$17,600 to feed a family. That is a national emergency we must take seriously, and Conservatives want to expedite a real solution.

Will the Liberal government immediately table legislation to cut taxes that punish those who bring food to our tables and boost competition in grocery chains?

**Hon. Adam van Koevorden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to the member's question, not only do we take the statistics very seriously, but we also take the recommendations of the organizations that are working to feed hungry Canadians extremely seriously. The top recommendation of Food Banks Canada was to create a groceries and essentials benefit. The Conservatives have a chance to support that motion and to vote in favour of it to help Canadians at the grocery store.

We know, based on the research that has been done by independent agencies, that industrial carbon prices not only have a negligible impact or zero impact, but many of them actually help. As such, if the Conservatives want to help Canadians at the grocery store, they should vote in favour of the groceries and essentials benefit.

**Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Liberals have tried this before, and it has only made matters worse. Canada is a country full of farms and fields, yet we are known as the food inflation capital of the G7. Food inflation has doubled since 2019. This is a homegrown crisis caused by high taxes on farmers, truckers and food processors, lack of competition in grocery chains and reckless inflationary spending.

I ask this again: Will the Liberal government immediately cut taxes that punish those who put food on our tables and boost competition in grocery chains?

• (1435)

**Hon. Adam van Koevorden (Secretary of State (Sport), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, farmers know that the number one cause of food inflation in Canada and globally is climate change. When they are listing off the products that are most affected by climate change, they often list lettuce, which is impacted by climate change in California; coffee, which is imported to Canada as we do not grow coffee here; and beef, which is impacted by climate change. The Conservatives can continue to bury their heads in the sand and pretend that climate change does not exist, but we are working with farmers to increase the number of domestic producers. We are working to build more greenhouses so that Canadians can buy more Canadian food.

**Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister spends his time with the world elites, life at home is getting harder for Canadians, including families in Haldimand—Norfolk. The 2026 food price report is alarming. This year, it will cost \$17,600 to feed a family of four, which is \$1,000 more than it cost last year. The Prime Minister's industrial carbon tax and fuel standard tax are driving up food prices.

Will he scrap the taxes and bring down the cost of food for Canadians?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the National Institute on Ageing's fourth annual report was just released, and it commends the actions the government is taking. It agrees with us, and its data shows that reducing expenditures in one area can result in an overall reduction in hardship as money is freed up for other household needs. That is why organizations like Food Banks Canada agree that the groceries and essentials benefit will make a real difference in the lives of Canadians, helping them to afford baby formula, helping them to afford lettuce and helping them to afford coffee and toilet paper.

I do not understand why the Conservatives want to be obstructionist about feeding 12 million Canadians.

**Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. Statistics Canada shows that food inflation is up 6.2%, which is the highest in the G7. I remember, as a university student, putting food back on the shelf because I could not afford it. I am so blessed today, but even recently I did not buy a package of meat because it cost four times more than I paid for it last year. Imagine what average Canadians who are working two jobs are going through, sacrificing every single day just to get by.

Will the Liberals give Canadians a break and cut the industrial carbon tax and the fuel standard tax?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, like many of my constituents in Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, I grew up in a single-parent household. I had a single mother and a handicapped sister, and making ends meet was really challenging. It is families like this that we have in mind, like the one I grew up in, like the ones that exist in my riding and in that member's riding. They are the ones we want to feed, and Food Banks Canada is supporting what we are doing.

Again, I do not understand why the Conservatives are opposed to feeding families.

*Oral Questions*

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, food inflation is up 6.2%, the highest in the G7. A family now pays more than \$17,000 a year for food, and 2.2 million people are lined up at food banks every month, thanks to the Liberals' industrial carbon tax and fuel standard tax, adding up to about 17¢ a litre, which is hitting farmers, truckers and food prices.

Conservatives are ready to fast-track legislation to reverse these devastating impacts. Will the Liberals immediately introduce a bill to eliminate the industrial carbon tax and the fuel standard tax to boost grocery competition and cut red tape for our farmers?

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while members opposite minimize our affordability plan, let us take an example of a young family of four this year. With supports like the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, the Canada child benefit, affordable child care, dental care, the national school food program and the fact that we cut taxes for millions of Canadians, this family will save over \$50,000 a year. This is real affordability.

While members opposite continue to obstruct Parliament, we are going to stand up for Canadians.

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals take thousands of dollars from Canadians; they return a pittance. Canadians are not fooled.

Food prices in Canada are rising twice as fast as in the U.S. and twice as fast since the Prime Minister took office. Grocery prices are up 5%, and his response to the cost of living crisis is to tell Canadians to sacrifice more. Canadians have sacrificed enough. With the ever-increasing cost to eat and heat, there is little left for Canadians to give up.

When will the government finally stop asking families to sacrifice and commit to legislation today to make life affordable for hard-working Canadians?

• (1440)

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not understand how the Conservatives can look their constituents in the eye when all they do in the House is obstruct what we are doing and the progress we are making.

We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. We are making the national school food program permanent. This is going to help 400,000 kids eat healthy meals at school. We are saving families \$16,000 per year through affordable child care. We are providing relief for 12 million Canadians through our Canada groceries and essentials benefit. This is going to make a real difference, especially for families in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville.

\* \* \*

**SENIORS**

**Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, seniors are choosing between medication and groceries. Food Banks Canada has reported 2.2 million visits in a single month, and 8.3% are seniors, up from 6.8%. Food inflation is the highest in the G7. Canadians need our help. Conservatives have proposed real solu-

tions: eliminate the industrial carbon tax, eliminate the fuel standard tax and cut red tape for farmers.

Will the Prime Minister show compassion for Canadians and work with us to provide real relief, yes or no?

**Hon. Stephanie McLean (Secretary of State (Seniors), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, our actions are compassionate. Our actions show compassion for seniors. We increased OAS for seniors over age 75 when the Conservatives wanted to bring it down to below age 65. We have protected OAS, ensuring that it is indexed to inflation, and we just guaranteed that low-income seniors will get the help they need to fight rising food costs, which is something we cannot control. However, what we can control is helping families afford the food they need with the groceries and essentials benefit. This will buy up to \$950 more food for a single, low-income senior.

[*Translation*]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, some new retirees have not been receiving their old age security pension for nine months now because of problems with the new Cúram software. What did the Liberals have to say to these people yesterday? The Liberal House leader said that software problems happen. He said that we were fearmongering. The Liberals were made aware of this in June by their own officials. With answers like that, we can see why they have done absolutely nothing.

When will they do something about this?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my department is in the process of transferring benefit delivery to a more modern system. The delay in the thirty or so applications affected 0.2% of OAS applicants. The department is committed to delivering the OAS swiftly and accurately. My department and I are working tirelessly to resolve these problems. If anyone is having difficulty accessing the OAS, we encourage them to contact Service Canada.

*Oral Questions*

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if things were going as well as the government House leader claims, then we would not have seniors who have not received their pension since last spring. We would not have seniors who are receiving the wrong amounts and who will be getting less on their cheques in the future. This is not fearmongering. We are talking about real people who are saying that the government's new software, its new system, is causing problems. When the government causes problems, its job is to fix those problems, not to say that stuff happens.

When will the government take seniors' problems seriously?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we obviously take very seriously the need to provide benefits to those who are entitled to them. The government modernized its outdated software, and that is good news. The new software enables seniors to access services online and receive an enhanced level of service. A few people have been affected, and that is a few people too many. We agree on that.

We are asking these individuals to call Service Canada to get their situations sorted out.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

[English]

**HOUSING**

**Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, between 2011 and 2021, home ownership among 30- to 34-year-olds fell from 60% to 52%. From 2019 to 2024, for every 100 adults added to the Canadian population, only 12 homes intended for ownership were built. That is less than half the rate of the earlier decades.

How does the Prime Minister expect young Canadians to ever buy their first home when his government keeps using the same old policies that have not worked for the last 10 years?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the good news is that our government has brought forward the first-time homebuyers' GST break, which is up to \$50,000 off their first home purchase for young Canadians. This is a new measure. It was stalled in the fall session by the opposition, unfortunately.

We are ready to bring this forward. We are ready to deliver affordability for young Canadians.

**Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, new home sales are down 45% in the GTA and 56% in Vancouver. Rebates do not matter to first-time homebuyers if no homes are getting built. Nearly half of young Canadians are now considering leaving their home communities because they cannot afford to stay.

When will the minister listen to all the experts, the builders, the developers and the Conservatives, and remove the HST on all new homes under \$1.3 million so that we can get builders building homes again?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it starts with first-time homebuyers and not obstructing bills that will deliver relief and affordability for young Canadians. That is number one.

Number two, we have record annual construction in Calgary, in Montreal, in Edmonton and in Ottawa. We have housing starts that were solid last year, the fifth-best year in Canadian history.

We will continue to build on that work with Build Canada Homes, which we expect the opposition's support on.

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a new year, but it is the same old story for Canadians trying to buy a home. They cannot.

The Missing Middle Initiative reported this week that while the vast majority of gen Z and millennials want to buy a home, only about half can realize that goal. Home ownership for them has decreased from 60% to 52%. Their ambition to buy a home has turned into uncertainty, and that uncertainty has turned into defeat. Missing Middle proposed 10 solutions. Not one of them was the government's plan for another bureaucracy to build non-market homes.

Why is the government's plan so different from what sensible experts are recommending?

**Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we have Build Canada Homes starting up, a one-stop shop for affordable housing, delivering housing for young Canadians in particular.

The opposition can support affordable housing. It has never done it before, but it can start now. It can start helping this government deliver affordability, whether that is new homes through Build Canada Homes or bringing down rents, which we have seen drop across Canada for 30 straight months.

**Tako Van Popta (Langley Township—Fraser Heights, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not keeping his promise to young Canadians to help them buy their first home. In fact, according to the Missing Middle report, things are going in the wrong direction. Home ownership among 30-year-olds is at an all-time low. Less than half think they are ever going to own their own home, and housing starts are not even keeping up with population growth.

Here is an idea. We are feeling generous. Why does the Prime Minister not adopt our policies to cut bureaucracies so that homes get built and first-time Canadian buyers can buy their first home?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Kody Blois (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a great idea for the member opposite. This government has put a series of measures in place to help support young Canadians getting into their first home and to be able to build more housing supply in this country, whether it is Build Canada Homes or removing the GST up to \$50,000 for new homebuyers buying their first home. The Conservatives obstruct at every single pass.

The member has to go back and answer to his constituents for why Conservatives are standing in the way of the progress this government is seeking to advance. There are important measures in Bill C-15. They should get on board and actually be a part of the solution.

[Translation]

**Bernard Généreux (Côte-du-Sud—Rivière-du-Loup—Kataskomiq—Témiscouata, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are seeing evidence of the housing crisis on the streets and in the homes of Quebecers. Families are being forced to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table. Young people are putting their plans on hold because they cannot find affordable apartments. According to a Leger poll, one in five renters in Quebec had trouble paying their rent last year. In Montreal, it is one in four. That is unacceptable.

After 10 years of Liberal government, when will Quebecers have access to truly affordable housing?

• (1450)

**Hon. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a family of four may receive over \$1,800 through our new Canada groceries and essentials benefit. That will help families and households make ends meet at the end of the month.

It is true. We have seen the statistics that show that one in five households has trouble paying their rent, so I am wondering why the Conservatives are blocking the work of Build Canada Homes. Why do the Conservatives want to block our new benefit for Canadians?

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[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Gurbux Saini (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, communities across Canada want to feel safe in their neighbourhoods and confident their government is taking action to prevent crime, especially given the rise in extortion in B.C.'s Lower Mainland.

Can the minister update the House on measures the government is taking to counter extortion, support law enforcement and ensure our communities feel safe?

**Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the rise in extortion in Surrey and the Lower Mainland is unacceptable, and I extend my support to the victims of extortion everywhere.

This morning, I met with Premier Eby and we committed to deploying up to 20 RCMP members to support law enforcement efforts. We deployed two helicopters in the Surrey area, and in November we announced \$4 million in federal funding to bolster the Surrey police's efforts to tackle extortion threats. There are bills before the House that the opposition can support right now, like the one on lawful access, to help us combat extortion in Canada.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for almost a year, Canada has endured an unprovoked economic attack by the United States and President Trump. Conservatives worked to fast-track Bill C-5, which was supposed to fast-track nation-building projects. Unfortunately, it has not fast-tracked anything. Not a single new project has been approved and not a single shovel has gone into the ground.

There is an alternative. A Conservative sovereignty act would repeal anti-development legislation, speed approvals and create economic opportunities for Canada. Businesses and provinces that invest would be rewarded.

Why will the Liberals not support this bill so that we can lessen our dependence on the Americans?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is good to see Conservatives finally coming around to the Liberal plan, which is precisely that: To diversify trade markets, to build our country up with Canadian steel, Canadian aluminum, Canadian ingenuity, Canadian know-how and Canadian union men and women building our country together.

The Conservatives' proposals were tested. They had the ultimate test, a general election, which did not go so well. Canadians voted for the Prime Minister's plan to build Canada strong. That is what we are going to keep doing.

**Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the Liberals promised in the election was that they were going to fast-track nation-building projects, and that is one of the reasons Canadians voted for them. Unfortunately, they have not actually fast-tracked anything. Not a single new nation-building project has been approved. Not a single shovel has gone in the ground for any of those projects.

We need a new approach. That's why a Canadian sovereignty act needs to be implemented. It would tear down the barriers to building these projects. It would create new economic opportunity and thousands of good-paying jobs.

The Liberals have stolen almost every single one of our policies. Why do they not steal this one for the benefit of Canadians?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have nation-building projects going on right across this country. I would refer the member to his own province of Ontario, where we are in major developments in the nuclear sector and will be developing the Crawford nickel mine, and where we are going to build North America's very first high-speed rail network, from Quebec City to Toronto. We are going to build in British Columbia, whether it is LNG, the northwest corridor or Ksi Lisims. We are building this country. We are building it big. We are building it strong.

• (1455)

**Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister has broken his promise to Canadians. He said he would build Canada strong, but in eight months he has not approved a single new project. Instead, he is closing down agriculture research stations and firing scientists, including at the 120-year-old station in Lacombe.

Conservatives introduced a motion this week to pass a Canadian sovereignty act. Will the Liberals vote for our legislation to repeal Liberal laws that block development, to reward investment in Canada and to protect Canadian innovation, or will they continue selling Canada out with their new world order agenda?

**Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' ideas were tested in the election, and guess what, they lost.

We are focused on something that is very clear and something Canadians want. They want us to build this country. They want us to grow the economy, and that is exactly what we are doing.

We are going to build the largest infrastructure investment in Canadian history, with major projects across this country, building affordable homes for Canadians using Canadian steel, Canadian lumber, Canadian skilled trades and Canadian student workers.

We are diversifying our trade, expanding to new markets and investing in innovation. We are going to create the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Ponoka—Didsbury has the floor.

**Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberals never let solutions get in the way of their ideology.

While the jet-setting Prime Minister travels the world to glad-hand and talk about his new world order, food prices are up and families are struggling to put food on the table. In the meantime, the government is closing the very agricultural research centres that allow Canadian farms and agribusinesses to be so innovative.

When will the Liberals finally understand that when we learn more, grow more, build more and export more, incomes go up and life becomes more affordable for Canadians?

**Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know this is going to be a difficult time for some, but this was the mandate that Canadians elected us for: streamlining research, collaboration with academia and the private sector, prioritizing high-impact areas, reducing duplication and aligning projects with the needs of farmers and ranchers across this

country. We are going to work with stakeholders and move this industry and sector forward that has been neglected for over 20 years.

**Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect us to work together to improve their lives. In that spirit, we worked with the Liberals to pass Bill C-5, giving the Prime Minister sweeping powers to get projects built faster. Despite the press releases and photo ops, nothing has been built.

When we build, Canadians get jobs, our economy grows and life becomes more affordable. We have put forward a bill that would repeal regulations that block development, reward provinces that build, and protect Canadian innovation.

Will the government work with us and pass a Canadian sovereignty act?

**Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is the Conservatives' platform, not ours. On this side of the House, we are focused on building one strong Canadian economy. On Monday, our Prime Minister announced a groceries and essentials benefit that would put \$1,900 in the pockets of working families.

On this side of the House, we are going to continue to build Canada strong. We are going to continue to focus on our economy. The Conservatives are focused on obstruction.

**Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when Canada builds more and exports more, incomes rise, our dollar gets stronger and life becomes more affordable. One of the first things I voted for was to give the Liberals extensive powers to improve projects at speeds never seen before, but despite all the Liberal slogans, they have not removed any barriers. Not a single new project has been approved.

When will the Liberal government work with Conservatives to build a country that all of us can be proud of and approve a Canadian sovereignty act to have an independent economy?

**Hon. Joanne Thompson (Minister of Fisheries, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, here we go again with another round of canned notes that do not address what the government is actually doing. It is another example of obstruction.

I have heard from the member's constituents. They support what the government is doing: building this country, investing in provinces and investing in rural communities, such as those the member represents.

Let us stop the nonsense. Let us get to work. Canadians expect it, and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians expect it.

*Oral Questions*

• (1500)

**David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives voted for Bill C-5, but the Prime Minister's Major Projects Office has not approved any new projects. What is worse is that the Liberal mountain of antidevelopment laws is still in place. When we build more and give Canadians jobs and opportunities, incomes and prosperity go up.

I ask the Prime Minister, will his Liberal government support a Canadian sovereignty act to unleash development, protect Canadian innovation and reward Canadians for building our country?

**Corey Hogan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what can we say about the motion? It includes a few things we are already doing and a few things Canadians rejected. It feels like the Leader of the Opposition found it in a jacket he has not worn in a while.

It is time of new ideas. We have some like the MOU with Alberta. It is an exciting time to be an Albertan. We are getting things built, and we invite the members opposite to get on board.

**Gaëtan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, northern Ontarians keep asking me when we will finally unlock our economic potential. I reply that it will be when the government finally decides to cut regulations. A Canadian sovereignty act is a chance to do exactly that and repeal needless barriers. In northern Ontario, economic sovereignty leads to affordability. When we grow our industries, such as mining, sawmills, pulp mills, agriculture and manufacturing, incomes rise and unaffordability dies.

Will the government work with us to deliver results for Canadians?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member of Parliament for their advocacy for northern Ontario, a topic I am always happy to get up to talk about.

As the member knows, we have been there for northern Ontario in many difficult and challenging ways. Most recently I have been working with Kap Paper to support the mill as it reorients its product to a product that will be sellable across the world.

We will be there for northern Ontario, whether it is through the capacity of FedNor, direct supports to the lumber industry or supports for critical mining. Northern Ontario knows it has a strong partner in the federal government.

[*Translation*]

**Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals told us that they wanted to fast-track major projects. That is why we voted in favour of Bill C-5.

Today, we see that absolutely nothing has changed. No barriers have been removed. Red tape continues to slow things down, and permits are still not being issued in a timely manner. That is why the Conservatives are proposing the Canadian sovereignty act so that we can export more and build more.

Will the government vote in favour of our motion or will it continue to hold back the economy?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we put our ideas to the test last year during the election, and the Prime Minister's plan to build Canada strong won the day, while the member's approach was rejected. I guess that is news to them.

I want to reiterate to my colleague that we just announced a project at the port of Saguenay, not to mention the port at Contrecoeur, a logistics and supply chain megaproject in Quebec.

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**FIREARMS**

**Stevee Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, January 17 was a historic day for Canada. The Canadian government, together with the Quebec government, announced the launch of the assault-style firearms compensation program in Montreal.

Quebec occupies a special place in the Canadian landscape when it comes to public safety, particularly because of its history, its collective awareness and its unique legislative frameworks.

Can the Secretary of State for Nature explain how the partnership between Ottawa and Quebec City is essential to the success of this program and to achieving our common security objectives?

**Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which address an issue that is important to Quebecers and to all Canadians. Let us not forget that Canadians want this program to work well and they want to get assault-style weapons off our streets. What does it mean to partner with Quebec? It means that Quebec is making the Sûreté du Québec available to participate in this program.

I would like to thank the hunters and gun owners across Canada who are already registering in large numbers to get these guns off our streets.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

[*English*]

**JUSTICE**

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to talk about the gap between rhetoric and reality. Well, last week reality came in the form of two police cars in my driveway investigating a report of shots fired on my street. My neighbours are wondering if we are now in the line of fire of some extortionists. Surrey's mayor, Brenda Locke, is asking the government to declare a state of emergency.

Conservatives are asking, will the government stop with the rhetoric, restore mandatory minimums and repeal the catch-and-release laws so criminals will feel the consequences?

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives need to decide whether they are going to help us stop extortions or whether they are going to obstruct us giving law enforcement the tools they need to prevent these crimes from happening.

Right now it takes about six months for police agencies to connect a phone number to an IP address or to a person, to a criminal, but these Conservatives are against supporting our lawful access measures, which would give law enforcement these exact tools.

Which side are they on? I hope they will vote with us when we put this bill before Parliament.

**Michael Guglielmin (Vaughan—Woodbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the York Regional Police recently arrested a man accused of extorting a Vaughan resident for seven years through threats and violence. Extortion is not a talking point; it is impacting real Canadians.

Now Liberals are spreading falsehoods. Let us look at bail reform. The Liberals tabled bail changes on October 23. We agreed to send the bill to committee on November 18, and until yesterday, they sidelined public safety to attack freedom of expression.

Will the Liberal government stop its obstruction, work with Conservatives to restore mandatory minimums for extortion and repeal catch-and-release laws Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

**Hon. Ruby Sahota (Secretary of State (Combatting Crime), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about catching these criminals. In order to catch these criminals, the police need the tools to do so. They need to be able to connect IP addresses and phone numbers to the criminals, which the Conservatives are obstructing and stopping from passing in the House.

We brought lawful access measures to Parliament in June, yet the Conservatives have been obstructing those measures all along. Whose side are they on? Will they help our law enforcement and police officers with catching these criminals?

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#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Federal Court of Appeal has once again affirmed that the Liberal government broke the most supreme law in this country, which is the Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, when it wrongly used the Emergencies Act. It also ruled that the government violated the charter rights of Canadians by freezing the bank accounts of political protesters and limiting the legal right to protest.

If this truly is a new government, will it say to Canadians right now that it will accept this ruling, uphold the civil liberties of Canadians and not appeal to the Supreme Court?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Transport and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a proud resident of the national capital region, I can only

#### Oral Questions

lament this member's repeated, and he has been consistent on this, endorsement of the occupation of this downtown and of the disturbance and unbelievable annoyance this created for residents of downtown Ottawa. The fact is that it was an unlawful demonstration that was ultimately ended by the good graces and very Canadian model of co-operative law enforcement.

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#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Emma Harrison (Peterborough, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Prime Minister announced new measures to put money back in the pockets of Canadians, including the Canada groceries and essentials benefit, which I know will mean a great deal to my constituents in Peterborough and Canadians across the country.

The announcement also included new measures to improve our domestic production and enhance food security in Canada. As a farmer, I cannot stress enough just how important this is. Now more than ever, Canadians want food made and produced right here in Canada.

Can the Minister of Agriculture please explain what Monday's announcement will mean for our producers and for food security in Canada?

● (1510)

**Hon. Heath MacDonald (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague gets it as a farmer. Canadians want access to Canadian-grown food, and our world-class farmers, producers and ranchers are ready to deliver. On Monday, our new government announced immediate expensing for greenhouse buildings. This will allow producers to fully write off greenhouses that become available for use before 2030.

We are developing a national food security strategy, investing \$20 million into a local food infrastructure fund and much more. Simply put, we are improving affordability for more than 12 million Canadians, and building a more domestic, resilient food system here at home. I hope the Conservatives can agree.

*Business of Supply***FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, forestry families on Vancouver Island are struggling. The Crofton mill closed. The Atli mill closed. The Chemainus mill was curtailed until the end of 2026. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs have been lost, but more importantly, already struggling families are now facing dire consequences. The government's handouts and subsidies are not helping those affected and will not save this critical and renewable resource industry.

When will the Prime Minister deliver on his promised softwood lumber trade deal?

**Claude Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the closure of a mill is difficult news, whether it is on Vancouver Island or anywhere across the country. It is difficult news for workers, their families and the community.

The federal government has come forward with support for the sector. We urge the provincial governments to work with us as partners to protect these jobs—

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

**The Speaker:** I have been putting up with a lot of loud noise coming from my left, but I have to call it out now because I am having trouble hearing the hon. member.

Could the hon. member take it from the top, please.

**Claude Guay:** Mr. Speaker, it is difficult news, the closure of any mill, whether it is on Vancouver Island or anywhere in the country.

We have come forward with a lot of support from a financial perspective. We work with the provincial governments as partners to protect these. The Conservatives may have missed the news that we announced a forestry sector transformation task force for the industry. It has already met and is formulating recommendations for the government for the future. We will continue to examine every option available. I urge the members to work with us on those—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

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**LABOUR**

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, with massive cuts being made to our civil service, how can the government justify threats to public health and safety as outlined today by the Public Service Alliance of Canada? Specifically in my community, we are very concerned because across a number of departments, believe it or not, workers involved in marine emergency responses to oil spills have all been laid off.

How does the government justify this?

**Hon. Shafqat Ali (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's new government is taking a responsible approach to renewing the public service focused on efficiency, sustainability and respect for those who serve Canadians. New incentives are being introduced to support workforce renewals and to manage adjustments, primarily through voluntary measures. Budget 2025 also proposes a measured reduction in up to 1,000 executive

positions over the next two years to ensure leadership structures remain aligned with operational needs.

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**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the hon. Myles McDougall, Minister of Advanced Education for Alberta.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding the order made Wednesday, December 3, 2025, Bill C-225, an act to amend the Criminal Code, be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

• (1515)

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY****OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADIAN ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY**

The House resumed from January 27 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:15 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the Business of Supply.

Call in the members.

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

• (1530)

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley voted both in person and online. When he was in person, he actually was not even in his seat. I am wondering if you, Mr. Speaker, can let us know if his vote counted twice, what happened there and how we can ensure this does not happen in the future.

*Business of Supply*

**The Speaker:** It is the electronic vote that will count. It is not ideal.

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

*(Division No. 60)*

## YEAS

## Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Baber	Bailey
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Block
Bonk	Borrelli
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	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	Généreux
Genuis	Gill (Calgary Skyview)
Gill (Brampton West)	Gill (Calgary McKnight)
Gill (Windsor West)	Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)
Gladu	Goodridge
Gourde	Groleau
Guglielmin	Gunn
Hallan	Hardy
Ho	Hoback
Holman	Jackson
Jansen	Kelly
Khanna	Kibble
Kirkland	Kmiec
Konanz	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kronis
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lawton	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
Mahal	Majumdar
Malette (Kapusking—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)	Mantle
Martel	Mazier
McCauley	McKenzie
McLean (Calgary Centre)	Melillo
Menegakis	Moore
Morin	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Reynolds
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ross
Rowe	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shipley
Small	Steinley
Stevenson	Strahl

Strauss  
Thomas  
Tolmie  
Van Popta  
Viersen  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Zimmer— 137

Stubbs  
Tochor  
Uppal  
Vien  
Vis  
Warkentin  
Williamson

## NAYS

## Members

Acan	Al Soud
Ali	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Auguste	Bains
Baker	Bardeesy
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Belanger (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River)	Bendayan
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blois	Bonin
Boulerice	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Carney
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Chang
Chartrand	Chatel
Chen	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
Erskine-Smith	Eyolfson
Fancy	Fanjoy
Fergus	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Fry
Fuhr	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Gasparro	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)	Gould
Grant	Greaves
Guay	Guilbeault
Gull-Masty	Hajdu
Hanley	Harrison
Hepfner	Hirtle
Hogan	Housefather
Hussen	Iacono
Idlout	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Joseph	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Klassen	Koutrakis
Kwan	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)
Lapointe (Sudbury)	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
Lavack	Lavoie
LeBlanc	Leitão
Lemire	Lightbound

*Private Members' Business*

Long	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Ma	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacDonald (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malette (Bay of Quinte)	Maloney
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	Rocheffort
Romanado	Royer
Sahota	Saini
Sarai	Sari
Savard-Tremblay	Sawatzky
Schieffe	Sgro
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sodhi	Solomon
Sousa	Ste-Marie
St-Pierre	Sudds
Tesser Derksen	Thériault
Thompson	Turnbull
Valdez	van Koeverden
Vandenbeld	Villeneuve
Watchorn	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zerucelli
Zuberi— 197	

**PAIRED**

## Members

Godin	Hodgson
Jeneroux	Lalonde— 4

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ACT**

The House resumed from January 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-228, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (prior review of treaties by Parliament), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-228.

● (1540)

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

*(Division No. 61)***YEAS**

## Members

Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Bonin	Boulerice
Brunelle-Duceppe	Champoux
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	DeBellefeuille
Deschênes	Fortin
Garon	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan)
	Johns
Idlout	Larouche
Kwan	Mantle
Lemire	McPherson
May	Perron
Normandin	Savard-Tremblay
Plamondon	Ste-Marie
Simard	Thériault— 32
Strauss	

**NAYS**

## Members

Aboultouf	Acan
Aitchison	Al Soud
Albas	Ali
Allison	Alty
Anand	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Anstey
Arnold	Au
Auguste	Baber
Bailey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Bardeesy	Barlow
Barrett	Battiste
Beech	Belanger (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River)
Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt)	Bendayan
Berthold	Bexte
Bezan	Bittle
Blair	Block
Blois	Bonk
Borrelli	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Calkins
Caputo	Carney
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chambers
Champagne	Chang
Chartrand	Chatel
Chen	Chenette
Chi	Chong
Church	Clark
Cobena	Cody
Connors	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Dancho	Dandurand
Danko	Davidson
Davies (Niagara South)	Dawson
Deltell	d'Entremont
DeRidder	Deschênes-Thériault
Desrochers	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Diotte	Doherty
Dowdall	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan
Dzerowicz	Earle
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Epp	Erskine-Smith

Eyolfson  
 Falk (Provencher)  
 Fanjoy  
 Fisher  
 Fortier  
 Fraser  
 Fuhr  
 Gainey  
 Gasparro  
 Genuis  
 Gill (Calgary Skyview)  
 Gill (Calgary McKnight)  
 Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley)  
 Goodridge  
 Gourde  
 Greaves  
 Guay  
 Guilbeault  
 Gunn  
 Hallan  
 Hardy  
 Hepfner  
 Ho  
 Hogan  
 Housefather  
 Iacono  
 Jaczek  
 Jivani  
 Joseph  
 Kelloway  
 Khalid  
 Kibble  
 Klassen  
 Konanz  
 Kram  
 Kronis  
 Lake  
 Lamoureux  
 Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles)  
 Lattanzio  
 Lavack  
 Lawrence  
 LeBlanc  
 Leslie  
 Lightbound  
 Lobb  
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
 MacDonald (Malpeque)  
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
 Majumdar  
 Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk)  
 Martel  
 McCauley  
 McKelvie  
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
 McLean (Calgary Centre)  
 Melillo  
 Mendès  
 Michel  
 Miller  
 Moore  
 Morrison  
 Motz  
 Myles  
 Nater  
 Nguyen  
 Ntumba  
 Olszewski  
 Osborne  
 Paul-Hus  
 Poilievre  
 Provost

Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake)  
 Fancy  
 Fergus  
 Fonseca  
 Fragiškatos  
 Fry  
 Gaheer  
 Gallant  
 Gagné  
 Gerretsen  
 Gill (Brampton West)  
 Gill (Windsor West)  
 Gladu  
 Gould  
 Grant  
 Groleau  
 Guglielmin  
 Gull-Masty  
 Hajdu  
 Hanley  
 Harrison  
 Hirtle  
 Hoback  
 Holman  
 Hussen  
 Jackson  
 Jansen  
 Joly  
 Kayabaga  
 Kelly  
 Khanna  
 Kirkland  
 Kmiec  
 Koutrakis  
 Kramp-Neuman  
 Kusie  
 Lambropoulos  
 Lantsman  
 Lapointe (Sudbury)  
 Lauzon  
 Lavoie  
 Lawton  
 Leitão  
 Lewis (Essex)  
 Lloyd  
 Long  
 Ma  
 MacDonald (Cardigan)  
 Mahal  
 Malette (Bay of Quinte)  
 Maloney  
 Mazier  
 McGuinty  
 McKenzie  
 McKnight  
 McLean (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke)  
 Ménard  
 Menegakis  
 Miedema  
 Mingarelli  
 Morin  
 Morrissey  
 Muys  
 Naqvi  
 Nathan  
 Noormohamed  
 Oliphant  
 O'Rourke  
 Patzer  
 Petipas Taylor  
 Powlowski  
 Ramsay

Rana  
 Reid  
 Reynolds  
 Roberts  
 Rochefort  
 Rood  
 Rowe  
 Ruff  
 Saini  
 Sari  
 Scheer  
 Schmale  
 Sgro  
 Shipley  
 Sidhu (Brampton South)  
 Sodhi  
 Sousa  
 Stevenson  
 Strahl  
 Suds  
 Thomas  
 Tochor  
 Turnbull  
 Valdez  
 Van Popta  
 Vien  
 Villeneuve  
 Wagantall  
 Watchorn  
 Weiler  
 Williamson  
 Zahid  
 Zimmer

### Points of Order

Redekopp  
 Rempel Garner  
 Richards  
 Robertson  
 Romanado  
 Ross  
 Royer  
 Sahota  
 Sarai  
 Sawatzky  
 Schiefke  
 Seeback  
 Sheehan  
 Sidhu (Brampton East)  
 Small  
 Solomon  
 Steinley  
 St-Pierre  
 Stubbs  
 Tesser Derksen  
 Thompson  
 Tolmie  
 Uppal  
 van Koeverden  
 Vandenbeld  
 Viersen  
 Vis  
 Warkentin  
 Waugh  
 Wilkinson  
 Yip  
 Zerucelli  
 Zuberi— 302

### PAIRED

#### Members

Godin  
 Jeneroux  
 Hodgson  
 Lalonde— 4

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

\* \* \*

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### VOTING PROCEDURES IN THE HOUSE

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to follow up on my point of order from before.

If you look online, it says that the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley voted in person. However, there is an asterisk next to his name, which usually means that the member changed their vote.

I am bringing this to your attention not because I particularly care about the last vote, but because I really believe that we need to create some kind of a standard here and that you need to rule on what the rules are when it comes to voting. For example, can I vote in my seat and then suddenly get up, leave and vote a different way on the app?

Perhaps if you do not feel comfortable coming to an answer, you could write to PROC and ask it to come up with a rule for the House, because in all honesty it is becoming extremely difficult to perform this function.

**The Speaker:** It is noted. I thank the hon. member for his point of order. We will get back to him on that.

*Routine Proceedings*

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, the time provided for Government Orders will be extended by 27 minutes.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

• (1545)  
[English]

**WAYS AND MEANS**

## NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Rebecca Alty (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I would like to table, in both official languages, a notice of ways and means motion for a bill, entitled “An Act to give effect to the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty and to make consequential amendments to other Acts”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I would like to request that an order of the day be designated for the consideration of this motion.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADA GROCERIES AND ESSENTIALS BENEFIT ACT**

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-19, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, entitled “Protecting Canada’s poultry industry: for a better control of spent fowl imports into Canada”.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from people from across Canada who want to draw to the attention of the House concerns around Bill C-9. They are concerned that pieces of the Bible could be criminalized, and they are insistent that the state has no place in recognizing or refusing religious texts.

The petitioners are concerned that freedom of expression and freedom of religion are under attack, and they call on the Liberal government to protect freedom of religion and uphold the right to read, share and promote religious texts.

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on behalf of Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, I would like

to present a petition about Bill C-9. The Liberal-Bloc amendment to Bill C-9, passed at the justice committee, would remove the good-faith religious defence clause from the Criminal Code of Canada. Bill C-9 would allow the state to prosecute people who express deeply held religious beliefs the government finds offensive.

Therefore the petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-9, protect religious freedom, uphold the right to read and share sacred texts, and prevent government intrusion into faith.

• (1550)

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition I would like to present today is on behalf of residents of Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford who are deeply concerned about the proposed expansion of medical assistance in dying to individuals whose sole underlying condition is a mental illness.

My constituents fear that expanding MAID in this way risks normalizing suicide as a response to mental illness. They believe that Canada should instead prioritize and strengthen mental health supports.

## TAXATION

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the third petition I would like to present today is about GST and HST in the context of physical education, specifically dance education, which provides significant physical, mental and emotional health benefits, including improved fitness, self-confidence and resilience, contributing to the overall well-being of Canadians.

The petitioning Canadians are calling on the Government of Canada to remove GST from instructional dance classes that meet formal educational criteria and align with the existing GST exemption for music instruction.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the last petition I would like to present today is on behalf of citizens of Abbotsford, in honour of Darshan Sahsi, who lost his life a few months ago. These residents are calling upon the Government of Canada to reinforce the process of public reporting so Canadians can clearly see how federal, provincial and local governments are working together to prevent further increases in violent and organized crime.

It is always a pleasure to rise and to present petitions constructively.

## FALUN GONG

**Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to present a petition signed by my constituents in Edmonton Griesbach. This petition highlights the 26-year persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. My constituents say this persecution has included torture, killings and forced organ harvesting. The petitioners call on the federal government to take urgent action to end these abuses and protect a community targeted by foreign repression.

I am pleased to bring this critical matter forward.

## BANGLADESH

**Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise to present petition e-6827.

In the context of the forthcoming elections in Bangladesh, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to call for cessation of and accountability for human rights violations, political persecution, religiously motivated violence, illegal detentions and extrajudicial killings. The petitioners are asking for internationally monitored free and fair elections with the participation of all political parties. Finally, petitioners call on Canada to support diplomatic and multilateral efforts to restore peace, democratic governance and rule of law in Bangladesh.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition from Canadians concerned about Bill C-9. Faith, as we know, is a matter of conscience, and the petitioners are worried that the state is interfering with their religious texts and teachings, will impinge on religious freedom and lead to government overreach in matters of faith. They are calling on the House to prevent government interference in faith, religious belief and practice.

**Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay. Petitioners are saying that they have a right to free speech and a right to religion and freedom of expression. They are concerned that the amendments to Bill C-9 presented by the Liberals and the Bloc would be used to criminalize passages from the Torah, the Quran and the Bible. They are asking the government to uphold the right to read and share these sacred texts.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured today to present petition e-6795, which is sponsored by Chloe Dubois from Ocean Legacy Foundation. The petition has been signed by 659 Canadians who are deeply concerned about ghost gear: abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear that is among the deadliest sources of plastic pollution. They are concerned that the Liberal government killed this very important program.

Petitioners note that ghost gear kills fish, marine animals and species like wild salmon, seabirds and turtles; damages habitats; and creates microplastics and even hazards for navigation and active harvesters, which hurts coastal communities, our way of life and our economy.

*Routine Proceedings*

They point out that the dedicated funding for retrieval, prevention, repair and recycling works, creating skilled jobs and partnerships with indigenous communities, small businesses, coastal people, fishers, harbour authorities and recyclers, especially in rural and remote areas.

Petitioners are calling for the government to reinstate and expand a permanent multi-year ghost gear fund with streams for rapid retrieval response, prevention and innovation, including gear marking and tracking; whalesafe and ropeless pilots; end-of-life management, repair and recycling; community capacity; and indigenous guardian programs.

• (1555)

## HOUSING

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition of deep concern to many constituents. As Canadians from coast to coast know, we have a housing crisis.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to expedite and focus on immediate help for people who cannot afford to get a roof over their head, particularly by getting rid of real estate investment trusts and corporate ownership of housing units as investment properties. They also call on the government to focus on more support for co-op housing and other forms of more accessible shared housing arrangements.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who call on the government to withdraw Bill C-9.

Canadians feel that religion is under attack, and they ask the government to respect and protect religious freedom and freedom of speech as fundamental rights that Canadians expect Parliament to uphold, as the state has no place in the religious texts or teachings of any faith community.

**Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition about Bill C-9.

Canadians are concerned about the erosion of religious freedoms, as contained in the legislation. They are also concerned that governments are intruding on faith. These petitioners are calling for the withdrawal of Bill C-9, and I am pleased to present these views on behalf of the many proud Canadians who signed.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition from concerned Canadians today. They are concerned about the Liberal government's assault on freedom of expression and freedom of religion contained in Bill C-9, particularly the Bloc and Liberal amendment to remove protections for people of faith to have open discussions about truth in this country.

The petitioners remind the government that it has no place policing the religious texts of Canadians of faith, and they ask that the government withdraw Bill C-9.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first is from Canadians who are profoundly concerned about the government's plan to expand medical assistance in dying to people whose sole underlying condition is a mental illness. The petitioners make their position clear. They state that mental illness is by nature treatable and recovery is possible. They warn that expanding MAID in these circumstances risks normalizing the idea that people struggling with mental illness should be offered assisted dying instead of suicide prevention treatment.

Therefore the petitioners call upon Parliament to adopt Bill C-218, ensuring that mental illness is not classified as a grievous and irremediable condition for the purposes of MAID.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition is from Canadians who are expressing great concern about the assault on religious freedom and freedom of expression contained in Bill C-9, which would remove the long-standing good-faith safeguards for religious expression, raising the risk that Canadians could face investigation for expressing sincerely held beliefs on a religious subject or for citing certain religious texts. The petitioners remind the government, and particularly the Liberal members and Bloc members, that freedom of religion and freedom of expression are listed as fundamental freedoms in our charter.

Therefore the petitioners ask the government to withdraw Bill C-9 and protect the freedom of religion for all Canadians so they can discuss their faith and share their religious texts in the public square without fear of government investigation.

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition today from constituents who are concerned about the Liberal-Bloc amendment to Bill C-9 passed at the justice committee. The amendment would remove the good-faith religious defence clause from the Criminal Code of Canada, allowing the government to criminalize passages from the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and other sacred texts, and resulting in punishment of up to two years in prison.

Petitioners are calling on the government to withdraw Bill C-9 and to protect religious freedom, uphold the right to read and share sacred texts, and prevent government intrusion into their faith.

• (1600)

## FARMLAND IN CLEARVIEW TOWNSHIP

**Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition from the great residents of Sim-

coe—Grey and, more specifically, Clearview Township. This will be the first of many petitions.

The Department of National Defence has purchased 700-plus acres of prime farmland overlapping the Minesing Wetlands to build a preliminary Arctic over-the-horizon radar system in Clearview Township. DND has now sent emails to many landowners surrounding it, and it wants an additional 2,600 acres of prime farmland to create this site.

The petitioning citizens of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to stop the building of any over-the-horizon site on the already purchased property, prevent future acquisitions of the prime farmland and building of any over-the-horizon site on the prime farmland in Clearview Township, and register the previously purchased property with the Ontario Farmland Trust to prepare its agricultural status.

People are concerned and worried; they do not want their land to be expropriated. Many of the townships in the area are supporting this.

## AIR TRAVEL TO INDIA

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today to present a petition from people in Winnipeg North, in particular, who emphasize that Canada's Indo-Canadian community has grown and has a high interest in being able to travel to India.

Petitioners are asking to increase the number of international flights that go directly from Canada, and in particular from Winnipeg, to Europe. Whether it is the government or the airport authorities, petitioners are asking for them to do what they can to increase the number of international flights from Canada.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege to rise on behalf of Canadians, many of them in my riding, raising very severe concerns with the way that the Liberal government is, through Bill C-9, attacking the religious freedoms of Canadians.

The petitioners are concerned in particular about the amendment adopted by Liberal members of Parliament that would remove long-standing protections for religious speech.

Petitioners are calling on the government to withdraw the divisive and toxic Bill C-9 to stand up for the fundamental freedoms of Canadians.

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

\* \* \*

### MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

STATEMENTS BY THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

[English]

**Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to request an emergency debate on the recent deeply concerning actions and statements by the Trump administration that have grave implications for the sovereignty and security of Canada.

On January 3, President Trump ordered American forces to disregard international law and core principles of national sovereignty by attacking Venezuela, a UN member state. This aggression was followed by President Trump's announcement of a Donroe doctrine, considering the entire western Hemisphere to be within the sole hegemonic control of the United States.

On January 18, President Trump expressed his intent to seize Greenland, a territory of Denmark, another UN member state and, importantly, a NATO member. He justified this aggression by referencing Greenland's Arctic proximity, mineral reserves and inadequate defence capacity.

These actions and words have direct application to Canada. They follow repeated and continuing threats made to Canada since Donald Trump became President. They are occurring on a daily basis right up to this moment. There is a wide consensus among observers, policy experts and stakeholders from across the political spectrum in Canada, from Jason Kenney to Bob Rae, that our country is vulnerable as a result.

### Government Orders

It is vital that members of Parliament be afforded an opportunity to speak to these important and urgent matters, which profoundly affect our sovereignty, security and place in the world. I ask that this emergency debate be approved and conducted forthwith tonight.

SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** I thank the hon. member for Vancouver—Kingsway for his intervention. However, the Speaker is not satisfied that this request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1605)

[English]

### CANADA-INDONESIA COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** moved that Bill C-18, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Canada and Indonesia, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to share my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu:** Madam Speaker, I rise today with pride and conviction to speak in support of Bill C-18, legislation that will bring into force the Canada-Indonesia comprehensive economic partnership agreement. This is a consequential moment for Canada, a moment to choose engagement over hesitation, diversification over dependence, and action over rhetoric. It is a moment to demonstrate that Canada understands the economic realities of the 21st century and is prepared to act decisively in response to them.

The global economy is changing, not gradually, but structurally. Growth is no longer concentrated on a small number of advanced economies. It is shifting towards the Indo-Pacific, towards emerging markets and towards economies with expanding middle classes, increasing infrastructure investments and growing demand for food, energy, manufactured goods and services.

Canada cannot afford to be passive in this environment. That is why our new government is leaning forward. We are all in for Canada. Our economy, our workers and our communities require foresight and deliberate action. Bill C-18 represents exactly that, a strategic decision to ensure Canadian businesses and workers are positioned to compete in the markets that will define future growth.

### *Government Orders*

Indonesia is central to that story. With a population exceeding 275 million potential consumers, Indonesia is the fourth-most populous country in the world and one of the largest economies in Southeast Asia. It is a country undergoing rapid urbanization, industrialization and income growth. Its middle class is expanding by millions every single year. Demand is rising for food, raw materials, infrastructure inputs, clean technology and professional services, areas where Canada has both capacity and global credibility.

Today, trade between Canada and Indonesia is roughly \$6.7 billion in goods and services annually, yet despite that volume, Canadian exporters continue to face tariffs that put them at a disadvantage compared to competitors who are already enjoying preferential access. That is precisely what Bill C-18 changes. Under this agreement, Indonesia will eliminate or reduce tariffs on nearly 86% of tariff lines, covering almost all current Canadian exports. These are not symbolic reductions. They are commercially meaningful changes that affect pricing, competitiveness and long-term investment decisions. Let me be clear about what that means. In agriculture, Indonesian tariffs on Canadian products such as wheat, barley, pulses and oil seeds will be reduced or eliminated entirely.

Indonesia is one of the world's largest importers of wheat and Canadian grain, which is valued for its quality and reliability. Eliminating tariffs ensures that Canadian farmers compete on product excellence. That matters to producers in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba, but it also matters to rail workers, port operators, processors and exporters across Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada who are part of that supply chain.

In agri-food and processed foods, tariff reductions improve access for value-added products that support jobs not only on farms but in processing plants, logistics hubs and other value-add services. These are jobs that sustain rural communities and urban communities alike, including communities like Brampton East, while strengthening food security at home and abroad.

In fish and seafood, Indonesia currently applies tariffs of up to 15% on products such as lobster, salmon, scallops and crab. Under this agreement, those tariffs will be eliminated and phased out. For fish harvesters and processors in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., British Columbia and Quebec, this translates directly into improved margins, stronger export volumes and greater stability in seasonal employment.

In forestry and wood products, tariff reductions will enhance competitiveness for Canadian softwood, pulp and paper products used in Indonesia's expanding construction and packaging sectors. These benefits will flow directly to forestry communities in British Columbia, Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick.

In manufacturing, this agreement will reduce tariffs on industrial goods such as machinery, automotive parts, aerospace components, chemicals and fabricated metals. For manufacturers in southern Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba, this means the ability to bid into projects and supply chains in Southeast Asia without pricing themselves out of contention.

In clean technology and environmental services, the agreement supports Canadian firms working in renewable energy, emissions reductions, water treatment and sustainable infrastructure. As In-

donesia invests billions in energy transition and climate resilience, Canadian companies gain predictable, rules-based access to the market.

This agreement is particularly important for small and medium-sized businesses. Large multinational firms can absorb tariffs, but small businesses often cannot. For them, even a 5% duty can be the difference between entering a market or staying out of it. Eliminating tariffs reduces upfront risks, improves cash flows and allows smaller Canadian firms to plan multi-year export strategies and hire new staff to turn plans into production. This is what trade diversification looks like in practice. This is why it matters now more than ever.

• (1610)

The new government has committed to doubling Canada's non-U.S. exports over the next decade. Bill C-18 is a concrete step toward that goal. Trade is not a simple concept. Trade is people. It is skilled tradespeople seeing consistent demand. It is plant workers and technicians benefiting from expanded production. It is port workers, inspectors and transportation professionals handling growing volumes of Canadian goods. These are resilient, productive jobs that anchor communities.

Canada's primary producers are a vital part of this story, and the message we have received is clear: They support this agreement. Cereals Canada has called the conclusion of this agreement a significant milestone and praised the government's commitment to expanding market access and creating new opportunities for Canadian exporters. That support resonates in provinces like Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba, where grain production supports farm families, transport workers, exporters and related industries. It also strengthens supply chains that reach Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada, connecting communities through stable jobs and increased economic activity.

By securing markets in Indonesia, Canadian farmers gain predictability, allowing them to plan for multi-year harvests, invest in sustainable farming practices and contribute to food security both domestically and globally. It also reinforces Canada's reputation as a dependable supplier of high-quality, ethically produced agriculture products. The Wheat Growers Association has described this agreement as a win for western Canadian farmers, noting Indonesia's growing demand for high-quality grain and the importance of market diversification in protecting livelihoods and strengthening resilience.

These lessons extend far beyond agriculture. They illustrate how strategic trade agreements benefit the broader economy, from manufacturing to services and from urban to rural Canada. When farmers thrive, communities thrive. When exporters grow, supply chains grow. When trade expands, opportunity expands.

In the protein and manufacturing sectors, the Canadian Meat Council and the Canadian Pork Council have described this agreement as a landmark opportunity to expand Canada's presence in the Indo-Pacific. It is clear that when we act decisively, the benefits ripple across sectors, regions and communities, and it positions Canadian processors and manufacturers to invest confidently, knowing that the rules of trade are clear, predictable and fair.

I want to speak directly to this chamber. I believe profoundly in this agreement. I believe in the leadership of the Prime Minister in advancing Canada's role on the global stage. I believe in this government's conviction that Canada must engage, diversify and lead to secure long-term prosperity, and I believe in Canadians: the entrepreneurs, the farmers, the workers and innovators who turn opportunity into results.

However, colleagues across the aisle do not have to take my word for it. The value of this agreement is being affirmed by the Canadians who would put it to work every single day. The exporters, producers, processors, manufacturers, small businesses and workers are ready, prepared and asking Parliament to act. Choosing not to act is a decision. Delaying is a decision. Hesitation is a decision, and in a fast-moving global economy, those decisions carry consequences. Other countries are moving quickly to secure access in fast-growing markets, and Canada must move too.

Bill C-18 would ensure that Canadian workers can compete on a level playing field, it would ensure Canadian businesses are positioned for long-term success, and it would ensure that Canada remains a reliable, rules-based partner. This agreement is not just a document; it is a bridge connecting Canadian ambition with global demand, and we are not stopping with Indonesia.

We are deepening engagement across the Indo-Pacific. We are building new partnerships. We are opening new markets. We are securing Canada's place in the fastest-growing region of the global economy, because leadership means acting, because prosperity means building and because Canada's future will not be shaped by standing still; it will be shaped by stepping forward. Bill C-18 is a statement of confidence in Canada, confidence in our workers, confidence in our businesses and confidence in our future.

We are all in for Canada.

### *Government Orders*

• (1615)

**Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague has brought to this chamber a bill that, on its face, may receive some positive reviews from our side, but we will have to wait to hear and see the bill and examine it at committee.

The minister mentioned rules-based trade. I wondered if he would state for this House whether he agrees with the Prime Minister, who said the rules-based trading system is dead, or whether he agrees with the president of the EU Central Bank, a former IMF chair and minister of finance of France, who said that she does not agree with the Canadian Prime Minister.

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his important work on the trade committee and as my critic.

It is an important time. The member opposite mentioned the Prime Minister. We have been clear with Canadians since the very start. Just over eight months ago, during the election, we promised Canadians that we would be out there diversifying our trading partners, along with in the Speech from the Throne. In our budget, we will be making record-level investments.

We are opening doors. This is what it is going to take to ensure our economic resilience, to ensure that Canadians have opportunities around the world and so that Canada is seen as a reliable trading partner. That is why the calls that we are getting are, "We want to do more with Canada. We want to do more with Canadian workers. We want to do more with Canadian farmers." We are going to be there to continue opening doors for our workers and for our farmers.

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech.

Yes, the agreement allows for market diversification, but it seems to me that it is not modern enough. There is no assurance that the supply chains will be free of forced labour or human rights violations. That issue is not taken into account at all. I think Canada has proven to be a slightly more progressive country in this regard in the past. In our opinion, new agreements should take into account the whole issue of human rights, human rights violations and forced labour.

Why did the government choose to exclude this requirement from the agreement with Indonesia?

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu:** Madam Speaker, with respect to human rights, labour and the environment remain at the heart of our trade policies and our high-standard trade agreements. Canada is deliberate and mindful when negotiating trade agreements, and we prioritize Canadian values, protecting workers' rights and environmental standards.

Building new trading partners around the world is an important driver to promote economic security for Canada. When we look at how trade drives our economy, we see that two-thirds of our economy is powered by international trade. Millions of jobs are directly related to international trade, so we have to continue to be out there knocking on those doors, getting these types of agreements done to build on our 15 free trade agreements.

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of International Trade for this bill. I would also like to commend all the work being done by the Prime Minister and his entire team to develop new partnerships such as this one.

In my riding of Sherbrooke, businesses and entrepreneurs understand full well the importance of diversifying markets, particularly in the current context, and they are ready.

I would like the minister to tell us what tools we are giving them to enable them to take full advantage of partnerships such as the one we are discussing this afternoon.

*[English]*

**Hon. Maninder Sidhu:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my friend and colleague's very important question in terms of the ecosystem that we are developing. I spent 13 years in the private sector facilitating international trade for hundreds of businesses. We need to continue to step up to give those businesses the tools to get export-ready.

In budget 2025, we have announced the Canadian SME export readiness program to get businesses ready to export. Once they are ready to export, we are going to utilize a program called CanExport that will get them to trade shows so they can show off their products and services. Once they have their first shipment ready, we want to be able to facilitate credit for that shipment through EDC, so we are putting about \$25 billion more into credit facilitation. This is about creating an ecosystem so that Canadian businesses and workers can succeed on the global stage.

● (1620)

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin, of course, by acknowledging we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I did have a question for the minister that I was unable to ask, but perhaps I can work it into my speech.

I am sure many of the people watching today's debate in the Canadian House of Commons will be from Indonesia, interested in what Canadian parliamentarians think about their country and this trade agreement. Therefore, I want to start by expressing deep condolences to the people of Indonesia who, just last weekend, experi-

enced an extreme weather event, likely due to climate change. The extreme rainfall event caused landslides. At this point, those landslides in West Java have killed at least 20 people, and there are dozens still missing. We are aware of the difficult time being faced right now by local governments and communities, including naval officials who are still stuck due to the landslides. It is a horrific event.

That brings me to the question I was going to ask the minister. I think I will start by prefacing my speech with this question. We have before us a bill that would appear to be an opportunity for the House of Commons to either agree and ratify a treaty or not. As a matter of law, this treaty likely was considered by both Canada and Indonesia to have come into force when the Prime Minister and the leadership in Indonesia signed the agreement back in September 2025. I think this is somewhat pro forma, which is troubling.

In Canada, which a lot of Canadians would not know, each government, each executive, the Prime Minister and cabinet, has a choice. They can choose to bring a treaty to Parliament for a debate and a vote, or it can be passed solely in cabinet by Governor in Council. In this case, the comprehensive economic partnership agreement between Canada and Indonesia was signed before it ever came to Parliament. We are now debating and considering an act to implement the comprehensive economic partnership agreement. It is kind of a hybrid here.

In the past, we have had many treaties where a prime minister has decided it is so important that we are going to debate it on the floor of the House of Commons and let Parliament vote on it. Let me contrast two with which I am very familiar. One was the time former prime minister Jean Chrétien felt that it was really important for Canada's Parliament, as a whole, to debate and vote on the Kyoto protocol back in 1997, the first of many legally binding climate negotiations that were concluded. Another example was when former prime minister Stephen Harper decided the Canadian Parliament did not need to debate or vote on a very dangerous agreement, which, in the end, was concluded by only a vote in cabinet, by an order in council.

That relates to what I am going to continue to speak about here today. It was the Canada-China Foreign Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement, or FIPA, which never was debated in Parliament but was only carried through the Governor in Council. It allows for, to this day, secret hearings if the People's Republic of China objects to any change in a regulation or rule by a local government, provincial government or whatever. We can then be sued for whatever amount by the politburo of the People's Republic of China because so many of their enterprises are state-owned. In any case, the FIPA with China never came before Parliament.

*Government Orders*

Each federal government has the option of concluding any treaty with a foreign power either through cabinet alone or through bringing it to Parliament for a vote. In this case, I am afraid that this is probably already a legally binding treaty with Indonesia before we discussed it here, and this is the implementation act to bring it forward.

It is very much the case that the Green Party agrees with the goals of the current government, that we need trade diversification. However, we would prefer far more effort to ensure that those agreements we make are with strong democracies that share our values. I can now quote her in this place because she is no longer a member, but former deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland put it this way: “Democracies should depend on democracies, not dictators.” Even in times when we need more trade agreements, more trade diversification and less reliance on the United States, no question, we should look at, excuse the expression, whom we are climbing into bed with on these issues.

● (1625)

I am concerned about the fact that while it is true Indonesia is a democracy, it may be a democracy in name only. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, it has, for years, marked Indonesia down as a flawed democracy. There are many issues, such as were already raised by my friend and colleague from the Bloc Québécois, around human rights within Indonesia and with the fraying of that relationship within a real democracy where the people really decide what the policies are and really control their government. There are many democracies around the world where people may think that may not be the case. In any case, Indonesia still, on paper, is a democracy.

However, when we look at this agreement, and I do want to focus on one specific area and one specific company, we have had a lot of trade with Indonesia already. I question whether it has been to our benefit and whether we should not have reviewed some of these trade arrangements more closely. I speak, of course, of the fact, which is astonishing for most Canadians, that the largest of our pulp and paper enterprises across Canada is a company that is basically controlled in Indonesia. It is called Paper Excellence. It started by buying Northern Pulp in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, and over the years, it then absorbed Domtar, Resolute and Catalyst. It controls a vast amount of Canadian forest, and it runs pulp and paper mills across Canada.

By this agreement, we would now be giving the same thing I mentioned earlier in the foreign investment promotion and protection agreement, which would mean that the Government of Indonesia can complain and go to arbitration if we change our rules or laws and it affects their investments. This is a very strange situation.

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources subpoenaed the leadership of Paper Excellence to come before the committee to explain what it was doing with our pulp and paper industry and with our vast area of forest that it now controls. The entire corporation is controlled by one Indonesian billionaire, Mr. Wijaya, who refused to come before the committee and sent some representatives. The company, on paper, is registered in Vancouver, but again, there is

no transparency. It is not listed on any stock exchange. It is the sole property of one individual billionaire.

By this agreement, which I think is already signed and in law, we have now given investment protection and the ability to go to an investor-state dispute resolution to complain if a Canadian province decides that it was a mistake to let an Indonesian multinational buy up Domtar, Resolute, Catalyst or Northern Pulp and now wishes to protect our forests, protect our forest workers and put in place more protections. I did hear the minister's answer that this agreement does maintain that we are going to seek sustainable development, promote the environment and promote fair labour standards, but we are dealing with a country where those things are rather unknown. It is not clear to me how, in passing Bill C-18, we will get to where we want to go.

In terms of the promised new day and how much this is going to deliver for Canadians, the estimate is that this will increase Canada's GDP by 2040 by 0.012%. Again, we do want to diversify trade, but we do want to be careful.

I look forward to the bill going to committee at second reading, where we can pursue some of these questions.

● (1630)

**Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I always listen intently when the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands speaks in this chamber.

The member opened the door on trading with democracies. She mentioned China by name. I wonder if she would offer an opinion on the Prime Minister's recent deal, if we want to call it a deal, or agreement with the CCP.

**Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, yes, I am deeply concerned if we jettison human rights in an effort to get trade deals. There is a price we pay. I do think we need strengthened diplomatic relationships with the People's Republic of China, but I do not forget what happened to the two Michaels, and I do not forget where we stand for the Uyghurs, other human rights, the people of Tibet and more.

*Government Orders***Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):**

Madam Speaker, when we look at Bill C-18, it is important we put it in the perspective of a commitment in an election platform the Liberal Party presented to Canadians. We have to take a look at the whole issue of the relationship between Canada and the U.S.A. and how critically important it is. Without abandoning our values, we need to look at ways we can increase export opportunities for businesses of all sizes here in Canada and see where we can get that additional investment, again, without abandoning the principles or values Canadians have. This is a piece of legislation that would ultimately continue to advance an important issue of trade. We can put it in this perspective: Canada makes up 0.5% of the population of the world, yet we participate in 2.5% of world trade.

Can I get the leader of the Green Party's overall position on trade?

**Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, we favour trade, particularly fair trade, rooted in Canadian values that prioritizes Canadian-owned businesses and enterprises, and a Canada-first policy that helps get our products first sold across interprovincial barriers and exported to the world. We need to link arms with other democracies that defend human rights.

[Translation]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for the speech she gave as part of this very important debate. In the current context, market diversification is crucial for our businesses. However, I am also a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, so this is an issue that I follow very closely, and I find it troubling that, in 2025, there are still so many children and young women who end up in forced labour.

In any case, the problem in all of these agreements is one that the Bloc Québécois raised through Bill C-228 on which we just voted. If this bill had been allowed to continue to move forward, we could have brought these treaties before the House for debate. It is not right that only the Prime Minister's Office gets to decide on agreements that affect issues that are so critical for local businesses and human rights.

Some countries have already adopted this practice by allowing debates in Parliament when major agreements are signed. What does my colleague think about that?

**Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my esteemed colleague. We are a people who have ignored the child labour situation around the world. The position of Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise, which ensures worker protection and children's rights in global manufacturing and trade, is still vacant today. We need to do more.

[English]

**Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I believe I need to seek unanimous consent to split my time with the esteemed member for Wellington—Halton Hills North.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès):** Does the member for Simcoe North have unanimous consent to split his time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

● (1635)

**Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House of Commons. I consider it a distinct privilege every time I am given the opportunity to use my voice in this place on my constituents' behalf and on behalf of the country and Canadians. It is also a pleasure to rise on a bill on which I think there is general consensus that, speaking for myself, we should send this bill to committee for further scrutiny. I think we have heard some reasonable concerns so far about this bill. It is important to understand how we arrived here.

I understand there have been many conversations between the House leaders looking for areas of collaboration. If one listens to question period every day, one would hear the government talk only about obstruction, but I think this is an example where at least the official opposition party has offered its support to work with the government, to collaborate on moving and expanding our trading relationships for the betterment of Canadian employees, workers and businesses and our citizens around the world.

It is on this expanding trading relationship that I think there is some agreement to promote rules-based trade, although I would say I had to disagree with the Prime Minister when he gave his speech and said the rules-based trading system is dead. I do not think it is dead; on the contrary, I think it is worth fighting for. In fact, members do not have to take my word for it. The esteemed Christine Lagarde, who is the President of the European Central Bank, was the former finance minister in France and also headed the International Monetary Fund, was asked whether she agreed with the Canadian Prime Minister, and her comment was that she was on a different page than the Canadian Prime Minister. I think the rules-based trading system is worth fighting for.

Canada and Indonesia have had a long-standing relationship dating back at least to 1952, but even before that as it was gaining its independence.

As I mentioned before, while Conservatives generally support this bill moving to committee, we do think there are some issues that require further scrutiny, including those around procurement opportunities. I read the bill. At first glance, from feedback, there were a number of stakeholders who welcomed the bill. There were also a few individuals who highlighted the fact that with respect to procurement, it would appear that Indonesian firms have the access and ability to bid on Canadian government procurement projects; however, that same access is not afforded, by right, to Canadian firms to bid on projects in Indonesia. They would be welcome to indicate their willingness to bid, but they would have to be invited by the government to do so. I think that is an area of the bill that we would seek more information on and discuss in committee, to further scrutinize it to make sure Canadian firms are receiving equal preference.

*Government Orders*

I as an individual, but Conservatives also, have generally always stood for free-but-fair trade, and that includes reciprocity. We need to make sure that if we are giving market access to one group of producers in one country, we are afforded that same access when Canadian firms are abroad.

I am happy to report that the trade committee is working relatively well at the moment. We have a government bill that we have agreed to move forward in, again, the spirit of collaboration with the government that would allow the U.K. to ascend to the CPTPP, which I think is yet another proof point on how Parliament can work together.

I will remind everyone that we just had an election. About 41% of Canadians voted for folks on this side of the House, a few more per cent of Canadians voted for people just behind me, and just over 41% or 42% voted for people on the government side. I think that was a signal from Canadians that they expect this Parliament to find ways to work together, and I believe we are doing that.

Prime Minister Harper had embarked on an aggressive trade deal expansion, which really set up a number of agreements, including the one with the E.U. and member nations, on which this current government has built.

• (1640)

I do not think we always agree on many things in this chamber. I said to the minister yesterday at committee that I do not agree with a lot of what the Liberal government does: the spending, the over-taxation, doubling of the deficits. The government prefers to spend valuable police resources confiscating firearms from law-abiding citizens instead of actually going after criminals, gangs and smugglers of illegal firearms. I am skeptical of the government's decision to get a little closer to the Politburo in Beijing. However, I will not let all of those issues on which I disagree with the government blind me from acknowledging that we need to work together to expand our trading relationships.

On this issue, members can rest assured that because this is on behalf of the benefit of Canadians, because we believe that expanding our trading relationships and diversifying trade is an important step to take for our producers, our employees and our businesses, it is an area on which there is consensus. I offer my support; that is one word to use. I offer my hand in collaboration with the government to ensure we can continue to deliver to Canadians expanded access across the globe. It is an important thing to expand our trade, but we will hold the government accountable when it is making these decisions.

As I mentioned, we have some questions about Bill C-18. We will not just blindly agree and support the government on every trade bill it brings forward. We believe it needs to go through the proper process, but we are here to work with the government.

I have to mention that I do have concerns with the government travelling to Qatar and to China. I think that will have some long-standing difficult situations that we will face ourselves. I think it is an acknowledgement and a confirmation to the CCP in Beijing that its tactics have worked when we have capitulated because of the way it squeezed us on tariffs. I would hope the government is taking some lessons from the way Mexico has been operating.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands recognized that this trade deal will only increase the GDP by, if I am correct, 0.0012%. That is not going to replace the big “elephant in the room” deal with the United States. We had a relationship with Americans and the United States before the current president. We will have a relationship with Americans and the United States after the current president. It is important that we sort out that relationship in a way that benefits everyone in North America, including Americans, Mexicans and Canadians, for the benefit of us all, not just for our economy but for peace and security and for certainty.

That is the primary job of the government. It was elected on a promise to manage that relationship. We are still waiting. Until then, we are happy to support the government as it tries to expand trading relationships across the globe.

**John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree it is a priority for Canada to diversify our economy and increase trade. It was good to hear that tacit support and offer of collaboration from the member opposite. Having greater Canadian access to the eighth-largest economy in the world, certainly on agriculture, seafood and lumber, is great news for Canadians.

Focusing in on Ontario, looking at opportunities for aerospace, clean technology, advanced manufacturing, minerals, mining and energy, I wonder if the member opposite sees any particular benefits for Ontario in this trade deal.

• (1645)

**Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, that is my first question from that member, although I do hear him often in question period. I welcome him to the chamber.

I would agree with the member in the sense that there are opportunities for Ontario, especially as it relates to agriculture. This is also something that applies across the country. Indonesia is poised to become one of the largest markets, not only by population but also by a growing GDP, so that will mean it will have a greater demand for high-quality agriculture products. I think we can satisfy that demand.

[*Translation*]

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague and friend on his very interesting speech. He always shares such insightful thoughts with us in the House.

We are in favour in principle of having an agreement with Indonesia. We must continue to diversify markets, but, as he said, the United States is still our main partner, so we will have to continue to negotiate and trade with it.

*Government Orders*

I want to ask my colleague about workers' rights. Modern trade agreements should increasingly include provisions to ensure that these rights are upheld. Indonesia, a big country with a rich culture, is committed to this, but the reality is that the widespread use of subcontracting has given rise to a number of confirmed cases of child labour. About one million children are reportedly engaged in child labour. We know how important the textile industry is there. Then there is the leather tanning industry, which uses chemicals that are hazardous to the migrant workers, who are often women.

What does my hon. colleague think about that?

[*English*]

**Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for his partnership, which was for a long time, on the finance committee. We did such a good job, they actually moved us to other committees. He is a very thoughtful individual, and I am proud to serve with him in this place.

I do think it is important to consider labour rights, especially for young people. I note that the Bloc has a bill regarding forced labour. We have also been looking at that issue at the trade committee in support of examining it further. That would be another area of concern that we should further scrutinise in this bill when it goes to the trade committee, if that is the will of the House.

**Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for highlighting the history the Conservative Party when it comes to trade deals. Could he expand a bit more on why the Conservative Party has traditionally supported free trade and why it is something that is so important to so many members on this side of the House?

**Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, from the very early days of this country, and even before it was formed, Canadians and those before us realized the importance of trade. We cannot satisfy ourselves with exactly everything that we need, but it is not just that; we actually have many things that the world needs, and we can trade those things for what we need here at home.

From the earliest days of the founding members of our country up to today, Conservatives have always supported free trade, but it also has to be fair trade. It is built on reciprocity. That is, if we give something, we must get something. That is an important distinction that we have to make sure is upheld, a principle that we need to have as our shining light or North Star.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Agriculture and Agri-Food; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Health; the hon. member for Calgary Crowfoot, International Trade.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians elected a minority government, and Conservatives fully respect the democratic will of the electorate. That is why, as His Majesty's loyal official opposition, we will carry out our constitutional responsibilities within the House.

• (1650)

[*English*]

On some matters, we will oppose the government as the official opposition, which is a constitutionally mandated role in a Westminster parliamentary democracy. On other matters, we will support the government, seeing as Canadians did not give the government a majority, which requires the opposition to play a role in moving certain matters forward in the House.

Conservatives respect the democratic will of Canadians as expressed in the last election. The government needs to do the same. That means the government needs to understand that, on certain bills in front of the House, we will oppose the government, and on other bills in front of the House, we will support the government.

It is not reasonable for the government to expect the opposition in the House to support it in all and any bills that it brings before the House. That would undermine the constitutional role the official opposition has in holding the appointed executive to account.

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives support Bill C-18, just as we supported Bill C-13, an act to implement the protocol on the accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, and just as we have supported many other bills over the past year in this Parliament.

[*English*]

We have supported the following six government bills: Bill S-2, an act to amend the Indian Act; Bill S-3, an act to amend the Weights and Measures Act and other acts; Bill C-4, an act respecting certain affordability measures for Canadians; Bill C-5, an act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act; and Bill C-12, the strengthening Canada's immigration system and borders act.

Recently, we agreed that we would expedite the study and passage of Bill C-14, the bail and sentencing reform act. We have been clear that good ideas in the interest of Canadians will win our support. Including the bill in front of us today, we have supported eight government bills in this Parliament just in the last year.

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives support Bill C-18, an act to implement the comprehensive economic partnership agreement between Canada and Indonesia, because we support diversifying our trade with other partners, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

*Government Orders**[English]*

This agreement would eventually reduce tariffs on 97% of Canadian exports destined for Indonesia. However, the government procurement in this trade agreement requires further scrutiny. Indonesian firms could bid on Canadian contracts, but Canadian firms could only bid on Indonesian government procurement if it is expressly opened. Indonesian government procurement is largely closed.

Other trading partners of Canada secured better agreements with Indonesia on government procurement rules, including the United Arab Emirates and the European Union. The European Union also negotiated a commitment to begin market access negotiations. Canada has no specific timeline to begin negotiating market access. For Canada, market access is left to further negotiations and no published coverage schedules.

However, Conservatives will support passing Bill C-18 to committee, but we would scrutinize the effectiveness of this agreement and point to ways that it could be better utilized.

*[Translation]*

I would like to conclude my remarks on our support for this bill by adding the following: Just signing trade agreements is not enough to diversify our trade away from our main trading partner.

*[English]*

To capitalize on these trade agreements and these investment deals, the Government of Canada needs to do two other things. These are two things that the government has not been doing and that, if left undone, would prevent us from significantly diversifying trade away from our largest trading partner.

The first thing we need to do is make Canadian goods and services more competitive to buyers in Asia and in Europe. Over the last decade, the Canadian economy has become uncompetitive, and many of our goods and services are no longer desired by buyers in Asia and in Europe. The trade data bears this out.

In the year 2000, Canadian exports, expressed as a per cent of our gross domestic product, were 42%. In 2024, the last year for which we have data, our global exports, expressed as a per cent of our GDP, had dropped to 33%, which is a 9% drop. Clearly, our products and services are not as desirable to foreign buyers as they once were. That is because the Canadian economy has become uncompetitive and over-regulated.

Our tax system has become a completely Byzantine mess, and this includes both the personal and corporate income tax system. We need to overhaul competition policy to make our economy more competitive. We need to eliminate regulation and the regulatory overburden that is strangling our competitiveness. We need to overhaul our personal and corporate income tax system in the same ambitious way that we once did in 1971 and in 1986. The government has introduced none of these types of reforms to get our economy moving and to make our goods and services more desirable for buyers in Asia and Europe.

The second thing we need to do is increase the physical capability of exporting more goods and commodities to global markets via

the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Currently, we do not have the capacity to significantly increase exports of commodities or goods via our country's largest ports. The port of Vancouver, which is our largest port and a federal entity, is woefully inefficient. According to a Standard & Poor's global study that was commissioned in 2024 by the World Bank, the port of Vancouver ranked 389 out of 403 global ports for efficiency. It is critical to have sufficient trade corridor infrastructure to significantly increase the export of commodities and goods via our ports to Asia or Europe.

Here is another example of a lack of trade corridor infrastructure: Canada is the largest high-income nation in the world without a comprehensive national highway system, and by highway, I mean an autobahn, an expressway or an autoroute, a system that would run from coast to coast, be entirely grade-separated, have no cross-traffic and have four or more lanes, two or more in each direction, allowing travel that is unimpeded by traffic signals, driveways, stop signs or intersections.

I encourage anyone listening to go to Google Maps to map out the fastest way from Halifax to Vancouver or from Toronto to Vancouver. Every single route will route us through the United States of America, through the U.S. interstate system, which is faster and more efficient than any highway system we have in this country. That is just one example of the lack of trade corridor infrastructure that prevents us from significantly diversifying trade beyond that with our largest trading partner.

Again, the government has introduced no real plans to significantly expand trade corridor infrastructure or improve its efficiency.

● (1655)

*[Translation]*

As I said, we support Bill C-18, just as we have supported seven other government bills in the House. However, simply signing trade agreements will not do much to diversify our trade unless the government does the necessary work here in this country to make our economy more competitive and ensure that the essential infrastructure is in place to export our goods and resources to global markets.

*Government Orders*

• (1700)

[English]

**John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of areas on which the member and I largely agree, which is really good to hear. I really appreciated his discussion of the need for investment in ports, trade corridors and infrastructure, which is, of course, an important part of budget 2025. In particular, the port of Hamilton has direct access to the Atlantic through the St. Lawrence Seaway, a key export hub for Ontario, along with Hamilton airport, which is the busiest overnight cargo airport in the entire country.

I want to ask the member about this new approach to collaboration and good faith, whether that will extend to committees, and how long we can expect it to last.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, this is not a new approach. I enumerated five bills that we already supported in the last year of this Parliament, Bill S-2, Bill S-3, Bill C-4, Bill C-5, Bill C-12, and now, in addition to that, Bill C-14 and the bill that is now in front of the House, Bill C-18. We have been supporting some pieces of legislation to move ahead.

The government would like to present a narrative that the opposition is being obstructionist, because I think it would like to pull the pin early on a federal election.

[Translation]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in my previous question, I reminded the House that the Bloc Québécois is very committed to addressing these international trade issues.

My colleague from Jonquière introduced Bill C-228, which aimed to establish a committee to discuss these treaties here in the House, to negotiate international agreements.

I would like to come back to that because my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton also introduced Bill C-251, which seeks to ensure that the goods we import are free from the taint of modern slavery and human trafficking. I am part of a group that discusses this issue, and we have learned that, unfortunately, in 2026, many women and children are still in forced labour situations. There are many risks.

What does my colleague think about our bill?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question about importing goods made with forced labour. That is a major problem. I think the crux of the problem is this.

[English]

Canadian law bans the importation of products produced from forced labour. This was first agreed to in the Canada-U.S.-Mexico trade agreement and then, subsequently, implemented in Canadian law. Importing products into Canada via forced labour is already banned. The problem is that the government has not enforced the law.

For example, thousands of shipments of cargo containers from western China that have been produced using Uyghur forced labour have been interdicted by U.S. authorities and prevented from entering the United States over the last five years. In Canada, not a sin-

gle cargo container has been stopped and prevented from entering Canadian supply chains under the CUSMA agreement, and that is to the shame of the Canadian government, which, after five years, has failed to enforce our treaty obligations.

**Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is of interest to me that, as my colleague pointed out, while the Prime Minister called the Canada-Indonesia CEPA a game-changing agreement, it is comparably disadvantaged with respect to the agreements Indonesia has with the U.A.E. and the EU.

I want my colleague to elaborate further. What does this kind of situation reflect? Is it because of incompetence on the part of the government or any kind of failure on the part of the federal government?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's question allows me to point out in greater detail that the Canadian government was not as successful in negotiating this trade agreement with Indonesia as the United Arab Emirates or the European Union were. The United Arab Emirates secured a 10% price preference in Indonesian procurement tenders and enhanced access for U.A.E. businesses to Indonesian government procurement opportunities. The European Union managed to secure non-discrimination obligations from Indonesia in government procurement. There is no such clause in this agreement in front of the House today.

As I mentioned earlier, the European Union also negotiated a commitment to begin market access negotiations on a scheduled timeline. The Canadian government did not secure the same explicit timeline in the agreement in front of the House. Clearly, it could have done a better job in negotiating this agreement.

• (1705)

**Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Wellington—Halton Hills—North mentioned Bill C-4. It passed this place quickly. I am very concerned about part 4 of Bill C-4, which would change the Elections Act to eliminate any privacy protections for Canadians. I wonder if he has any thoughts on whether we can still stop it in the Senate.

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I would simply say in response that I think the more pressing issue to protect our political process and our democracy is for the government to expeditiously and forthwith implement the foreign influence transparency registry, which I think would counteract the single biggest threat to our democracy, which is Beijing's foreign interference.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say hello to all my colleagues. Please excuse my hoarse voice. I seem to have caught a cold, probably from partying too hard over the holidays. My energy levels are still not back to normal, and neither is my voice. In any case, I am happy to be here. It lifts my spirits. I want to wish everyone a happy new year, although it is getting rather late to say that.

Today, we are talking about a bill to implement a new economic and trade agreement with Indonesia. I will start with the good before moving on to the bad.

Indonesia is a very large market. This bill provides a good opportunity for Quebec companies in a business environment that would be more stable and predictable, as is generally guaranteed by most agreements. It would support long-term investment and export development. The expansion of trade with Southeast Asia is also a great opportunity for green technologies, but not at any cost. I will talk about that in a moment. It is a good market. Of course, it will never replace the United States, which is something we will continue to point out. There is no easy fix.

It reminds me a little of that Indo-Pacific strategy that was announced with great fanfare a few years ago. I attended the briefing at the time, and later I asked a question. I said that Pierre Elliott Trudeau had announced a strategy, that Jean Chrétien had announced a strategy and that Stephen Harper had announced a strategy. Now it was Justin Trudeau's turn. I asked how this time would be any different. The answer I got was that there really would be a strategy this time and that we needed to have faith. A few months later, however, we found out that the Indo-Pacific strategy would be going ahead without India, because relations had broken down and negotiations had stalled. It was an Indo-Pacific strategy without India. My colleagues may make of that what they will.

However, we cannot say no to a good thing. We cannot be against the idea of an agreement with Indonesia in principle. I say "in principle" because we are very uncertain about supporting this all the way through. I will talk about our reservations.

I am going to start by talking about the method. It is nothing new: Parliament does not debate the actual agreement; it debates an implementation bill. Parliament passes laws according to a well-established process that involves conducting a detailed study in committee and holding public hearings. However, Parliament is largely excluded from the treaty-making process. Members will recall that the Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-228, which was rejected about an hour or two before this debate right now. It is almost as though the parliamentarians here are unwilling to do their job as parliamentarians, and that is absolutely shameful. It amounts to saying that it is a lot easier to hand off all responsibility to the executive, let it do what it wants, engage in negotiations and then ratify the agreement. Ultimately, we will end up debating and studying it for the first time during the negotiation process, which is extremely secretive. In the end, debating and amending a bill allows little opportunity to change much of what is in the agreement.

We are mere elected representatives of the people. Let us not forget that Canada is a monarchy. We are mere elected representatives of the people sent here to argue positions and raise points. There

are things we would like agreements to include, things we would prefer they not include, and things we would like to advance on, but our wishes neither count nor matter, so they get pushed aside. I thank all my Bloc Québécois colleagues for voting in favour of this bill. I also want to thank the two Conservatives who voted for our bill earlier.

What is even more worrisome now is the human rights situation in Indonesia, particularly with respect to goods being produced for the Canadian market. The agreement will primarily benefit mining companies and the fossil fuel industry, and it puts respect for human rights and sustainable industrial development on the back burner.

I also have to mention the notorious investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms, which I talk about every time this comes up, and I will come back to this point a little later. This agreement includes such a mechanism, and it serves as a bit of right to profit for multinationals. It gives them the right to sue the governments where they invest if they feel that their profits have been adversely affected. It allows them to be treated as true sovereign powers and to take states and governments to court. It allows a multinational corporation to effectively override the democratic will of elected officials who may have adopted a policy that, according to that multinational, would undermine its right to profit. There are plenty of examples, each more scandalous than the last. When this mechanism was removed from CUSMA, we thought that Canada had finally entered the 21st century, that it had finally listened to common sense. However, as we saw with the bill that was on the agenda earlier, parliamentarians here like to shirk their responsibilities.

• (1710)

As a result, they are still quite capable of living with the fact that multinationals are overturning their decisions, even if it means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for governments to legislate on issues relating to social justice, the environment, labour conditions and public health.

According to a report from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development dating from 2013, which does not take into account disputes initiated since then, 42% of cases were decided in favour of the state while 31% were in favour of the business. The remaining cases were settled. That means that, in 58% of cases, the claimants managed to completely or partially force the political leadership to backtrack.

Moreover, this quantitative data ignores an aspect that cannot be calculated: the pressure this puts on people responsible for establishing policy proactively. They might hesitate to pursue certain things for fear of being sued. There is clearly a deterrent effect in these mechanisms. Moreover, these disputes are very lucrative for large international law firms.

### *Government Orders*

We have always opposed that, and I will continue to oppose it at committee. I do that all the time. Even when I vote in favour of certain trade agreements, I always vote against provisions that allow for investor-state dispute settlement under local law. After the committee reviews the bill being considered in the House, then I will decide whether I am ultimately for or against it. However, in either case, I will definitely vote against investor-state dispute settlement. I can give my word on that.

After all, Indonesia is a relatively poor country. Foreign investors should not be able to use the free trade agreement to dictate their will under threat of legal action. This would undermine the sovereignty of Indonesians, who already have so few rights. We will continue to oppose having this mechanism included in the agreement. If it were to be removed, we would undoubtedly be more favourable to the bill when it reaches the final stage.

Let us also talk about rights. During consultations on the agreement, working groups pointed out the prevalence of forced labour and human rights violations in Indonesian supply chains. They encouraged the government to include strong protections for workers, indigenous communities and the environment. Unfortunately, there is nothing about that in the agreement. There are no guarantees and no binding protections. The agreement even reverses the progress made on labour protections obtained by workers in some recent agreements, including the agreement with Ukraine. The only amendment that was retained in the agreement with Ukraine was mine. We were told that this needed to be monitored more closely, but that overall it was a real step forward.

However, after the Prime Minister signed agreements with Qatar and China, it became clear that human rights are not one of his top priorities. That is not the case for us. Human rights are important to us and we are committed to standing up for these values. The preamble of the agreement is totally ridiculous because it basically says that these are principles, period.

Indonesia is the largest manufacturing economy in Southeast Asia. The manufacturing economy accounts for more than 20% of its GDP. The manufacturing industry has really been a major part of Indonesia's modern economy. Unfortunately, Indonesia has gotten richer at the expense of human rights. That is putting it mildly. Although the Indonesian government requires all industries to comply with child labour laws, it has been reported that approximately 1.01 million children were involved in child labour in 2023. This is important and it must be taken into account. That will be coming our way before long.

There are many layers and subcontractors in the supply chains, which makes traceability challenging. This often makes it difficult to know the conditions under which certain products, like clothing, are manufactured.

There is no longer any doubt that the people who work in clothes manufacturing in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia—whether they are involved in cutting, sewing or bonding—often work in dangerous conditions for poverty wages, without any social safety net and without a formal contract. These workers are often exposed to harmful chemicals and unsafe work environments.

• (1715)

That danger is also evident in the leather tanning industry. Workers, often migrants, handle hides and hazardous chemicals and are exposed to significant health risks, particularly from the chromium compounds used in tanning.

The rights of migrant workers, especially women, remain vulnerable in Indonesia. The United Nations Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families has indicated that 70% of migrant workers in Indonesia are women and it has emphasized the need for measures to protect these women from harassment and exploitation. The committee learned that these women are frequently victims of abuse and that those employed in the fishing industry, often in irregular situations, are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.

If Canada is looking to increase imports of clothing, fishery products and leather from Indonesia, it is imperative that we strengthen worker protections and ensure that our fundamental values are upheld, particularly with regard to human rights, so that our trade is not conducted at the expense of ethics.

That is why I introduced Bill C-251, which essentially copies the American model that works quite well, whereas Canada has almost never seized anything in its entire history. The burden of proof is reversed, and when entities, regions or companies are presumed to be using forced labour, the onus is on the importer to prove otherwise. It works. It has proven its worth. Canada's model, which relies entirely on the goodwill of customs officers, does not work.

Twice, in the March 2023 budget and in the March 2024 budget, we read verbatim that such legislation was going to be introduced by the end of the year, whether it was 2023 or 2024. As far as I know, it is now 2026 and we have not seen anything yet. I should mention that it was not spoken of again in budget 2025, although I imagine that has nothing to do with the Prime Minister's kowtowing to China's dictatorship. There is probably no connection; it must be me who is crazy. In any case, we are going to have to get moving on that. In due course, I hope the House will pass this bill.

I also want to talk about palm oil. Palm oil is already being imported into Canada. It is the most widely consumed vegetable oil in the world. Indonesia is a major palm oil producer. Palm oil imports into Canada are increasing at a startling rate. However, the production process is associated with a real environmental and human cost. Huge swaths of tropical forests are being destroyed, often by burning, to make way for plantations, resulting in a massive loss of biodiversity and threatening iconic species such as orangutans. This deforestation also contributes to air pollution and climate change. In terms of the social impact, the expansion of plantations, often carried out under the direction of warlords, frequently occurs at the expense of local and indigenous communities, in a context of abusive working conditions, exploitation and sometimes forced labour.

This agreement severely exacerbates the situation by stimulating the production and export of palm oil, without imposing any serious requirements, even though this would have been the perfect opportunity to do so. Some folks might wonder what I am talking about and whether this problem is really serious. The European Union created a panel on EU measures concerning palm oil and biofuels from Indonesia to address issues surrounding the production and import of these products into Canada. I think that shows the situation is quite serious.

It is also important to discuss any additional harms we might be causing there. Canada produces a large amount of plastic waste every year, but only a small portion of it is actually recycled here. A significant portion of what we think of as being recycled ends up in foreign countries for processing, particularly in the United States or Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, where recycling infrastructure cannot handle these kinds of volumes. Some of this waste, which is often hard to recycle and mixed with garbage, ends up in landfills or is burned in open air pits, polluting the local environment and exposing communities to health and environmental risks. Activists and experts argue that continuing to export plastic waste to countries that are not equipped to process it is not a sustainable solution. In addition, this goes against Canada's so-called targets for reducing plastic pollution and violates the principles of international law regarding waste management.

● (1720)

I also want to talk about mining and conflicts between mining investors and governments. Canada, incidentally, is a haven for mining companies. Canada is a flag of convenience, because these mining companies are often not actually Canadian at all. They are simply registered here. All they need is a post office box to be able to benefit from the advantages of the TSX. That is why most of the world's mining companies are registered here, because it gives them advantages.

Conflicts between mining investors and governments often begin as conflicts between investors and local communities, which are initially displaced from their lands or suffer environmental degradation, such as contaminated drinking water. I have seen this happen in Colombia and Chile. I have spoken with people who have been affected by air pollution, water pollution, the use of private security firms that have fired point-blank at locals. There are a number of documented cases today. We also know that in many of these cases, investigations revealed that Canadian embassies had an official line of pro-mining diplomacy, always supporting these companies. It is all well and good to go and talk about human rights in Davos in front of a bunch of people wearing shiny shoes and \$2,000 suits, but we should really be taking concrete action on this, too.

These disputes are often caused or exacerbated by a lack of adequate consultation on the project. In Indonesia, the community on the small island of Sangihe is a case in point. This community has long been fighting to prevent the Canadian company Baru Gold from starting industrial gold mining operations. If the community succeeds in stopping the project, but the agreement is ratified in Canada and Indonesia, the company would have the option of suing Indonesia for lost profits. On what grounds? On the grounds of the investor-state dispute settlement I mentioned earlier. Is that not a wonderful thing? Well, that is what Canada is defending.

### *Government Orders*

The current reconfiguration of trade partnerships and supply chains calls for severe and strict requirements for ethical consistency: no economic ties should be maintained with suppliers or states involved in human exploitation or trafficking, particularly to the detriment of the Uyghur and Tibetan peoples, in the case of China. Of course, we will never cut off economic ties with the regions that are affected, but we must nevertheless be firm with the states that are in charge.

Lastly, we also have to bear in mind that Quebec and the provinces are responsible for implementing the provisions of treaties within their areas of jurisdiction. The Bloc Québécois demands respect for this sovereignty. Quebec has its own Indo-Pacific strategy—which pre-dates Canada's, if I am not mistaken—that aims to support Quebec exporters and attract foreign direct investors from that part of the world.

Yes, we are in favour of trade. The Bloc Québécois is the natural successor and supporter of the independence movement that was among the first to advocate for free trade with the United States in the 1980s. Free trade gave us a chance to breathe, to escape the confines of the Canadian market. We are still in favour of it, provided, of course, that the products we get are untainted by human rights abuses.

● (1725)

**Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He did a great job of outlining some issues that I hope will be considered in the agreement. However, coming from a very agricultural riding, I am a bit surprised. I do not think my colleague has spoken much on that matter before. Furthermore, 45% of manufacturing companies in his riding export products outside Quebec.

Can my colleague tell me how this agreement will help businesses in his riding?

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I honestly have nothing against the agreement and the fact that it includes grains. That is fine, and I am sure it will create opportunities. If the agreement comes into force, I will definitely hold training sessions with farmers, the Quebec farmers' union and local chambers of commerce to explain what they can do. We will help them to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

I chose to talk about the grey areas, which are extremely important, because they could be a deal breaker. They could be extremely important for us. I would rather not talk too much about how great exports are for our sectors, because there are so many examples. I usually do that for other agreements, but this agreement seems to have more grey areas and dangers than the other agreements that we have reviewed in the House before.

*Government Orders*

That is why I am also saying that I hope that there will be some extremely convincing arguments in committee on the issues that I raised today so that we can vote in favour of this at the end of the process.

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in the amendments dealing with human rights, environmental issues and everything else.

Can my colleague talk a little more about that?

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I spoke about it for about 20 minutes already. I do not know what else I could say.

Let us move away from the agreement, and I will talk in general terms about what we need. I want to come back to my bill, C-251. Hopefully, if it does come back to the House, the Conservatives will support it. That would be much appreciated. It would also allow us to regain the trust of the Americans, since we would have a piece of legislation that is common or similar across North America. I think that would go over very well. I have often talked about it with U.S. elected officials, who told me that it was a good idea and that they hoped it would pass.

Aside from that, I think we need a real ombudsperson. I have always felt that having the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise is not enough. My preference is for a truly independent commission of inquiry that does not just wait for complaints.

However, if the current ombudsperson, since one already exists, could at least have the power to compel witnesses to testify and documents to be produced, we would have a tool that actually has teeth.

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank and congratulate my colleague and friend for his speech. He is truly an expert on matters of international trade. He has depth and a strong, confident philosophy.

A few hours ago, the Liberals and a majority of the Conservatives voted against a Bloc Québécois bill on the prior review of treaties by Parliament.

He touched on this in his speech, but I would like to ask him the following. If such a law had been passed by the House, what would it have allowed us, as parliamentarians or legislators, to do with regard to the treaty under consideration?

• (1730)

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, the bill before us contains a number of items. First, the good news: This time, unlike the last agreement tabled here, the deadline between tabling an agreement and introducing the bill ratifying it in the House was met. That did not happen for the United Kingdom's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP. That bill is currently being studied by the Standing Committee on International Trade, but it was debated in the fall, if I am not mistaken. The deadline was not met in that case.

Ironically, when we tabled the bill that was defeated earlier, I was told by the members opposite that we did not need a bill like that because an official policy already existed. However, they had just violated that policy two days earlier with the protocol on the accession of the U.K. to the CPTPP.

In addition to that deadline, the bill would have allowed us to hold debates and instruct negotiators ahead of time on the political will of legislators. Honestly, Canada is one of the worst countries on the planet on this issue. In the United States, debates are held before treaties are signed. In the European Union, debates are held before treaties are signed. Not only is there a complete lack of transparency here in terms of political participation, but negotiations are also conducted in the utmost secrecy.

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to first provide a comment. It is important to note that the Bloc legislation that was being introduced was actually defeated by both the Liberals and the Conservatives, ultimately for good reason, and there was a good, healthy debate on that particular piece of legislation.

I want to go back to the issue of agriculture. The Prime Minister was in China with a team of individuals. I represent a riding in the province of Manitoba. The issue of canola and other cereal crops was being discussed. There were also other issues like, for example, our Atlantic fisheries and fisheries in other areas where there were outstanding issues with China, and we were able to come up with a compromise that ultimately takes away some of those irritants.

Does the member believe it was in the farmers' and others' best interests to get that agreement?

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to keep giving the same answer to these questions. His colleague just asked the same question. The positive parts are positive. I have no problem saying so.

That is all.

[*English*]

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague referenced some of the human rights violations committed by the CCP. I want to mention to the House that I had the honour this afternoon of meeting with members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, who are here in Canada. Part of what they are doing is highlighting the case of the 11th Panchen Lama, who was detained and disappeared by the CCP more than 30 years ago. His whereabouts remain unknown.

Oftentimes, we hear discussions about the detention of Canadian citizens in the past tense, without acknowledging the fact that we continue to have the detention of Huseyin Celil, a Canadian citizen who has four children here in Canada. The detention has gone on for so long that, sadly, the youngest child in this family never had an opportunity to meet his father before he was taken illegally from a third country and brought to China, where he is incarcerated. He is a Canadian citizen and a human rights activist.

*Government Orders*

I think these specific cases of the Panchen Lama and Huseyin Celil, and other human rights abuses, really put into sharp focus our moral obligations, as well as the strategic importance of defending justice and human rights and defending Canadian citizens. I wonder if my colleague has reflections on that.

[*Translation*]

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's intervention, and I wholeheartedly agree. However, to be honest, I did not hear any specific questions. I will simply say that I thank him for his work in this area. We are also working together as part of certain interparliamentary associations, some of which specifically focus on the issue of human rights violations in China and on Chinese influence and subversive activities abroad.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleague on this issue.

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I travelled to Washington in 2023 with a delegation of Uyghurs to meet with American elected officials and speak with them about this law.

This was mentioned earlier, but Canada has managed to intercept just one single container. We keep using this example because it is striking to see just how much we need a law that has a lot more teeth. This shows that it is not incompatible to propose tougher measures to combat forced labour, as proposed in our Bill C-251. It is not unreasonable in a context where this is what American elected officials are calling for. It is actually quite positive at a time when we are trying to dialogue with them on good treaty and international trade practices.

Talking about human rights is not a bad thing. My colleague's bill is a great example of that. It directly responds to a request from American elected officials, who urged us to be more proactive and to intercept a lot more goods made with forced labour in order to ensure that our products are completely untainted.

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

• (1735)

**Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I think that, as we pursue a more stable geopolitical environment, that is a given. It would help restore ties with the United States. It is a model that has proven its worth. I am not saying that is the only reason. If the model does not work, I would not say that we need to follow it just for the sake of following it. If it works, why not draw inspiration from it? That is what I am trying to get at.

It worked for them. If I am not mistaken, they seized goods worth billions of U.S. dollars from a single region, the Uyghur region, to be specific. Indeed, according to the latest statistics, it was one shipment in Canada but now it is a bit more. Again, there is no comparison. The Canadian model is a clear failure.

[*English*]

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time.

Today, the House is debating a trade deal between Canada and Indonesia. It is a deal that Conservatives support advancing to the next stage of consideration.

In the context of this agreement, I would like to offer a few observations about the state of the world that have bearing on how and with whom we make international agreements. Over the course of my time following international affairs, we witnessed a dramatic shift in tone and expectations within certain parts of the democratic world. That shift has been from the unrealistic Liberal optimism of the past to the exaggerated Liberal pessimism of the present.

In an earlier era, Liberal optimism was evident in the attitudes and decisions of elite figures who proclaimed an inevitable march of history towards democracy, freedom, justice and an international rules-based order. Liberals thought it would happen, and they thought it would happen relatively easily. This optimism held, for instance, that engagement and increased trade with China and other authoritarian countries would gradually, inevitably transform their governments into progressive democracies. It is easy to see why Liberal optimism is no longer in vogue. It is no longer popular, because it clearly failed.

Authoritarian regimes that were once hiding their strengths and biding their time are now confidently asserting the supposed superiority of their political model and even winning converts in the free world. In some quarters, the transformation has been from this naive optimism to a new Liberal pessimism, vividly on display in the Prime Minister's recent remarks at Davos. No longer is the triumph of freedom, democracy, justice and an international rules-based order presented as history's inevitable endpoint. Instead, the idea of a free, open and liberal international order is dismissed as a mirage, as an allusion akin to the lies once propagated by communist apparatchiks.

The argument of the Prime Minister was this false equivalency that both the authoritarian system and the liberal rules-based system are based on lies. The Prime Minister is not merely arguing that a rules-based order is difficult to achieve, under strain or not guaranteed. Rather, he is arguing that the very idea of such an order is fundamentally necessarily an illusion.

I do want to point out that both of these dispositions, yesterday's Liberal optimism and today's Liberal pessimism, have ironically been used to justify the same policy agenda. The Liberal Party of Canada, at least since Pierre Trudeau, has always wanted to pivot away from a foreign policy of engagement primarily with democracies towards a foreign policy that seeks a kind of strategic balance between the United States and Communist China. The Liberals have always been interested in the idea of ever-deepening engagement with authoritarian powers, especially the CCP, though they have justified it in radically different ways.

### *Government Orders*

In the past, Liberal optimism was used to justify engagement with authoritarian powers on the grounds that such engagement would speed us towards the inevitable triumph of democracy. Today, Liberal pessimism justifies the same engagement, but this time on the grounds that such engagement is necessary and pragmatic in a world where international rules were always a mirage anyway.

How curious that leaders with a range of personal ties and economic interests linked to the PRC have always wanted the same policy outcome regardless of the convenient justification. Regardless, today I call on the House to reject both of these flawed dispositions, the extremes of Liberal optimism and of Liberal pessimism. Instead, I propose that we embrace a view of international affairs that makes room for genuine ideals and for firmly grounded pragmatism.

On ideals, the vision of an international order rooted in fixed principles, foremost among them the dignity of the human person and the right of communities to govern their own affairs, is worth defending. It was never realistic to believe that these ideals would emerge into practice easily and through some natural historical process. Ideals are realized and preserved only through struggle. The rule of law did not come to our own system without sacrifice and struggle, and the realization of the ideal of an international rules-based order will not be advanced or preserved without the same. The Liberal optimism of the past did not pay sufficient attention to this reality.

However, while these ideals have never been fully realized, they continue to exist in a more profound sense. The ideals of democracy, freedom, justice and an international rules-based order, founded on a recognition of the created dignity of the human person and the rights of communities of persons to govern their own affairs, express the highest political aspirations of human persons and communities. The dream of a morally grounded, rules-based international order is not a mere sign in the window. While it remains unrealized, it is a concept well worth pursuing. We must not merely accept the world as it is. We must act to create a better world.

My grandmother was a Holocaust survivor, and the promise we made to her generation was the promise of “never again”. For her generation and for the Uyghur children of today, whose genocide remains unrecognized by a Canadian government that wants to make deals with their oppressors, for them and for so many others, we must and we will keep that ideal in mind. Canada must chase its ideals with clear-eyed pragmatism, seeking concrete, meaningful gains rather than symbolic or ephemeral ones, and moving constructively towards those ideals where possible, focusing on what we can actually change.

● (1740)

The very nature of pragmatism is that it implies that there is an objective being pursued. To be pragmatic is to be practical in the process of pursuing some goal. One cannot call oneself pragmatic if one has no goals or ideals at the end of the day, so in this troubled world, we can hold our ideals high while being smart and strategic in their pursuit.

The Prime Minister has also spoken at times about this, calling it “values-based realism”. This is a concept that I could get behind in theory, but it is clearly not informing the concrete actions of the

government. In reality, the Liberal Party has consistently pursued closer ties with authoritarian regimes. By contrast, Conservatives will be consistent in defending the vision of a free, democratic world that stands together and collectively defends its shared democratic values.

I noted that in the Prime Minister's speech in Davos, he spoke only about “great powers” and “middle powers”, but the distinction between democratic powers and revisionist authoritarian powers remains the most central and defining distinction of our time.

The CCP, in addition to interfering in our affairs, continuing to jail our citizens, such as Huseyin Celil, and committing genocide against its own people, is trying to establish strategic control of the flow of resources that will be most critical as technology changes. The goal is for the CCP to be able to use strategic resource domination to direct world affairs. Deals made in the short term that reinforce that long-term strategic domination by our adversaries are neither values-based nor realist.

Obviously, it has become more difficult to speak today of an existing democratic world with a shared agenda and shared purpose. Forces within and without, intentionally or not, are undermining our unity, but even amid real and justified disappointments and frustrations among democracies, there is one central point we must remember: Every nation is more defined by the character of its constitutional order than by the character of its current leaders.

What makes democracies different from dictatorships is not the hope that democratic leaders are more personally virtuous; rather it is the fact that democratic leaders are constrained by a constitutional order. We should not be indifferent to the real risk that leaders in democracies can strain and even break constitutional safeguards, but as long as those safeguards hold, our friendships with democracies will be more well-founded than our relationships with authoritarian powers, where the will of the people at the top is implemented without question.

Rule-of-law nations are more likely to act in legal ways internationally, and might-makes-right nations are guided by that principle in domestic as well as international actions.

Our belief in democracy is not a belief in the inevitable virtuousness of democratic leaders; it is a belief in the virtuousness of democratic constitutions. The distribution of decision-making facilitated by those constitutions creates the possibility of durable friendship between nations that goes beyond individual leaders.

What happens when democracies disappoint us? Naturally, we should engage those nations at all levels to make our case, and we should also seek to diversify our engagements across a broad range of democracies, so that problems in one case do not have an overwhelming impact. We can do all this without embracing some false equivalency between fellow democracies and authoritarian powers. They are fundamentally different, and they remain so.

The trade deal before the House is, thankfully, a deal with a low democracy, Indonesia. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation and the third-most populous democracy in the world. It is a country with a history of strong diversity and pluralism. It contends with a series of challenges, including challenges that threaten its pluralism, but it has strong civil society organizations that work hard to advance and defend its pluralistic identity. It is a good example of a nation where constructive engagement at multiple levels of society can pay economic and strategic dividends, so I look forward to seeing the further study that is going to happen on this trade deal as it goes forward.

Regarding our engagement with southeast Asia, I also want to underline that the fight for democracy requires urgent consideration of the situation in Burma. The people of Burma are successfully fighting for their freedom while facing brutal air strikes by the military junta. Burma now has the world's longest-running, ongoing civil war. The junta must face more severe sanctions, the people must be supported and institutions that represent the Burmese people must be recognized so that democracy can prevail.

In the days ahead, shared purpose and principled engagement among democratic nations could reasonably help deliver democracy in Burma, Venezuela and even Iran, and preserve security and advance the efforts of our democratic ally, Ukraine. This might be cause for a return to some kind of optimism, though an optimism more considered and more constrained by a recognition that struggle and sacrifice are always necessary for the maintenance and advancement of the international common good.

• (1745)

For Canada, the defence and advancement of democracy, freedom, justice and the rule of law must remain our North Star.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to change the topic but still deal with the issue of trade. I have become very much interested in where the Conservative Party lies.

The Prime Minister went to China, along with the Premier of Saskatchewan and others. There has been a fairly well-established irritant in some trade dealing with, for example, canola, which is so critically important to the prairie provinces. I suspect that is one of the reasons the Premier of Saskatchewan went. We were able to come up with some arrangements with China to deal with those irritants.

I am very curious about this, given that the member is from the Prairies and, no doubt, very familiar with just how important it was to make those arrangements. Could he give his personal opinion and maybe even reflect on how the Conservative Party of Canada views the success of that particular mission by the premier?

**Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, the government and the Prime Minister would like to create a false choice between our values and our interests. I would say this. When the Prime Minister ignores our fundamental values and fails to address critical issues of human rights, and when he allows strategic domination of key sectors by a strategic adversary, then we leave ourselves vulnerable in the long term. We undermine our interests in the long term.

### *Government Orders*

I would like to know when the government actually plans on implementing the foreign interference legislation that it previously brought forward after much pressure from the Conservatives. When does it plan to seriously deal with the issues of foreign interference, the ongoing detention of Canadians and the effort to strategically dominate key sectors? These things are not in line with our values or our interests.

[*Translation*]

**Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my takeaway from this afternoon is that we are being led to believe that economic interests and human rights are totally irreconcilable. With its bill to reverse the burden of proof in cases of forced labour, however, the Bloc Québécois is strengthening ties. Indeed, that just happens to be one of the things that the United States has requested of us as it takes action to ensure that our products are not made with forced labour.

It is rather striking. We are talking about the rights of migrant workers, women in particular. I know that my colleague is also concerned about this issue. The United Nations Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families noted that 70% of migrant workers in Indonesia are women; they are victims of sexual exploitation and violence and are also exposed to the risk of human trafficking.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

**Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I generally agree with the proposals of my Bloc Québécois colleague.

As we said, we will support this bill so that it can be studied in committee. I hope the committee will be able to look at the important issues of human rights and forced labour.

In general, the current government has not brought these issues to the forefront. We continue to have a huge problem with products coming into Canada that are made with forced labour. We must take action on this matter.

• (1750)

[*English*]

**Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives stand for free trade agreements. Under Harper we had a couple of dozen free trade agreements.

**An hon. member:** No.

**Marc Dalton:** Mr. Speaker, there were a lot.

The fact is that all these countries, like Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Taiwan, are very concerned and building up their forces in response to the militarization and threats from China.

The member talked a bit about China, obviously, but we are concerned that the Liberals are continuing in step with what Trudeau said, that he admired the basic dictatorship of China.

*Government Orders*

I wonder if the member could make some comments about the Prime Minister talking to the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** I have to give the member some time to respond.

We will have a very brief response from the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I continue to believe that the world faces a situation akin to a kind of second cold war, an intensifying conflict between the democratic world and the authoritarian revisionist world. In that context, our engagement with democracies in the global south and with other states that are sort of the swing states in this new cold war, which have legitimate strategic concerns with the actions of the CCP, is very important for our security and for the advancement of our values.

**Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we support the government's modest efforts to open new markets for Canadian exporters. More trade is good. I support free trade.

Unfortunately, despite our efforts to work co-operatively with the government, yesterday the government House leader went into the lobby and did an interview with CTV where he spread misinformation about the Conservative Party, saying that we were simply obstructing the Liberals' agenda.

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

**Jacob Mantle:** Mr. Speaker, what hubris from the other side, from the member for Winnipeg North.

The Leader of the Opposition, even before that interview, made an offer in good faith to the government to work with it on trade-related matters and others, and we are doing that. The Liberals do not have to give us credit for that. Canadians will judge. However, I would ask the government, and especially government leaders, not to confuse Canadians by saying things that just are not true.

I have a few comments about the proposed agreement with Indonesia. Let me just say that it is a rounding error. The PMO released a statement, calling it “game-changing.” The chief economist for Global Affairs Canada actually said, “the projected economic gains are modest.”

While the minister tried to speak to all of the new tariff-free access we have, the actual state of facts is that 88% of Canada's exports to Indonesia already enjoy duty-free access. Any additional benefits from this agreement would only flow to 9% of Canada's exports. The remaining 3% would continue to face high tariffs. In fact, the estimated tariff savings for Canada's top exports to Indonesia are estimated to be only \$14 million. That is less than a rounding error. The total estimated impact to Canada's GDP is \$226 million, which is less than one half of 1%.

Do not get me wrong. A new trade agreement is good, but I think Canadians should know that it is not a panacea for the problems we face. Indeed, it is not even clear that this agreement is necessary.

Let me explain. Indonesia has already made its formal application to join the trans-Pacific partnership. It did so in 2024. It is expected to proceed through accession to that agreement in 2026, which is this year, so it is not clear to me that this agreement is

even necessary. Furthermore, Canada is already in a trade negotiation with ASEAN, which is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. If that agreement proceeds, this agreement would, again, become redundant.

I am concerned that the government is spending valuable negotiating resources on an agreement that may not be relevant, when instead it should be focusing on our most important agreement, which is the agreement with the United States. Unfortunately, we have very little information about that because we hear one thing from the Americans, and then we hear another thing from the Prime Minister—

● (1755)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions amongst the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to put the question on Bill C-18 at second reading at this time.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** All those opposed to the member's moving the motion will please say nay. It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Pursuant to order made on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, the division stands deferred until Monday, February 2, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 5:57 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

### KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ACT

The House resumed from October 23, 2025, consideration of the motion that Bill C-223, An Act to amend the Divorce Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette—Manawan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to reiterate how sensitive my party and I are to violence against women and their children. We must work tirelessly to ensure that all women and children can thrive in a safe environment at all times. A woman was killed in the north of my riding recently and I am quite shaken up by it. This has to stop.

The bill under consideration seeks to remove parental alienation as a concept from family law. In our view, it is not up to the legislature to decide whether a concept should disappear as a psychological phenomenon, let alone be removed from the Criminal Code, just because there is an emerging and minority hypothesis that parental alienation disproportionately harms one group.

Objectively, the definition of parental alienation proposed between 2010 and 2013 by the Parental Alienation Study Group, or PASG, to the DSM-5 preparatory committees is the one that is now nearly unanimously accepted among experts who subscribe to the concept:

Parental alienation is a mental condition affecting children or adolescents (often in the context of high-conflict parental separation) and characterized by two elements:

1. The child or teenager allies strongly with one parent.
2. The child or adolescent unreasonably rejects the other parent, without legitimate justification. The child or adolescent resists or refuses contact with that parent, even when ordered.

Forensic expert, retired professor at the Université de Montréal and recipient of the Noël-Mailloux Award from the Ordre des psychologues du Québec Dr. Van Gijsegem points out that there is not necessarily a causal link between the two parts of the definition. He adds:

Despite the apparent simplicity of the definition, diagnosing parental alienation “disorder” is no easy task and requires a rigorous and thorough psychological and family assessment that includes all family members.

Family law lawyer Jérôme Harrison believes in the importance of identifying two situations where the child is the focus of tension. When a child still feels torn, feels like they need to make a choice, we speak of a conflict of loyalty. This type of conflict can be fuelled by a wide range of disparate factors. When a child flatly rejects one parent, seems to have made their choice, is no longer or not torn between their parents, there is reason to suspect that one of the spouses is engaging in parental alienation.

That said, a child, usually a teenager with more advanced critical thinking skills, may have made an informed choice without being pressured by either parent. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that parental alienation has occurred, Mr. Harrison suggests contacting a lawyer to have an action plan put in place to address the situation. This process illustrates how professionals are able to detect credible parental alienation and that mechanisms are set in motion long before a trial.

### Private Members' Business

Furthermore, parental alienation is difficult to argue in court because evidence gathering is difficult and there is still some debate over this psychological concept. In a study conducted in Ontario between 1993 and 2011, 170 legal decisions referred to parental alienation. In the majority of these cases, the allegations of alienation were unfounded or there was insufficient evidence to reach a verdict.

Let us be clear: parental alienation, a phenomenon that the medical community can observe and measure and that a majority of family law attorneys use, is not abstract and cannot be dismissed on the grounds that it no longer corresponds to the findings of a few researchers with differing opinions on the subject. This implies that the judiciary, many family law attorneys, and in some cases the police, medical professionals, or child protection workers are not doing their jobs properly because they lack the judgment to detect potential acts by an abusive parent who encourages a child to reject the other parent.

Unfortunately, parents sometimes get into a fight where the children can be caught in the middle and used as weapons against the other parent. Quite often, one or both parents will convince one or all of the children to choose a side through a myriad of tactics, arguments, lies and defamatory statements at the expense of the other parent. On the other hand, a child may become alienated from a parent long before the divorce process begins. A child may have experienced abandonment, insecurity, fear, emotional detachment early in life or aggression from a parent. In short, the child might already be detached from a parent and therefore alienated without having been through a divorce.

Historically, divorce has remained a federal jurisdiction since the adoption of the Constitution Act, 1867, which placed marriage and divorce under federal jurisdiction. The stated objective was to ensure that the rules were consistent across provinces and to avoid contentious situations if a spouse decided to move somewhere else in Canada.

Unofficially, this has allowed Quebec to maintain control over family law, despite its clear distinction in the handling of separations by following French civil law tradition. It is therefore a holdover from another era that unnecessarily complicates family law and allows Ottawa to have the final say on marriages. The Bloc Québécois is therefore calling for marriage and divorce to be handed over to Quebec City in order to ensure uniform rights, regardless of the type of union individuals choose.

● (1800)

The Bloc Québécois supports the objectives of Bill C-223, namely to guarantee the well-being of children in divorce cases, and it is prepared to revisit this sensitive topic. However, we reject the premise that parental alienation has a harmful and disproportionate impact on one group. The proposal to remove this concept from the Criminal Code to avoid cases where this may have happened seems excessive to us.

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According to the experts in psychology and law who were consulted, it seems that this phenomenon is rare and that there is no consensus on this matter. Lastly, as previously mentioned, it is difficult to imagine removing a concept that comes from the field of psychology and that has been used by the courts for many decades because of an emerging minority theory that lacks consensus.

One of the cardinal principles of justice is equality before the law. Creating an exception risks causing more harm to children than good. We cannot brush aside the fact that a parent may use coercive alienation against their children. We must trust the various professionals throughout a difficult process such as divorce, and we believe that a parent who engages in parental alienation, intimidation or coercive violence towards their child will ultimately be found out and made to answer for it.

The Bloc Québécois believes that any amendment to the Criminal Code must be carefully considered, and we want to avoid weighing the legislation down with controversial provisions. Nevertheless, we will vote in favour of the bill so that experts can weigh in on the wording and so that the committee can debate the best practices for protecting children during a contentious divorce. If the committee deems it appropriate to improve the bill or remove parts of it where there are differences of opinion, the Bloc Québécois will offer its full co-operation.

Considering that family law is highly developed, regulated, and rooted in Quebec's civil law tradition, the Bloc Québécois calls on the federal government to give up this last piece of common law, the Divorce Act, which is an anomaly in separation and divorce management. This archaic separation, which was politically motivated at the time, is no longer necessary. Quebec courts have shown that they can deal with different separation cases seriously and professionally.

What is more, Quebec's justice minister introduced unified family tribunals, or UFTs. Since October 10, 2025, civil union-related claims are now heard by the Court of Québec's Unified Family Tribunal. This is another example of the Quebec government's expertise and seriousness in this type of civil litigation. Quebecers simply want to handle divorce proceedings themselves, and they are calling for an end to this two-tiered system.

• (1805)

[English]

**Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking to Bill C-223, the keeping children safe act, aimed to strengthen protections for children and survivors in family law proceedings where family violence or coercive control may be present. I want to begin by thanking my friend and colleague the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain for bringing this important legislation forward and for her continued work to ensure that the safety and well-being of children remains at the centre of Canada's family justice system. This bill addresses issues Parliament has examined carefully over many years: family violence, coercive control and the misuse of parental alienation claims and the profound impact these harms can have on children.

At its core, Bill C-223 is guided by a simple and essential principle: When families are in crisis, children must come first. Children are not legal strategies. They are not leverage in disputes. They are

individuals with rights, needs and voices who deserve protection. However, Parliament has heard through committee studies and testimony that too often children have been separated from the parent who provides their primary care and safety, not because it was in their best interest but because allegations were raised without a full and informed understanding of family violence or coercive control. This bill seeks to correct this by ensuring that child safety, not litigation tactics, is the guiding principle in family law decisions.

For too long, violence within families has been understood primarily in physical terms, but through research, lived experience and extensive testimony before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, the committee learned that harm can also be emotional, psychological, financial and controlling. Coercive control is not a single incident; it is a pattern of behaviour. Witnesses from women's shelters and victim services organizations described how coercive control can include isolating a partner from family or community, monitoring movements, restricting access to finances and using intimidation to instill fear and compliance.

One organization representative told the committee that in their experience supporting survivors, physical violence is almost always preceded by coercive behaviour, and that coercive control often continues even when physical abuse stops. A witness from another victim services organization emphasized that coercive control is a critical warning sign that must not be ignored, particularly when children are involved. Critically, the committee heard that these behaviours often persist after separation and can continue through family law proceedings themselves, impacting family law with respect to children.

One of the most troubling findings of the status of women committee study was how parental alienation claims can be misused in cases involving coercive control. Witnesses explained that when courts do not fully recognize coercive dynamics, protective parents, most often women, may be portrayed as obstructive, while a child's fear or resistance to contact is misunderstood or minimized. In such cases, children may be placed in unsafe situations or separated from the parent who is actually protecting them.

The committee also heard the testimony of witnesses from organizations who described the devastating consequences of failing to recognize coercive control early. They pointed to national inquiries and identified coercive control as a central factor in tragic outcomes, noting that missed opportunities to intervene by institutions and systems can have irreversible consequences for victims and their children. The committee was clear. When coercive control is misunderstood or dismissed, children pay the price.

That is why Bill C-223 matters. The bill would amend the Divorce Act to strengthen protections for children and survivors in family law proceedings where family violence or coercive control may be present. It would do this in several important ways.

- (1810)

First, it would limit the misuse of parental alienation claims, ensuring that courts do not rely on such claims in ways that undermine child safety or silence survivors. This is critical, because survivors should not be blamed for failing to facilitate the child's relationship with an abuser, particularly where violence or coercive control is present.

Second, the bill would prohibit courts from ordering harmful reunification practices that force children into contact intended to repair a relationship with the parent when safety is not assured.

Third, it would expand the responsibilities of legal advisers to ensure that risks of family violence are assessed and that appropriate safety planning is considered during divorce proceedings.

Fourth, it would reinforce that there is no automatic presumption of equal parenting time. This decision must be grounded in the child's best interest, including their safety and well-being. Finally, the bill would strengthen how courts consider the child's voice while protecting their safety and privacy, and direct courts to avoid relying on harmful myths or stereotypes about family violence, such as the assumption that to be credible, abuse must be reported immediately or leave visible injuries.

Together, these measures would help ensure that children are protected, survivors are not penalized, and clear guidance is given.

In 2019, Parliament modernized the Divorce Act to require courts to give primary consideration to a child's safety, security and well-being, and to consider family violence as part of that analysis. Those reforms were significant. However, the status of women committee's work demonstrated that further clarity and reinforcement are needed, particularly when coercive behaviour continues after separation and manifests within the family law proceedings. Bill C-223 would strengthen that foundation by responding directly to what Parliament has learned since.

On November 25, the committee released its report containing some recommendations informed directly by testimonies. These testimonies were from survivors, advocates, shelters and victim services organizations from across Canada. Their voices made it clear that coercive control can take many forms, emotional, psychological, financial and controlling, and that children's safety is at risk when these behaviours are not properly recognized.

The report emphasized that the system must stop penalizing survivors for protecting their children and must instead focus on safety, context and evidence. Bill C-223 responds to those findings. It reinforces that assumptions have no place in family law decisions, and that child safety, not litigation tactics, must guide outcomes.

Violence does not always leave visible marks. Fear can silence families, and children must never be separated from safety. Bill C-223 respects the complexity of family law in Canada while keeping children where they belong, at the centre of every decision. I call on colleagues on all sides of the House to join me in supporting

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this important legislation. Together we can continue to build a family justice system that is compassionate, evidence-based and firmly centred on keeping children safe.

- (1815)

**Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to rise for the first time this year to speak to Bill C-223.

Before I begin, I want to extend my warmest wishes for a happy new year to all the residents of Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay. Over the holidays, many of them took the time to write, call or speak to me directly. I want them to know how much I value those conversations. Hearing from them is essential to my work, and I am truly honoured to represent them in Ottawa in 2026.

The legislation before us, Bill C-223, an act to amend the Divorce Act, addresses an issue that touches families in a deeply personal way. The proposed changes to the Divorce Act are the first in several years, and I appreciate the member opposite for using her private member's bill to focus on such an important area of the law.

For people who may not be familiar with the the bill, I will say that it proposes a number of reforms to the Divorce Act, the first since 2021. Although I was not yet a member of the House at that time, it is clear that those earlier reforms were significant and that many advocates have continued to call for further improvements.

From speaking with people in the communities I represent, people who have been through the family court system, it is evident that inconsistencies in how cases proceed can undermine fairness. Experts have also highlighted how difficult it can be for the courts to properly assess coercive control and psychological abuse, both because of limited resources and because these forms of harm are not always easily defined in law. In addition, despite children being at the centre of these cases, children's voices are still not heard consistently. Alongside this is the very real and very serious issue of parental alienation.

*Private Members' Business*

There is much in the bill that I believe members across the House can support. One provision I am particularly glad to see is the explicit direction to courts not to dismiss allegations of family violence simply because there is no police report or no visible injury, or because parties continue to live together. This is a meaningful change, one that resonates with me personally. Many years ago, a friend confided in me that she would be better off if he had hit her. She was living in a coercive, abusive situation that left no bruises but caused deep harm. Her experience was a reminder that violence is not always physical but is no less real.

The bill also proposes requiring legal advisers to assess risks of family violence and to develop safety plans, and it would strengthen the ability of courts to consider coercive control and its impact on parent-child relationships. It would further introduce safeguards around the use of direct testimony from children.

If the bill were limited to these reforms, I expect members would still raise questions about implementation, particularly around the new responsibilities placed on courts and legal professionals. This would be expensive, but it is important. Overall, these are constructive steps.

However, I do have concerns with one aspect of the bill: the provision that would prohibit judges from considering evidence of parental alienation in family law cases. As I mentioned earlier, I appreciate the bill's efforts to broaden the types of evidence courts can consider, especially regarding children's testimony and family violence. Family law cases are complex and emotional, and they often require expert input, yet the bill would prevent judges from considering parental alienation, even when supported by expert analysis.

The bill would allow judges to consider coercive control, often based on expert opinion. I see no reason why judges should not also be permitted to consider parental alienation under the same conditions. Colleagues with legal experience have noted that parental alienation is already recognized in Canadian case law. One colleague from Ontario shared that in more than one-third of proven alienation cases, mothers were the alienated parent, often targeted by the abusive former partner. An absolute prohibition on considering this evidence seems, at best, misguided.

• (1820)

I understand that the bill's sponsor has worked closely with organizations, such as the National Association of Women and the Law. Its contributions are undoubtedly thoughtful. However, its characterization of parental alienation as junk science is not universally shared. As a lawmaker, not a lawyer, I have reviewed the research, and it is clear that many respected voices in both law and social science disagree with that assessment.

I would draw the House's attention to a detailed critique published in *Law360* by two distinguished scholars: Nicholas Bala, a professor of law at Queen's University, and Rachel Birnbaum, a social worker and professor at King's University College, Western University. They raise many of the same concerns I have outlined, particularly regarding the risks of prohibiting judges from considering parental alienation altogether. They also reference rigorous scientific and legal research supporting the validity of parental alienation, including studies published in *Developmental Psychology* and the *University of New Brunswick Law Journal*.

I want to close by acknowledging the member's sincere commitment to improving the safety and well-being of children. Her intentions are good, and I respect the work she has put into this bill, but good intentions alone cannot form the basis of sound legislation. As debate continues, I look forward to hearing from colleagues across the House. Should the bill proceed to committee, I believe it will require careful study and thoughtful amendment, informed by expert testimony. Our goal must be to craft legislation that truly protects children and supports families through some of the most difficult moments of their lives.

[*Translation*]

**Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for 2026. I also wish all my colleagues a happy new year filled with happiness, health, serenity, a bit of calm and, above all, kindness for everyone around us. If I may, I would like to point out that I am proudly wearing a purple flower on my lapel to signify recognition and awareness of Alzheimer's disease, hence my mention of kindness. If my colleagues have a chance to thank people from community associations or groups in their ridings who work to help loved ones and those with the disease, I invite them to be kind during Alzheimer's Awareness Month.

I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-223, an act to amend the Divorce Act. I often say that I am proud to be a social worker in Quebec and a member of my professional association. I might give up my licence on March 31, but I have been a member of my association for many years. I am also a family mediator accredited by Quebec's justice department to help couples who are separating reach mediated agreements. In my practice, I have always worked to make parents understand that a mediation agreement is intended to help them divide up their property, assets and liabilities, but that the primary and most important focus must be the children. The agreement that is reached must be in the best interests of the children.

*Private Members' Business*

That is basically what this bill seeks to address by putting the focus back on the children. By amending the bill, it provides even more opportunities to focus on children who go through very difficult experiences when their parents separate. Needless to say, the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this bill so it can be studied in committee, because we can see that its objective is truly to protect children. They are our most precious asset and we agree on the objective. However, in all honesty, a fairly in-depth study will be needed, because many bills are being introduced right now to amend the Criminal Code. When changes are made to the Criminal Code, it is necessary to bring in experts so we can better understand the implications of those changes.

In my practice as a social worker, I have handled about 70 cases where I listened to or helped parents smoothly navigate a divorce or separation and where I made sure, above all else, that the agreement they reached was in the best interests of the children. I witnessed some pretty tough situations. First, I should point out that in Quebec, the Government of Quebec provides five hours of free family mediation so that parents can reach an agreement. This is a good way for us to tell whether mediation is even possible. I can say without hesitation that if a social worker senses that violence is an issue or that the two parties cannot speak freely because of tensions or violent and disrespectful comments, family mediation is off the table. Family mediation is a process where both parties have to participate willingly, and each parent has to let the other speak in order to reach an agreement, which entails compromises. One of these compromises concerns custody.

What I am trying to say is that I have witnessed situations, both personally and professionally, where a child was caught in the middle of a dispute between their parents and where one parent pitted the child against the other parent. This is damaging and devastating to children. It leaves lasting wounds. Whether it is the father or the mother who is using violent language or harassing the other parent, what children want more than anything is to be loved by their parents. In my practice, I noticed that children were sometimes used to score points, either in mediation or in legal proceedings. I noticed that children were often conflicted about loyalty. They did not want to talk too much about what they were experiencing or observing because they did not want to hurt the other parent. I have seen both mothers and fathers use their children against the other parent, putting the children in an impossible situation.

● (1825)

Loyalty conflicts cause children to feel deep emotional pain. If they are not supported and helped, they can carry that pain with them their entire lives. In Quebec, we have tried to develop a tool that is primarily a mediation system focused on the well-being of the children. It allows for discussion and co-operation between the parents.

In 2025, Quebec's justice minister created a unified family tribunal. It deals with and specializes in family matters. This is very important, because the people who judge these cases or who attend the court proceedings need to have a much deeper, more specific understanding of families, separation, and its consequences for children. We can tip our hat to Minister Jolin-Barrette. I do not always agree with everything he says, but, as a social worker and family

mediator, I can tip my hat to him. He did a heck of a job creating this tribunal.

All that is to say that, in Quebec, we have made some progress in the area of family law. Most Quebecers no longer get married in church. Instead, they are opting for civil unions. In Quebec, there is some overlap, in the sense that some couples are married while others are in civil unions. We know that divorce and marriage are federally regulated, while civil unions are regulated by Quebec. We believe that it would be easier if Ottawa delegated all the administrative aspects and jurisdiction over marriage and divorce to the provinces. Some provinces, like Quebec, have a way of approaching cohabitation arrangements, civil unions or marriages that can be different from other jurisdictions. Having full jurisdiction would allow us to better support families and couples who choose separation and divorce.

Now, the bill before us contains some good provisions. We agree with the provision that states a judge does not need a police report to find that spousal violence is an issue in a couple's relationship. We generally agree with that. People with clinical knowledge know that violence is not just physical. It can be psychological and insidious. It can consist of repeated insults that affect a person's physical and mental health. When people lose their sense of self-worth, they often lack the strength to leave a toxic relationship. We agree with this provision.

We are prepared to look at the bill's other provisions as well. I am sure that my colleague from Shefford, our critic for the status of women, will help us improve this bill, but more importantly, she will help us ask the experts questions. We are legislators, but experts in the field advise us. That is the work we are going to do in committee.

The government can count on the full co-operation of the Bloc Québécois in studying this bill both seriously and thoroughly. The most important thing to remember is that the purpose of this bill is to ensure the safety of children, and children must be at the heart of our decisions. The government can therefore count on our support for a healthy and respectful debate on this bill.

● (1830)

[English]

**Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-223, the keeping children safe act, introduced by my friend and colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain. I will begin by acknowledging the courage of the many survivors, advocates, legal experts and organizations who have spent years bringing these issues forward, often at great personal cost. I also want to acknowledge the work of the hundreds of organizations across Canada that have called for this reform.

*Private Members' Business*

This is an important bill. It would protect children and families as they navigate through the court system. The bill's central purpose is protection for the survivors of intimate-partner violence and their children as they go through the already complex and emotional process of separation and divorce.

[Translation]

This bill allows us to believe survivors and prevent them from being revictimized during the legal process.

[English]

At its core, the bill asks whether we are truly centring the best interests of the child or whether we are allowing outdated assumptions and systemic blind spots to put children at risk. The answer matters, because family law decisions are not abstract; in fact they shape children's daily lives, determine whom they live with, whom they see and whether they grow up safe.

[Translation]

Bill C-223 places the best interests of the child at the heart of all decisions. It specifies that there should be no presumption of shared custody and that decisions must be based on the safety, well-being and lived reality of the child.

[English]

The bill would require legal advisers to screen for family violence, including coercive control. It would strengthen the court's ability to assess the impact of coercive control on the parent-child relationship. This is critical because coercive control is not always visible in bruises or police reports, but its effects on children are profound and long-lasting.

The bill would ensure that children's views and preferences are meaningfully considered, and that they are not automatically dismissed as the product of manipulation. Bill C-223 would give children the opportunity to be heard in an age-appropriate way, with proper safeguards, and it would make safety a paramount consideration in custody decisions.

Finally, Bill C-223 would prevent courts from issuing orders that retraumatize children, including forced reunification therapies or sudden reversals of primary residence in the absence of evidence that such measures are safe or necessary.

• (1835)

[Translation]

In 2024, Statistics Canada reported that there were only 25,000 child and youth victims of police-reported family violence. We know that these figures only tell part of the story. Many cases of family violence are never reported.

[English]

Children who have experienced or witnessed family violence carry trauma that shapes their development, their sense of security and their ability to form healthy relationships. When our family courts fail to take their fears seriously, when courts dismiss their disclosures as manipulation, or when children are forced into the care of parents who have harmed them or who have harmed the other parent, we compound that trauma. We teach them that their

voices do not matter, that adults will not protect them and that the system designed to serve their best interests has in fact failed them.

When I served on the status of women committee, we studied coercive control. We heard testimony from survivors, lawyers, psychologists and frontline workers. Again and again we heard how violence does not end when a relationship ends. In fact in many cases it intensifies, through the courts, through custody disputes and through the manipulation of legal processes themselves.

We heard how coercive control operates not only through physical violence but also through fear, surveillance, intimidation and the erosion of autonomy. We heard repeatedly how children are drawn into that control, used as leverage, silenced or forced into situations that are unsafe, in the name of parental rights.

During committee testimony, we heard heart-wrenching stories about the harm that forced reunification had on children. For example, we heard from a 17-year-old girl who told us that she was ordered by the court to go to a reunification camp in New York after her father claimed parental alienation. She told us it felt like she had been "judicially trafficked". Those are her words.

Among other things, she and her younger brother were told that their negative memories of their father were not real. They were forced to smile in photos, tell their father that they loved him and show physical affection toward their father under the threat that, if they did not, they would not be allowed to see their mother. When this witness was 16, she ran away to try to go to her mom's house. Her father had the police bring her back. She was ultimately under a no-contact order with her mother for over 500 days.

Sadly, this is not an isolated incident. We heard of a young woman who, at age 15, was forced into the custody of her father, who sexually abused her. Children told us over and over again that they felt that they had no voice, that nobody believed them and that there was nobody to talk to, especially when, after they finally told someone, their disclosures of abuse were repeated to the abusive parent, who would then use that to further intimidate and victimize them.

Under this bill, children would be able to tell their story confidentially to the court without fear. This bill treats children as people with agency, not as property to be divided.

[Translation]

Too often, decisions are still influenced by myths and stereotypes, such as the notion that co-parenting is always the best solution, that children who refuse contact have been manipulated, or that a parent, often the mother, who raises safety concerns should be considered unreasonable or uncooperative.

• (1840)

[*English*]

Research shows that mothers are twice as likely as fathers to face allegations of parental alienation, even in cases where violence is documented. Protective actions taken to keep a child safe are reframed as hostility. Fear is reframed as non-cooperation, and children's voices are too often dismissed on the assumption that they cannot be trusted.

Bill C-223 does not remove discretion from judges; it actually guides it with evidence. The bill does not diminish the importance of parental relationships. In fact, it recognizes that a relationship that is unsafe is not a relationship that is in the best interests of the child.

[*Translation*]

The Standing Committee on the Status of Women heard clearly that if the courts do not understand coercive control, they may repeat it. If they prioritize formal equality over actual safety, they put children at risk.

[*English*]

Canada has committed internationally to protecting women and children from violence. The keeping children safe act would build on that commitment by aligning our domestic framework with evidence-based best practices and international human rights obligations. We cannot meet those commitments if our laws remain out of step with what we know.

Bill C-223 asks us to listen to children; take violence seriously, even when it is subtle; and ensure that the justice system does not become another tool of harm.

[*Translation*]

This bill seeks to ensure that, if families experience violence, they are not revictimized by the very system that should be protecting them.

[*English*]

For these reasons, I am proud to support the keeping children safe act, and I urge all members to do the same.

**Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-223, the keeping children safe act. I want to extend my thanks to the member for Hamilton Mountain for her work on this very important issue.

As the chair of the status of women committee, I heard extensive testimony on coercive control, parental alienation and family violence in Canada. In 2025, our committee released a report recognizing coercive control as a serious form of intimate partner violence, involving repeated psychological abuse, intimidation, stalking, isolation, manipulation, financial control and even cruelty to family pets, all of which undermine the autonomy, safety and well-being of women and children. The report did not just identify the problem but made 16 clear recommendations to address them. These recommendations come directly from survivors, experts and frontline organizations across our country. Therefore, I allow their testimony to inform my perspective as I speak to this legislation today.

### *Private Members' Business*

Coercive control comes in many forms. It can include constant monitoring, threats, financial control, isolating someone from friends or family, using the legal system to intimidate a former partner and even using the children as leverage to maintain power and control, which is especially prevalent in divorce cases. As we heard, this behaviour often does not stop after separation; in many cases, it only escalates further. Too often, family courts are asked to make decisions without fully recognizing these patterns. Survivors told us that their concerns were minimized, that abuse was treated as a private conflict or that it was dismissed entirely because there was no police report or visible injury. In some cases, protective parents were even accused of alienating their children for raising legitimate safety concerns.

Bill C-223 seeks to address these failures by strengthening and amending the Divorce Act so that courts are better equipped to recognize coercive control and parental alienation.

I would like to briefly outline exactly what the amendments aim to do.

First, the bill would require family law lawyers to assess the risk of family violence and coercive control when representing a client in a divorce, and to take steps to put a safety plan in place where risks exist.

Second, the bill would give courts clearer direction on how coercive control affects parenting and child safety. Coercive control is often not visible or physical but a pattern of behaviour, of things that sometimes are difficult to see. Patterns of intimidation, isolation, threats, manipulation and financial control are things that tend to continue long after separation, and the bill would make it clear that they must be taken seriously.

Third, Bill C-223 would ensure that children's voices are heard through written evidence or in camera interviews with appropriate safeguards. Children are not property to be divided, and their views should not be dismissed simply because they are inconvenient. Children can easily be intimidated by one parent or another, so the measures in this bill would allow written testimony or video interviews, which would prevent the child from being unduly traumatized by the judicial process or being intimidated by one parent or another.

Finally, the bill would bring greater clarity to how parental alienation claims are assessed, ensuring that child safety and the evidence of family violence remain the priority.

*Private Members' Business*

The House has already acknowledged that our systems have failed children in the past. I had conversations with Pam Damoff, a former member of Parliament who was a great advocate, talking about Keira's law and what was needed to follow up on that. Members may remember that Keira's law followed the tragic death of Keira Kagan, who was killed by her father after her mother had repeatedly raised concerns about coercive control and family violence that were not adequately recognized in family court. Keira's law requires judges to receive training on intimate partner violence and coercive control. That is an important step, but training alone is not enough. Bill C-223 would build on that work by providing clearer guidance in the Divorce Act so that courts are better equipped to prioritize child safety and recognize warning signs when making custody and parenting decisions.

● (1845)

I would like to spend a bit more time on the issue of parental alienation, because it is important that everyone understands. Deliberately undermining a child's relationship with a loving, safe parent is harmful. It causes long-term emotional damage to children, and when that happens, courts must be able to recognize it and respond appropriately. No child should be used as a pawn in a custody dispute, and no parent should be cut out of their child's life without good reason.

However, our committee also heard clear evidence that allegations of parental alienation have too often been misused in cases involving domestic violence and coercive control. Survivors told us that when they raised legitimate safety concerns, they were accused of manipulating their children simply because the child expressed fear or resistance towards the abusive parent. In some cases, those allegations were accepted without proper scrutiny, and children were removed from a safe parent as a result.

Bill C-223 does not dismiss the possibility of alienating behaviours, but it rejects the idea that alienation should be assumed or used to outweigh evidence of family violence. It requires courts to look at the full context, the patterns of behaviour, power imbalances, and the children's lived experience before reaching possibly devastating conclusions. That balance matters. Protecting children requires recognizing both the real harm caused by true alienation and the very real danger of using alienation claims to silence abuse or dismiss children's fears.

Getting this wrong has serious consequences. When courts act on assumptions instead of evidence, children can be placed back into unsafe situations, causing a generational cycle of distrust in the system. However, parental alienation is not well understood. It was very helpful, when trying to get the courts to recognize coercive control, to provide a list of the types of behaviours that would be admissible to show that pattern of behaviour. I think the same is true for parental alienation. This is one area of the bill that may need some clarification or help in order to ensure that people adequately understand how to recognize true parental alienation when it is occurring.

One of the strongest messages alluded to at committee was that family law does not operate in a vacuum. Decisions made in divorce proceedings affect housing stability, mental health, education and long-term outcomes for children. When our courts miss warn-

ing signs or fail to properly assess the risk, these consequences show up in many forms. They show up in children struggling at school with anxiety and trauma that can follow them into adulthood, and in families that lose faith in the justice system that is meant to protect them. That is why it is so important that this legislation encourages courts to get these decisions right.

Clearer guidance on coercive control, stronger recognition of children's experiences and a more careful approach to highly contested concepts like parental alienation all help move family law towards decisions that are evidence-based and centred on safety. When the system works properly, it protects children and gives families the stability they need to move forward.

As this bill moves forward, it deserves careful and thoughtful study. We must ensure it genuinely strengthens child safety, respects due process and avoids unintended consequences. Family law decisions are among the most consequential decisions a court will make. They shape a child's sense of security, stability and trust for years to come.

When families are at their most vulnerable, our law must not make things worse. It must not create incentives or discourage legitimate safety concerns from being raised. Instead, courts must help examine the evidence and focus on patterns of behaviour and the lived experience of the child. Above all, our family law system must remain grounded in evidence and guided by a single clear principle: keeping the child safe. Obviously, there are issues of provincial jurisdiction, since it is provincial courts that typically administer the Divorce Act. The training of all the people involved and ensuring that it is properly executed will be very important. That means listening carefully and doing our best to make decisions that protect children from harm.

This bill is looking at keeping children safe. There has been a lot of work done to keep women safe. I think also there is work to be done to make sure that men are safe.

I do support this bill.

● (1850)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The time for the debate has now expired. I will now call on the member for Hamilton Mountain for her five-minute right of reply.

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

**Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by thanking the dozens of people who came to Ottawa today to support this legislation, because these reforms are urgently needed. We have organizations like the National Association of Women and the Law, Women's Shelters Canada and YWCA Canada. There are 300 women's organizations across this country that support this legislation, because they hear from victims almost every day. These are victims who are asking, "How do I protect my child?"

We have a dentist here who has seen so much family violence in his practice; he did not know how to address it. We have lots of victims, including, as we heard from my friend, a 15-year-old girl. Her dad claimed parental alienation even though he was a sexual abuser. Next year, she will be going to criminal court to testify against him. She was here today to tell people that if this legislation had been in place, she would not have had to go through that.

Opponents ask about about parents' rights, fathers' rights and mothers' rights. I do not think it should be about the parents' rights. I think we should centre every decision on the best interests of the child, especially when there are allegations of abuse.

Right now, in family court, it does not look like allegations of abuse are taken seriously. In fact, it is an aggravating factor if one brings up allegations of abuse during divorce court. We have police and women's organizations in this country today advising women not to disclose to family court that they have suffered abuse, whether it be coercive control or physical abuse, because disclosing that leaves them vulnerable to losing their children, and they just want to protect their children.

We cannot let this stand. We have to listen to children. We have to take domestic violence seriously. We have to treat it, and we have to understand how it affects families, including children.

As my good friend from Brampton South said tonight, let us stop penalizing survivors. As my good friend from Ottawa West—Nepean has said tonight, let us not let the justice system be another tool of harm.

I thank all the members in the House who seem to unanimously be supporting this legislation. Next week, we will vote. Let us send this bill to committee. Let us make it as good as it can be, and let us pass this law so that children are safe in this country again.

• (1855)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** 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.

**Lisa Hepfner:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 4, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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

[*English*]

## AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on October 3, I asked the Minister of Agriculture if he would abandon the government's proposed regulatory changes to the plant breeders' rights in favour of supporting the rights of farmers who save and re-use their seed. The parliamentary secretary rose and responded that consultations have happened, which completely dodged the question. Less than a week later, on October 9, I rose in the House to present a petition signed by more than 6,000 Canadians who want the same answer to the same unanswered question.

Amending the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, as the government has proposed to do, would be, as I said in October, harmful and reckless. It would force farmers to purchase seed annually, and it would drive up production costs, restrict access to new varieties and undermine the ability of farmers to adapt to climate change. It would undermine the age-old practice of farmers' using farm-safe seed, forcing them to buy seeds or pay royalties year after year.

That is what the CFIA's proposed regulatory changes would do to the people who grow Canada's fruit, vegetable, ornamental and hybrid varieties.

I am rising again tonight on the issue because in the government's response to my e-petition 6778, which was signed by more than 6,000 Canadians, it missed the mark and left the farm community perplexed about whom the government is actually trying to help with its changes. It is certainly not the hard-working farmers who produce our food.

The National Farmers Union has been banging the alarm bell on this issue, and I want to thank its members for their tireless advocacy and for keeping this important issue at the forefront. Earlier this month they wrote to the agriculture minister expressing their disappointment with the government's response to the e-petition and, once again, urging the government to abandon its proposed amendments to the plant breeders' rights regulations removing farmer privilege to certain crops.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

That letter from the National Farmers Union was co-signed by many other major agricultural stakeholder groups from across Canada, including the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network, the Canada Organic Trade Association, the Canadian Organic Growers, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, FarmFolk CityFolk, Friends of the Earth Canada, Growers of Organic Food Yukon, Manitoba Organics, Organic Alberta, SaskOrganics, SeedChange and Young Agrarians.

The co-signatories on the letter feel the government's response to this issue was inadequate and is not reflective of a government that purports to take farmers' concerns seriously. They note that the government failed to provide a thoughtful response that properly acknowledged the validity of the points made in the e-petition, including forcing farmers to buy seed and/or propagating material annually, which would increase production costs, allow plant breeders to raise prices, prevent access to new varieties that are not available commercially, and prevent farmers from adapting their crops to changing climatic conditions on their farms.

They also state that removing farmers' privilege for new fruit, vegetable and ornamental varieties would unfairly encroach upon farmers' age-old practice of using farm-saved seed. The CFIA wants private investment in plant breeding to become more profitable by taking more revenue from farmers. Canada should provide more support to our public plant breeding system, which benefits farmers and the public. Farmers' privilege is key to food security and Canada's sovereignty. Ensuring that farmers can reproduce crops on their own farms, even if supply chain or climate impacts restrict the supply of propagating material, is critical.

I should note that this letter was sent to the whole of cabinet, including the Prime Minister. In all sincerity I say that I have a copy of that letter with me this evening if the government needs a copy.

I hope the parliamentary secretary is prepared to address these concerns in a more fulsome way than was done during question period in October. I stand alongside these incredible organizations in calling on the government to abandon the proposed regulatory amendments, protect farmers and support farmers' rights through this real action, not empty words. I look forward to the response.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

**Sophie Chatel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for raising this important point in the context of the debate this evening. In my view, we do not talk about agriculture very often and yet agriculture is central to our economy, Canadians' lives and food security, as my colleague referred to. A country that does not feed its people is a country with few options, as our Prime Minister said so well. I would add that, today, the issue of food security is more important than ever.

I am pleased to rise in the House and have the opportunity to speak to the proposed amendments to the plant breeders' rights regulations. I want to talk about the importance of plant breeders' rights in Canada and how they relate to the long-standing practice of saving seed for replanting. I also want to talk about the ongoing consultations with farmers, which my colleague spoke about earlier.

[*English*]

The government remains steadfast in its support of our vibrant agricultural sector, which benefits Canadian farmers and our wider agri-food industry. A direct way we can support this sector is by modernizing our regulations, and the sector all across Canada is asking for that. The proposed amendments are designed to foster innovation in plant breeding and address key challenges such as climate resilience, crop yield and sustainable production.

Plant breeders' rights are a vital form of intellectual property protection. They provide an incentive to plant breeders to invest time and money into creating new resilient plants, which we need. We want to help protect plant breeders' rights in the same way we are protecting other inventors and their creations.

[*Translation*]

We know that our hard-working farmers face serious threats from increasingly unpredictable and extreme weather events, as well as other dangers that threaten crops and orchards. Our goal is to support them by reducing crop losses and improving innovation and productivity. We can achieve this by encouraging breeders to develop varieties that are resilient to climate change.

[*English*]

That will help Canadian farmers adapt to the effects of climate change, offering options to fight drought, heat and disease, and I have a lot more I want to say.

Last year, the CFIA held consultations and then published a "what we heard" report that indicated strong support. The report showed that 90% of the feedback received supported those amendments.

[*Translation*]

The most recent consultation period is coming to an end, and we are now reviewing the new comments we have received, including those presented here by my colleague. This will be completed in the coming weeks.

That said, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. We remain fully available to all Canadians who may have concerns about this issue. Consultations are still ongoing.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[English]

**Gord Johns:** Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that I stand alongside these incredible organizations, which I talked about earlier, representing small farmers. They are calling on the government to abandon these proposed regulatory amendments, to protect farmers and to support farmers' rights through real action and not empty words. From what I just heard, I do not feel the government is going to do that, but it needs to come clean, explain its rationale and listen to the impact this is going to have on these farmers.

The ask of the stakeholders, who represent hundreds of thousands of farmers who grow our food, is simple: Will the government show, through concrete action and not empty words, that it respects a farmer's right to the age-old practice of collecting and saving their own farm seed, and abandon these harmful regulatory changes?

There are different sizes of farms. There are different farmers' needs, but these organizations represent a lot of farmers. They are being ignored, and I hope that the government will come clean on what it is proposing to do.

• (1905)

**Sophie Chatel:** Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of a farmer's privilege, which my colleague referred to, to save and replant seeds. The proposed regulatory amendment would help clarify this concept, and that is what we will do.

[Translation]

The proposed changes do not alter the right to save and reuse seeds, such as grains and legumes, which is a long-standing practice.

[English]

Farmers' privilege would not apply to crops such as hybrids, fruits, vegetables or ornamentals, which in many cases are propagated, or copied, through vegetative reproduction.

[Translation]

Indeed, it would be unfair for an orchard owner to grow hundreds of trees from cuttings taken from a single apple tree without compensating the breeder for the years they devoted to developing a new variety, which often takes 15 to 25 years. Nevertheless, our farmers will still have the option of purchasing plants that are not protected.

[English]

## HEALTH

**Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I asked a question of the government on the privatization of health care in Alberta. I want to be very clear: This is something that is starting in Alberta but something that I am deeply worried will have impacts across this country. I also want to be clear: This is not a theoretical issue. This is a debate; it is a conversation that Canadians need to have.

On December 22, a father of three, a 44-year-old man, went to the Grey Nuns Community Hospital in Edmonton. He waited eight hours with chest pains. He lost his life. Those three children do not have a father any longer because of our failing health care system.

When I asked the minister what she was going to do to protect the Canada Health Act, to protect Canadians in this country, including Albertans, her response was wholly inadequate, talking about innovation and about building infrastructure at a moment in time when the failure of the health care system in Alberta has caused people to lose their lives.

I want to quote Dr. Paul Parks. He is a Medicine Hat ER physician, and he is the past president of the Alberta Medical Association. He said, "I've been here 25 years and never seen it [so] bad." This is the reality that we are living with, with our health care system in Alberta.

Make no mistake: When Danielle Smith brings forward a bill like Bill 11, that is the biggest attack on our health care system since Tommy Douglas and the NDP made medicare a reality in this country. For every Canadian who cherishes a health care system that is public, that is universally accessible and that is delivered to every single Canadian equitably, this is the biggest threat, this threat that we see from Danielle Smith. I saw Scott Moe put up his hand and say, "That sounds great to me."

People in my province are dying because our health care system is failing, and what they need right now is a federal government that stands up and defends the law of this land, the Canada Health Act. That is our law. That is the federal law; that is our jurisdiction.

I asked the minister, "Where is that line? At what point are you going to step in? At what point are you going to say that attacking our public health care system is un-Canadian? At what point do you look at that and say that Canadians do not want a two-tiered, American-style health care system?" I wrote to the Prime Minister. We have been pleading with the government to step in, to take the steps necessary and to defend the Canada Health Act to ensure that all Canadians, including Albertans, have access to publicly delivered, universally accessible health care.

When I stand in this place and I ask the question of the minister, I get nothing. I am going to ask again: Where is the line? When will the Liberal government live up to its obligations to Canadians and in fact enforce the Canada Health Act?

• (1910)

**Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is my first time speaking in the House in the new year, so I want to start by wishing everyone a happy new year. I look forward to working together with colleagues from all parties at a time that demands unity.

Our government was elected last year with the promise to build Canada strong. We understand the importance of nation-building projects, and let me be clear that there is no greater nation-building project in Canada's history than the Canada Health Act. Our government will always defend and protect the Canada Health Act because we recognize that our universal health care system underpins our economic strength. To build Canada strong, we need healthy Canadians.

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This is reflected in budget 2025, which makes generational investments in health care. We are investing \$5 billion in building Canada's health care infrastructure, in attracting top research talents from around the world and in a comprehensive assessment of health care and health infrastructure needs in the north. These are critical investments that will build Canada's health care capacity from coast to coast to coast. Whether it is helping to build a new hospital or attracting researchers who will make their scientific breakthroughs here in Canada, our government is demonstrating in budget 2025 that we are doing our part.

It is deeply disappointing that the member for Edmonton Strathcona voted against the budget. At a time when we need to make generational investments, it is sad to see that she and many members of her party would rather play politics than build up health care across the country, including in Alberta.

In building our health care capacity, we of course need to work closely with our provincial and territorial partners. We have always been clear that, if a province or territory needs help in delivering health care to its citizens, we are there to help because we recognize that access to medically necessary health care should be based on medical needs, not someone's ability to pay.

By working with our provincial and territorial partners, and most importantly, by making key investments that build up health care infrastructures from coast to coast to coast, we will make sure that universal health care continues to be Canada's defining nation-building project and achievement.

**Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, that was not a response to my question about when the government is going to step in to tell Danielle Smith to adhere to the Canada Health Act.

I want to talk about one other piece that Danielle Smith is attacking, which is the rights of trans kids and trans people in my province. She is interfering in the relationships that trans people have with their doctors. There are three people that should be in the room when trans kids are talking about their health care: them, their parents and their doctors. The fact that Danielle Smith seems to feel that she needs to use the notwithstanding clause so that she can insert herself in those conversations is disgusting.

I would ask that the government use the powers it has to protect human rights and our public health care system in this country.

**Maggie Chi:** Mr. Speaker, it is good that the NDP and the member opposite are speaking up for the Canada Health Act, but they need to back up their words with actions by backing budget 2025 and ensuring that needed investments in health care infrastructure can flow to where they are needed the most.

Our government will always defend universal health care, but we understand that defending the Canada Health Act means investing in the health care system.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the last election, the Prime Minister argued for an aggressive elbows-up approach with the United States. Then in November, in the wake of Donald Trump's crippling tariffs and the ongoing trade war, the Prime Minister was asked during a G20 summit when he had last spoken to the President. His response was to flippantly say, "Who

cares?" This was an insensitive remark, particularly to the thousands of Canadians in the auto, forestry, steel and aluminum industries who had lost their jobs since the Prime Minister came to office.

With his having gone from "elbows up" to "who cares", having failed to keep his election promise of having a new trade deal with the United States by July, having gone to Washington in October and come back without a trade deal, having seen softwood tariffs triple and having seen thousands of layoffs, I asked the Prime Minister when Canadians might expect a trade deal. My question was a serious question, a relevant question and timely. It might have been a bit aggressive, but the parliamentary secretary's response that afternoon was simply to insult me and my party.

He offered no apology for the Prime Minister's insensitivity to workers, no excuses for the broken promises on trade deals and no path forward. He just patted himself and his government on the back for their relief efforts. The parliamentary secretary's insolence in question period is not really the reason I have brought this back for an adjournment debate. I am here tonight because in the last two months, the underlying issues that precipitated the "who cares" response remain unresolved. The Prime Minister's flippant attitude toward journalists and parliamentarians is showing a troubling pattern.

Only this past week, the Prime Minister was asked how talks with President Trump were going. He said, "That's the most boring question. Think of a new one."

What an astonishingly arrogant and condescending response to a basic, normal, pertinent question from a journalist. Canadians expect clarity and respect from their Prime Minister and from those who speak for the government in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister was elected to get results for Canadians, and he made many very specific commitments during the election. He did promise a trade deal with the United States by this past July, and he has failed to deliver one. We all know that Donald Trump's attacks on the Canadian economy are unjust and unprovoked, and that his insults and threats to Canadian sovereignty are appalling, but the Prime Minister has made promises to Canadians within this known environment and he has failed to keep those promises.

Tonight, the parliamentary secretary has an opportunity to show some compassion for Canadians who have lost their livelihood as a result of tariffs unjustly imposed by Trump. Every day in question period, we hear heartbreaking stories of mill closures. These people care if and when the Prime Minister has spoken to the President. They do not think it is boring. They are increasingly aware of how unprepared Canada has become for the crisis before us. For 10 years, the government has driven hundreds of billions of dollars out of the country. The Liberals have shut down private investment in new pipeline construction. For 10 years, they have broken all of their promises on the deficit, the debt, spending, infrastructure construction and a host of other things they promised in 2015.

I am going to keep demanding accountability from the government. I will not forget that the Prime Minister and the government made a promise that they have not delivered.

● (1915)

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy (Canada-U.S. Trade), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member might think nobody cares, but I would beg to differ with him. Canadians have been witnessing a government that is serious about all of our economic relationships, and the pace and scale at which our government is acting is truly unprecedented. Just to take an example, today we all heard about an announcement. The Minister of Industry has signed an MOU with the Republic of Korea. However, there are many more examples.

In fairness to my hon. friend, he has asked about the significance of our relationship with our largest trading partner, the United States. Canada's trade relationship with the United States remains one of the most important economic partnerships in the world. It is a relationship that has long supported our shared prosperity by creating jobs, fostering innovation and contributing to economic stability on both sides of the border. I think that is something the hon. member will agree with.

Today, we can all see that we face a disrupted global trading order with long-standing assumptions being upended. As we navigate this challenging period, we will continue to seek solutions with the United States, while also, of course, pursuing a broader strategy of trade diversification and building one Canadian economy. We certainly remain committed to the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, and we are taking the CUSMA review very seriously.

To buttress my point, I think it is important to remind the member that this past Sunday, several days ago, the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade had a very cordial and productive discussion with the U.S. Trade Representative, Mr. Jamieson Greer, where he reiterated that Canada remains fully committed to CUSMA. In turn, it is also important I point out that Ambassador Greer confirmed a very clear desire to work with both Canada and Mexico as we begin this review process.

We are ready, and I think it is important for the member to know that. We have been conducting consultations across our country. We have been hearing from industry stakeholders. We have been working closely with the provinces and territories, and we are leaving no stone unturned to make sure we stand up for Canada. It is important

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to bear in mind that we will take the time needed and necessary to reach a deal that is in the best interests of Canadian workers and Canadian industry.

To further this momentum, as I am sure the member is well aware, the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade will soon be leading a high-level delegation to Mexico, which includes prominent business leaders and representatives from key economic sectors. I am told, and from everything I see, this is going to be one of the largest trade delegations Canada has ever sent out into the world.

This is all to say, the changes we are experiencing are taking place in real time and the trade landscape is shifting, but our government is doing everything with respect to the CUSMA review and also with respect to all the economic relationships we currently maintain.

● (1920)

**Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I will point out that it was not the parliamentary secretary who gave us such an arrogant, flippant answer in the question period from which this debate arose, but I will remind him that he ran in 2015, 10 years ago. He was elected when I was. They ran on a platform then to build infrastructure, unprecedented infrastructure, historic infrastructure.

Ten years later, countless deficits later, there are piles of new debt, and they are still talking about building. They were re-elected nearly a year ago with the promise to have a new trade deal in July. It has not happened. They talked about unprecedented speeds of construction, and nothing is being built. It is all empty promises.

**Hon. Ali Ehsassi:** Mr. Speaker, we are taking nothing for granted. The hon. member is absolutely correct. When we were first elected, our government appreciated full well how important infrastructure is, and I can assure him the same remains true today.

We are very much focused on this challenge. As the member is aware, and I do not know if he has had the opportunity to read the budget, we are investing strategically across this country. We obviously care about the one Canadian economy, but there is also the trade corridor fund, which is so incredibly important to allow us to position ourselves to have more robust trade with countries around the world.

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• (1925)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accord-

ingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:24 p.m.)

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