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Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 13, 2026

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-217, an act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act (reporting on unpaid income tax).

[*English*]

I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill, with amendments to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill C-12, an act respecting certain measures relating to the security of Canada's borders and the integrity of the Canadian immigration system and respecting other related security measures. Copies of the amendments are available at the table.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 8—FOREIGN INFLUENCE TRANSPARENCY COMMISSIONER

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That, in accordance with section 9 of the Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act, S.C. 2024, c. 16, s. 113, the House approve the appointment of Anton Boegman as Foreign Influence Transparency Commissioner, for a term of seven years. (Government Business No. 8)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request that it be passed on division.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

BUILD CANADA HOMES ACT

The House resumed from March 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-20, An Act respecting the establishment of Build Canada Homes, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to wish my husband, Mike, a happy 20th anniversary on St. Patrick's Day. We are on this crazy ride together, and it has really been wonderful.

As a former city councillor, I am very familiar with the development process and acutely aware of the housing crisis, so I really appreciate the opportunity not only to wish Mike a happy anniversary but also to talk about the importance of the Build Canada Homes act.

This legislation establishes Build Canada Homes as a Crown corporation dedicated to building truly affordable homes in communities across the country. The bill is the next major step in strengthening the federal government's capacity to address Canada's housing crisis. The need is very clear. Across the country, far too many Canadians are struggling to find homes they can afford. The phenomenon is not new, but it is urgent. In 2010, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives published a report entitled "Canada's Housing Bubble: An Accident Waiting to Happen". The headline on the news release reads, "Housing bubble at precarious 30-year peak".

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That was in 2010. Here we are 16 years later, and the challenge persists, through different political leadership and through different market conditions. There are many reasons for the complex challenges we face with Canada's housing system. Over the past 30 years, the Canadian building construction price index more than doubled, the cost of land and labour is rising, and through it all, the supply of homes simply did not keep pace with the growing demand for market housing. Governments at all levels did not invest in community, affordable, social and supportive housing, believing incorrectly that the private sector would fill that gap, when that is not its mandate. Although we are beginning to see promising improvements in several cities across the country, it is clear that more needs to be done, and crucially that it be done differently. This is why we are taking a new approach.

Since it was launched in September 2025, Build Canada Homes has made progress in scaling up the supply of affordable housing across Canada. It is driving a more productive and innovative homebuilding sector and acting as a catalyst for modern methods of construction. Combining access to federal lands, development expertise and flexible financial tools under one roof, Build Canada Homes makes it simpler and faster to get big projects off the ground.

With low-interest loans, equity investments, contributions and guarantees, Build Canada Homes can fund construction in an innovative way. It is designed to partner across the housing ecosystem. It works in partnership with non-profits, indigenous organizations, private developers and all orders of government. The federal government's investment in housing supports local jobs and local businesses, helping to grow Canada's economy everywhere.

Build Canada Homes is also implementing the Government of Canada's buy Canadian policy. This means prioritizing projects that use Canadian materials and strengthening domestic supply chains while creating jobs that pay well. This aligns extremely well with the government's significant investments in training for construction trades.

By also prioritizing modern methods of construction, such as factory-built housing, Build Canada Homes will spark a more productive homebuilding industry. I have seen this first-hand. Guelph's Pacd Homes can flat-pack a home. People from the auto sector, one of the most productive sectors in the country, have figured out a way, with new materials, to assemble, in particular, ADUs or additional dwelling units. They can ship them. They can assemble them in four to six weeks if they have the zoning and the land. We are going to see more and more of these innovations right across the country. This will drive a steady demand for factory-built housing to speed up delivery, reduce costs and improve sustainability.

The industry committee just completed a study on productivity and how Canada can boost it. Did members know that industries with the lowest productivity often include those that are highly labour-intensive, slow to adopt new technologies or composed mainly of small firms? Those are all characteristics of residential construction. In fact, in 2024, TD Bank identified construction as one of the lowest-performing sectors in terms of productivity and said it was at a 30-year low.

The need is so great that we can boost productivity in homebuilding, and there will still be plenty of room for smaller builders. Every new home that is built will mean more demand for Canadian steel, lumber and aluminum, helping workers and businesses thrive. A broad increase in supply will have a downward pressure on prices on the market side of the housing continuum. These are some tangible results provided by Build Canada Homes already.

● (1005)

In just a few months, Build Canada Homes has delivered measurable progress. Landmark agreements have been signed with many provinces and municipalities, and six federal land projects are advancing toward construction. Canada's housing crisis is being addressed. Do we wish it could happen overnight? Absolutely, we do. With new innovations, thousands of affordable homes are committed, and we should see shovels in the ground this year. Hundreds of projects are under review across the country, ready to break ground. These are concrete results that show how this new approach is turning ambition into action. It is what can be achieved when speed, innovation and especially collaboration are prioritized.

Housing advocates across the country are very excited. I met with housing proponents in Guelph just last week who are collaborating to submit a portfolio of projects. One is an affordable housing project for vulnerable families, and another is a multiresidential, permanent supportive housing project for seniors who are struggling with mental illness. These are not projects that the private sector would build. The private sector has a profit motive, which is fine, but the private sector in Guelph also has a big heart. It has been a huge provider of services, funding, supports and, very importantly, land in the last few years, to help previous Guelph projects literally get off the ground.

Land is so often the core of this issue, so this bill would also give the federal government the authority to transfer the land holdings and development experience of Canada Lands Company Limited to Build Canada Homes. This would streamline and consolidate federal tools to directly build affordable housing on public land for public good. Build Canada Homes and Canada Lands Company would continue to work together closely. They would continue to advance priority projects, including the direct-build sites, and ensure a smooth transition.

Government Orders

As a Crown corporation, Build Canada Homes would be overseen by a board of directors responsible for strategic direction, risk management and oversight of activities and performance. This would ensure alignment with Build Canada Homes' legislative mandate. A chairperson and CEO, both appointed by the Governor in Council, would provide leadership and ensure that the corporation's activities align with government priorities. The legislation, importantly, would provide Build Canada Homes with the independence to operate effectively, while ensuring clear lines of accountability to Parliament.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Once this legislation is passed and comes into force, Build Canada Homes will become a Crown corporation. It will be given the independence necessary to take risks and the operational autonomy it needs to focus on fulfilling its mandate, while remaining accountable to Canadians.

Making Build Canada Homes a Crown corporation will give it the flexibility and legal and operational autonomy it needs to fulfill its mandate. At the same time, it will maintain a clear framework of accountability to Parliament. It will be able to exercise a broader range of powers than a special operating agency, and it will be able to hold assets, make investments and conduct complex financial transactions.

This bill fulfills the commitment that the government made in budget 2025. It is a historic law that will help advance the mandate of Build Canada Homes, which is to build more housing more quickly and more affordably. It will guarantee safe and affordable housing for every Canadian.

[*English*]

Everyone in Canada, no matter where they live across the country, should have access to affordable housing. A home is not merely shelter. It is security, stability and connection to community. We are facing a housing crisis, one that has been growing for decades. In response, the new government is adopting a new model, a new approach, new construction methods and new partnerships and collaborations to accelerate housing construction, restore housing affordability and reduce homelessness.

Canadians need affordable housing now. This bill would help enable Build Canada Homes to continue to deliver on the federal government's promise to Canadians. It would provide a better, brighter future for homebuilding across our country.

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first question that comes to mind regarding the need to build homes is this: Who builds homes? It is builders. People build homes, but they need a way to be able to build them. They need the government to get out of the way and municipalities to facilitate it. All these conditions have to be provided by the authorities to make sure that homes are built on time, with productivity levels in place and with the numbers and efficiency needed. We do not need another bureaucracy to stand in the way.

Another layer of bureaucracy is definitely going to slow down production and productivity, and that is the wrong path. I would like the hon. member to understand that and comment on it.

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, as a city councillor for many years, I saw the municipality streamline its processes. The member is quite right. The private sector is building homes, but for 30 years, communities have expected provinces or the federal government to build non-market affordable housing. Guess what: The private sector does not build that kind of stuff. Why? It is because it has a profit imperative. Look, I have an economics degree. The private sector wants to maximize its profits. It wants to pay higher wages and all that stuff. It is all fine, but there is a gap. Build Canada Homes is going to fill that gap for true market affordability.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I cannot be the only person who heard the Prime Minister say during the election campaign that he was going to implement an ambitious construction program to help our forestry sector, one of the economic sectors paying the highest countervailing duties and the most tariffs in Canada.

Although nothing in the bill necessarily promotes the use of lumber, that is not what concerns me. By the time that the Build Canada Homes program gets off the ground, and given the tariffs that the forestry industry is currently paying, no one will be left in the industry anyway. If it truly wants to build homes using more lumber, the government should find a way to provide funding now and give people in the forestry sector access to liquidity. That does not appear to be the case.

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

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree that the government needs to support sectors put at risk by unfair U.S. tariffs. Liquidity programs exist for the lumber, steel and automotive sectors.

Although this issue is truly important, it falls outside the scope of this bill, which only seeks to create a Build Canada Homes Crown corporation. Nevertheless, the issue is indeed important and yes, we need to use Canadian lumber.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, may I congratulate my colleague and her husband on their anniversary.

Government Orders

Having said that, it is really important to recognize that our government understands it has a leadership role to play in the issue of housing and affordability. As a federal government, not only are we investing by creating an agency, but we are also working with the other stakeholders, in particular, the provinces and municipalities. I am wondering if my colleague could provide her thoughts on how important it is that the government works with municipalities, provinces and other stakeholders to meet the situation Canada is facing today.

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, the City of Guelph is a participant in the housing accelerator fund from the previous government. That funding has allowed all kinds of zoning reform. We have removed exclusionary zoning. We have seed money for accessory dwelling units. We have seed money for affordable housing projects. That first step, that first foray of working directly, has been extremely important. This next step is a complete game-changer. I want to congratulate all the affordable housing providers in Guelph, which have done an amazing job of building affordable housing with wraparound services over the past four years.

Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands—Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in a housing crisis. This does not come as a surprise to anyone in this place, and it certainly does not come as a surprise to Canadians who are looking for a home or a place to live, be it a first-time home purchase or simply shelter.

We can agree that there is a crisis, but how do we solve it? The government has made some proposals and has some ideas on how best to address it. The Build Canada Homes act would, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, cost about \$219 million in operating costs. That would be the administrative price of this bureaucracy. This is not the Liberal government's first iteration of a housing bureaucracy, but it is its latest one.

Housing starts are projected to fall sharply. The government promised 500,000 homes per year, but it is not fixing the real barriers, which is why we are going to continue to see a decline or insufficient growth in housing starts.

There are a few different ways we would propose, as Conservatives, to address this. For market housing, we obviously have a supply-side challenge, and we need to unlock that. The private sector is going to be the biggest driver in building homes. We need to recognize that and do what government should be doing, which is getting out of the way and reducing the burdens. Removing taxes, such as the GST on new homes, and tying federal infrastructure funding to municipalities to permit more housing are part of an approach that would absolutely lead to faster project approvals and easing prices for homebuyers.

We also need non-market housing. Private developers are not going to be the ones to solely fill this need, but supportive housing, indigenous housing and housing for people experiencing homelessness need to be addressed, and need to be addressed urgently. However, this federal bureaucracy, and that number again is \$219 million in operating costs that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said it would cost, would take money away from the approaches that work and that we advocate for.

We come at this from a point of agreeing with the government that there is a housing crisis, a homelessness crisis and an addictions crisis, but there is not a crisis in the creation of too few bureaucracies by the government.

What happens when government provides funding to the people who need it without creating a new bureaucracy? A good example of that is in my community, where I advocated for supportive housing. There was a municipal building that was a former administration building for the water pollution control plant. Along with my provincial counterpart, MPP Steve Clark, we encouraged the local government to free that up for supportive housing, which it did in partnership with the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. They pursued a service provider and project funding that would house the homeless and help to treat those suffering from addiction, giving them the tools to get well, to get off drugs if they were suffering from addiction, giving them skills for employment and helping them find market housing and a job. Once they graduated through, a new space would be opened up for someone else.

● (1020)

The Pathways supportive housing project in Brockville, which is being administered at that site by the John Howard Society, is a great example of funding that can come from government. It is \$850,000 to operate that program, and it is going to change the lives of dozens of people every year by getting them off the street, getting them off drugs and helping them to get jobs, to get into market housing and to reunite with their families. This is incredible. This is the way.

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness administered these funds. This comes from a government program. It comes from the homelessness reduction innovation fund. Are the parameters of this program perfect? No, no government program is, but when we are comparing investment where it is needed, \$850,000 is going to help dozens of the most vulnerable people every year in one community. Let us take that in terms of the value for investment against, and I keep looking down to make sure I get the number right from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, \$219 million in operating costs alone for this latest bureaucracy. We agree on what the problem is. We agree on some of the ways to solve it, but where we disagree is the expenditure on another bureaucracy. This is one of those things.

How quickly we can build homes in this country can also be addressed by expanding skilled trades participation and continuing to unlock private investment so builders can deliver homes faster and at greater scale. I had the privilege to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, and I was a tradesman. I was a telecommunications lineman, so I got to work with all kinds of construction trades. It was a tremendous opportunity for me. I got to work with the greatest Canadians I have ever encountered.

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My experience in meeting with the building trades in my community is that the hard-working men and women who build stuff, who fix stuff, are the folks who make it is easy to see the investment bring a great return. If we want to find ways for all levels of government to work together, we need to be partnering with them, investing in our skilled trades, recognizing their credentials uniformly across the country and giving them fair tax treatment, as fair or fairer than CEOs who are able to write off their travel. What are we doing to encourage people to enter our building trades?

We have had this housing shortage for years, and we have seen the supply challenge for years. However, we have also seen the creation of new housing bureaucracies over that same period of time, and the problem has not been solved. We agree there is a problem, but where we disagree is on the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars for the creation of a new bureaucracy.

We can agree on investment in the areas where it matters most. Cutting taxes and removing the GST for first-time homebuyers will get the job done. Let us find ways we can work together to help Canadians without the creation of another bureaucracy, which will only drive up inflation through higher taxes but will not do anything to meaningfully address the housing crisis we find ourselves in here in Canada.

• (1025)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously I disagree with the member's assessment of the need for the agency. He does bring up one valid issue that I do support, which is the area of non-profits. Many different agencies are out there. I am thinking of Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity in the city of Winnipeg has done amazing things, and it has received federal support in the past. It relies on a lot of volunteerism. It supports deeply individuals who are challenged to be able to own their very first home. If not for Habitat for Humanity, hundreds of people in Winnipeg would never have really had the opportunity to own homes.

I am wondering if he could provide his thoughts on Habitat for Humanity, because Habitat for Humanity is a national non-profit.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, Habitat for Humanity is a real lifeline. It is a program that, frankly, provides dignity to folks. I think that the creation of conditions where we can allow people to continue to live with dignity or to find it for the first time is an area where we can collaborate. These not-for-profits are experts in being able to deliver these types of solutions, and partnering with them and working with them is one area where we can find common ground to stomp on. Those are good investments for us to make.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, housing construction generally falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. My concern is that the federal government is again creating a structure that will increase the amount of time it takes to build housing.

Does my colleague agree with me that it would be much simpler to transfer the money to the provinces and ensure that the homes are built, as they are the ones in the best position to do so? Does my colleague agree?

• (1030)

[*English*]

Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada provides all kinds of money to municipalities, to towns and cities. We can help to incentivize, in every province and territory, new home construction by increasing or bonusing municipalities when they make regulatory changes that accelerate the construction of homes. Whether it is building fourplexes or making sure that there is housing densification near transit projects, these are criteria that the government should set. It can continue or even increase the funding as long as we see measurable outcomes, which is what all federal funding should be tied to, because that is what Canadians expect.

There needs to be more housing faster, and municipalities, cities and towns can be a real player in that right across the country.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues the Liberals seem to keep putting forward is just little dribs and drabs of a tiny bit of new supply: a hundred homes here, a hundred there. It is clear that Canada needs hundreds of thousands of new homes. We are in a supply crisis, not a government spending crisis. I wonder if my colleague could comment on the fact that there is nothing in Build Canada Homes that would reduce the regulations or reduce housing costs for Canadians and developers.

Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is from the beautiful city of Edmonton, which I am proud to have called home when I served in the Canadian Forces. I want to draw him back to the PBO's estimates on this program: that it would add 26,000 homes, 5,000 homes per year. That is certainly a long way from what the government is promising. What we need is a reduction in taxes, a reduction in regulations and working with the municipalities so they create the conditions and so we can get housing densification and more houses built, and address this problem without a new, expensive Liberal bureaucracy.

Taleb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin not with a policy argument but with something more fundamental, a question that I think most Canadians are grappling with right now: Can the next generation afford to live in the communities they grew up? For too many Canadians, and certainly this is the case in my riding of Vancouver Granville, the answer is no. I think it is worth sitting with that for a moment before we get into the mechanics of the legislation.

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The mechanics matter only if we are honest about the scale of what we are trying to solve. We are not dealing with a temporary market fluctuation. We are dealing with a structural deficit in housing supply that has compounded over decades in communities large and small in every province and every territory. The cost of inaction shows up in families doubling up in homes that were not designed for it, in workers who cannot live near the jobs they are being asked to fill, because they cannot afford to, and in young people who have quietly stopped imagining home ownership as something that belongs to them. This bill is one part of the government's response to that reality.

Bill C-20, the Build Canada Homes act, proposes to transition Build Canada Homes from a special operating agency within Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada into a Crown corporation. I want to take a moment to explain why the distinction matters, because I think it is easy to hear "Crown corporation" and think of it as a bureaucratic technicality or a boondoggle, but it is anything but.

A special operating agency, however well resourced and however well intentioned, operates within the constraints of its parent department. It cannot independently hold assets, it cannot take on the kind of financial risk that is required to build complex or large-scale housing developments, and it cannot move with the speed and flexibility that a housing crisis of this magnitude demands. A Crown corporation, on the other hand, can do all those things while remaining fully accountable to Parliament and to Canadians.

What the legislation would do in practical terms is give Build Canada Homes the legal and operational independence to deploy \$13 billion in additional capitalization to hold and to develop public lands; to enter into complex financial arrangements with provinces, municipalities, non-profits and indigenous housing providers; and to do so without the structural friction that has, quite frankly, slowed federal housing delivery in the past, regardless of who has been in power.

The legislation would authorize the integration of the Canada Lands Company, which would bring with it significant land holdings and deep development expertise, under the Build Canada Homes umbrella. It would enable non-profits, church groups and other organizations to bring their land to bear in helping to solve the housing crisis in the country. That matters. Federal land is one of the most underleveraged assets we have in addressing the housing supply gap, and the legislation would begin to change that.

The arguments that one could make against the bill are predictable, and they deserve a substantive response. We will hear and have already heard that this would be yet another federal bureaucracy, that the government would be inserting itself where it does not belong and that builders build homes, not bureaucrats. I would say with the greatest of respect that this framing misunderstands what Build Canada Homes is designed to do.

Build Canada Homes would not be competing with the private sector. It is not designed to replace builders, developers or market mechanisms that have an important role to play in housing supply. It is designed to go where the market on its own has demonstrated it will not go: deeply affordable housing, non-market housing, supportive and transitional housing, housing for indigenous communi-

ties and housing in places and for populations where the financial returns do not attract the scale of private capital that other markets do. This is not government overreach. It is government doing what only government can do.

I want to point out something concrete, because I think this debate benefits from moving from principle to evidence. Last month, Build Canada Homes and my province, the province of British Columbia, announced a partnership that I think illustrates exactly what this model is capable of. Through that agreement, Build Canada Homes committed \$170 billion in capital, which in turn unlocked \$640 million in provincial investment through BC Housing.

Together, that partnership will deliver over 700 shovel-ready and supportive transitional homes, with construction beginning in the next 12 months, alongside at least 400 affordable rental homes using B.C.'s DASH program, Digitally Accelerated Standardized Housing, which uses prefab Canadian components to reduce costs and construction timelines simultaneously. It is one federal investment and multiple times its value in leveraged provincial dollars. It is over 1,000 homes built using innovative Canadian construction methods on a timeline that would not have been achievable under the old model.

● (1035)

This is the logic of the legislation made real, and it is not an isolated example. Since its launch in September, Build Canada Homes has already secured partnerships and agreements with the City of Ottawa and with the provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec, and a tripartite agreement with Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. All of these represent, together with the B.C. agreement, more than 8,600 new homes already.

Since I was elected, I have made a commitment to my constituents that I would do everything possible to bring affordable and rental housing to our riding. Since then, we have delivered more than 10,000 units of affordable and rental housing in Vancouver Granville. However, that is not enough. That is why this work with Build Canada Homes is essential.

I want to say a word about affordability and accountability because I know it will be raised, and accountability should be raised. Accountability is not a distraction from the urgency of the housing crisis; it is what makes sustained, long-term delivery possible. Build Canada Homes, as a Crown corporation, would operate with a board of directors and a Governor in Council-appointed leadership. It would be subject to the FAA. It would report to Parliament. The minister would retain authority to issue directives.

These are not weak accountability mechanisms. They are quite the opposite. They are the standard framework that has governed effective Crown corporations in this country for generations. The question is not whether there will be accountability but whether we are willing to give this institution the independence it needs to actually deliver. The legislation seeks to balance that in the right manner.

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I think about what the bill would achieve when we look down the line 10, 15 or 20 years. What would it make possible in that time frame? We know, because history has shown us, that the most consequential investments governments make are rarely the ones that produce immediate visible returns. This is not just about between now and the next election but about security and stability for generations of Canadians.

The infrastructure that was built by previous generations, the institutions established over decades, and the long-term bets on innovation and capacity that have compounded over time are what define whether a country is building toward something or simply managing its present. Housing affordability is one of those long-term bets. Turning Build Canada Homes into a durable, well-capitalized, operationally independent institution is not a quick fix; it is a foundation that if built well will be delivering homes for Canadians long after the politics of this moment have moved on.

I believe, and on this side of the House we believe, that is worth doing, and I think it is worth doing urgently. The evidence of the last six months, the partnerships, the projects, the capital deployed, the communities engaged from British Columbia to Nunavut and to Nova Scotia, suggest that we have in Build Canada Homes an institution that is ready to rise to that responsibility.

When I think about what we have already accomplished in my own riding, whether it is the Soroptimist project, which is women-led housing for women and women-led families; whether it is the Ashley Mar project, which turned a small number of co-op units into hundreds of co-op units alongside rental; or whether it is the Senákw project in the north end of my riding, each and every one of these projects, supported by the federal government, has enabled different types of housing to take shape. It has helped to address the missing middle challenges. It has helped to address what workers need in order to be close to their jobs.

However, we need more. We need to be able to move quickly, and I think every single member of the House recognizes that CMHC has not been able to deliver this on its own. That is why Build Canada Homes, given the space, the authorities, the capacity and the independence to be able to act, would do what we all need it to do.

It would unlock private capital, unlock the investors who are going to be able to partner with government, and unlock lands held by the federal government. It would enable all manner of groups and organizations that have land, but do not have the means to be able to develop it, to work with the federal government and to look at a portfolio approach across this country to develop housing where we need it most, in the communities that are in desperate need of this.

The legislation would transform positively the lives of Canadians, young Canadians and the people most in need. It would also make sure our communities are resilient, our cities are strong and rural Canada has what it deserves: the type of housing where we are going to see an increasing and growing need. I encourage every member of the House to support Bill C-20. I know that by moving forward on the legislation and by giving Build Canada Homes the space and the mandate it deserves, we would see the results that Canadians deserve from all of us.

• (1040)

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member opposite on how bureaucracy does not build any homes and how the government has to have a mechanism to do that. However, he said that the process was going to allow us to use unused lands in the different parts of the departments. Could he tell me where in the bill there are any limits, goals or numbers for departments to say what is possible for vacant lands? My understanding is the departments themselves determine what is vacant, and they may never actually come up with any available lands unless they are given goals and requirements.

Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question because it illustrates some of the information that I think people should have access to.

As each department has gone through and looked at their land inventories, that is one step in the process. There is also a process by which Build Canada Homes will ask pointed questions when inventories do not look like they line up with reality. I will give a good example of this. As we all know, there are Canada Post facilities across this country, some of which have been designated and some of which have not. There is going to be a process that the folks at Build Canada Homes will be certain to undertake to ensure that, where there is an opportunity to access those lands, they will.

In my own riding, there are several pieces of land that the federal government owns that are now going to be part of the portfolio approach, including the Heather Lands, which is going to be an important development.

If we all look at those opportunities together, we will be able to achieve success.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, indeed, everyone agrees that investments should be made in housing. The government is facing a terrible crisis that it needs to manage. Unfortunately, in the past, the federal government has always used these crises as an excuse to centralize power. We support building more housing, but we are concerned about Build Canada Homes. We are concerned that a centralizing structure will be created, when, in fact, housing falls under Quebec's jurisdiction. What assurances can my colleague give me?

Recently, an agreement was reached with Quebec. The details are still unknown. That agreement exists and let us assume that it is valid for one year. What assurances can my colleague give me that, next year, or in 5 or 10 years from now, this institution will not continue to trample on Quebec's areas of jurisdiction?

Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, this agreement between Quebec and Canada to work together within the Build Canada Homes framework should reassure my colleague that the Quebec government is committed to protecting the rights of Quebec and Quebecers.

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We can draw on Quebec's experience and capabilities to assure Quebecers that the federal government's involvement in this matter will benefit Quebec. In fact, we can leverage all of Quebec's and the Quebec government's experience, authority, and capabilities to ensure that Quebecers—

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member to continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East has the floor.

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already seen examples of the government supporting new housing projects, such as the 612 new co-op homes near the Kennedy TTC Station in my riding of Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East.

Could my colleague share how projects like this demonstrate the kind of community-focused housing the legislation is aiming to deliver?

Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the amazing work that she does in that community.

The example she presented is a perfect example of how community-led initiatives give government the priorities that it should be using. When we look at the types of projects that communities need, we see that communities know best what they need. By being able to work through the Build Canada Homes process, they will be able to put those projects at the fore as their priorities.

This is one perfect example of that, and the more of this that we can do, the more communities will see that government partnering with them can deliver the types of results that they deserve.

[*Translation*]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Montmorency—Charlevoix, like everywhere else in the country, families are working hard and making the right choices. People get up every morning and go to work. They pay their taxes. They want to build a better life for their children. Today, however, there is one vital thing that eludes far too many young families, workers, and seniors: the ability to find suitable, reasonably priced housing in their region.

The crisis is not limited to housing. It is a cost of living crisis. It is a regional development crisis. It is also a crisis of confidence in our institutions and in the government, which makes big promises, makes plenty of announcement and spends lots of money, but is not delivering results.

The Liberals promised to build 500,000 homes a year. According to current estimates, the government is going to end up building more like 212,000 homes a year between now and 2028, or less than half the number expected. That is a far cry from the Liberals' promise. It is a far cry from what is needed. Most of all, it is a far cry from addressing the reality confronting families looking for a home but forced to remain longer in an apartment because the market is obviously not on their side.

What has the Liberal government done to try to tackle this crisis? Instead of drawing up a proper plan, it has created more red tape. Instead of speeding up the start of new housing projects, it has added a fourth department responsible for housing. Instead of setting clear targets, the minister himself tells us that no overall target has been set for the number of homes to be built. When a government does not even know how many homes it actually wants to build, how can we, as elected representatives and as the public, trust the Liberals?

That is not all. The assessment indicates that, even once the machinery gets up and running, Build Canada Homes will only be able to build 5,000 homes a year. That is 1% of what was announced. Their strategy is a wholly inadequate response to the crisis. It is not a response that meets families' needs. It is not a construction plan. It is a sham. These are announcements and pretty pictures, but they do not address the real problems.

What are people going through in the meantime? Everything is more expensive. Interest rates are going up, shutting down their chances of buying a home. Household budgets are being eaten up by rent. Their children are leaving the region because they cannot afford to settle there.

Back home in Montmorency—Charlevoix, this is the harsh reality for young couples, tourism workers, retail employees, single-parent families and seniors who want to stay in their communities, but this is also affecting small businesses that cannot find employees because people are unable to move to these towns. Having a roof over one's head is the foundation for building a family, a future, and a community's future. It is a matter of economic vitality. It is a matter of social well-being. It is a matter of land use. It is, in fact, an existential issue for our regions.

The federal government cannot do it all alone. We know that. In Quebec, land use planning, urban planning, permits and several other mechanisms fall under the jurisdiction of the municipal and provincial governments. However, the federal government has very real responsibilities and can really help where its jurisdiction allows. The federal government can provide federal tax relief, better direct its transfers to certain programs, quickly free up its land and empty buildings and put an end to tax barriers that are slowing down construction investment.

The federal government can enter into clear agreements with Quebec and the municipalities to reward those that are actually getting things done rather than funding bureaucracy. In other words, Ottawa does not issue municipal permits, but it can stop making the crisis worse and start rewarding those who are building. That is why the Conservatives are proposing a clear, simple and, above all, responsible approach at the federal level.

First, we need to axe the GST on all new homes under \$1.3 million. That is something only the federal government can do. That would directly reduce the purchase price, help families and encourage the construction of new homes. It could also save a family up to \$65,000.

Government Orders

Second, the government could tie federal infrastructure dollars to homebuilding. Let us be clear. Municipalities are the ones that make the decisions regarding building permits. That falls under their jurisdiction. However, the federal government has the right, and even the duty, to demand results when it provides cities with billions of dollars.

• (1050)

We in the Conservativs Party are proposing that municipalities allow a minimum 15% annual increase in residential construction in order to receive full federal support. This is not an intrusion into municipal areas of jurisdiction; it is a federal condition for receiving federal funding. That is exactly how a serious government can work in partnership, by rewarding municipalities that are really making an effort to find solutions for their residents.

Third, the taxes and fees that are driving up construction costs could be reduced by 50%. Obviously, these costs are also a municipal matter or are often even covered by provincial programs. However, the federal government can set standards. It cannot eliminate all these standards unilaterally, but it can work on agreements with Quebec and the municipalities, use its programs and offer financial incentives to reduce taxes and fees. In other words, co-operation is not just a slogan. It must become the normal way of working. Quebec and the municipalities retain authority over their jurisdictions, but Ottawa uses its financial tools to get more housing built faster and at a lower cost.

Fourth, we could end the capital gains tax on reinvestments in new housing in Canada. Once again, that is a federal responsibility. It is a powerful means to unlock billions of dollars of investment in residential construction. Here is what we propose: fewer tax penalties, more private investment, more housing, less talk and more action.

Finally, the federal government needs to clean house. We found out that it takes up to nine years to dispose of federal property. Knowing that, the reason for the problem is clear. The Liberal government talks about doing things fast but moves at a snail's pace. It talks about urgency but acts like there is no hurry, like all is well. If the federal government owns under-utilized or entirely vacant buildings and sites, it must make them available quickly, subject to clear requirements, simple agreements and an obligation to produce results.

It should not take nine more years and three or four more administrative structures. While the Liberals drag their feet, families have bills to pay. Families are paying more for everything. Right now, they are putting off making purchases. Families are even delaying plans to have children because they cannot find an affordable home. Families are leaving our regions because they cannot stay and settle down there.

What does that mean, in concrete terms, for Montmorency—Charlevoix? It means that personal support workers, hotel employees, young entrepreneurs, couples with two children, fishers and seniors who want to stay in the area are all asking themselves the same question: What can they do to stay in their region, in their home? That is the real question.

The answer does not lie in a new agency that has no clear targets. It does not lie in more delays, more press releases, or more announcements about fake projects. The answer lies in a clear response from the federal government that respects its jurisdictions and uses them to the fullest in order to lower federal taxes, reward construction, unlock federal lands faster, attract private investment and enter into partnerships with Quebec, the RCMs, the municipalities and the private sector.

The Conservatives believe that a strong country starts with families who can afford a home. We believe that a strong economy starts with workers who can stay in their region. We believe that a fair society starts with an affordable roof over everyone's head. Most importantly, we believe that after 10 years of promises, Canadians deserve results. Enough with the red tape. Enough with the false starts. Enough with the empty promises. The time has come to build more, tax less, approve faster and give families a chance not just to survive, but to thrive.

• (1055)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the figures speak for themselves. Three of the five best years on record for housing starts in Canada have been within the last five years, in 2025, 2022 and 2021. The other two years were in the 1970s. What do these historic peaks have in common? Liberal governments were in power in Ottawa.

However, the Conservatives' record from their most recent stint in power is far less impressive. Only a few tens of thousands of affordable homes were built or renovated over the course of nearly 10 years. There was no national strategy and very little investment.

When comparing these records, would my colleague not agree with me that the Liberal approach to housing delivers far more tangible results, with increased housing starts? If he agrees, will he vote with us to support the bill and enable Build Canada Homes to accelerate housing starts across the country?

Gabriel Hardy: Mr. Speaker, it is funny how when, the Liberals ask us a question, they say that tens of thousands of homes were built during the Conservatives' years in government. However, when we ask questions in the House, they say that only six homes were built.

They may have trouble counting, but the numbers are out. They are promising 500,000 homes, but only 212,000 homes are going to be built per year by 2028. That is less than half. Next, let us look at the objectives. Build Canada Homes is going to deliver 5,000 homes a year, not 500,000. That amounts to 1%.

Maybe the Liberals should review their program, stop funding bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake, and finally help the people on the ground for real.

Statements by Members

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech and noticed a potential blind spot.

If the government wants to build more housing, it will have to support the forestry industry, which is going through one of the worst crises in its history. Right now, what we are seeing is consolidation within the forestry sector. This means that if a major construction initiative started tomorrow, a lot of players would be missing. Where would we get our lumber then? The question is sure to come up.

Does my colleague agree with the proposal jointly presented by the Bloc Québécois and forestry sector representatives? Would he back the idea of introducing a financial support program to help the forestry industry make it through the current crisis?

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to give the member a chance to reply, but unfortunately, he will have to wait until after question period, since it is almost 11 a.m. He will have lots of time to think about it.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1100)

[English]

KULDIP SINGH THANDI

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour the remarkable life of Mr. Kuldip Singh Thandi, a constituent who recently passed at the age of 80 after a courageous battle with cancer.

A deeply respected leader, Mr. Thandi served the Khalsa Diwan Society gurdwara with unwavering dedication. He held the positions of president and treasurer, leading always with humility, integrity and commitment.

Mr. Thandi was an incredible organizer, a guiding force behind countless community initiatives and a pillar of strength for many families. His selfless service, deep wisdom and rare generosity touched innumerable lives. As he was recently described to me, Mr. Thandi was one in a million and a loyal friend whose kindness and compassion were felt by everyone who met him. His contributions to our community and country will never be forgotten.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Mr. Thandi's family and loved ones. May Waheguru bless his soul with eternal peace.

THE GOOD COMPANIONS SENIORS' CENTRE

Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some of the main challenges facing many seniors are isolation, staying active and engaging with their neighbours and communities. Addressing those challenges is the core mission of The Good Companions Seniors' Centre in my community of Ottawa Centre, and it has been pursuing that for the past 70 years.

The amazing staff and volunteers of The Good Companions have shown unrivalled passion and dedication in their work. They have undeniably made a lasting impact on our community and have

changed the lives of seniors for the better. Programs such as the adult day program, fitness classes, the craft studio and the seniors' centre without walls are just a few examples of how the centre is keeping seniors active. It has been a great joy for me to attend many of those events, and I see so much fun every time I go to that community.

I would ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating The Good Companions on its well-deserved 70th anniversary.

WOMEN'S HUSKIES BASKETBALL

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the University of Saskatchewan's Huskies women's basketball team. Just last Sunday, at the U Sports championship, the Huskies captured their second straight title with a 77-68 win over the University of New Brunswick Reds.

Coming off the bench was Logan Reider. She scored a team-high 19 points and was named the player of the game. Ella Murphy Wiebe, who is in her fifth and final year, was named the tournament's most valuable player. The Huskies will now graduate five players, so winning the bronze baby for the second year in a row was certainly special.

The Huskies reeled off 51 straight wins over two seasons, which I think is a tribute to their coaching staff, led by Lisa Thomaidis. The program has now won four championships since 2016. I congratulate all Huskies.

CHILD NUTRITION

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was heartwarming to see the Children's Foundation of Guelph and Wellington's keep kids fed programs in action last week. I met parent volunteers and U of G nutrition students who were preparing the snacks. I spoke with a school administrator and Children's Foundation leaders.

Together with volunteers and donors, they ensure every child has reliable access to nutritious food every day, with dignity and without barriers. We had a great conversation about how federal policy directly shapes the well-being of children in my riding through initiatives like the national school nutrition program and the upcoming groceries and essentials benefit, which will help more than 18,000 people in the riding of Guelph.

While the national school nutrition program helps with the keep kids fed at school program, our community fills in the gaps and supports the keep kids fed at home program, which provides nutritious snacks for vulnerable kids during weekends and holidays.

The return on investment, whether it is social, educational or economic, is significant when every child has the food they need to thrive.

[Translation]

Our children definitely deserve it.

[English]

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 1991, Canadian men and women in uniform answered the call to defend Kuwait. Operation Friction deployed nearly 4,500 Canadian Forces members to the Persian Gulf. They served with distinction alongside coalition partners to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. For the first time in our history, women served alongside men in combat roles. Canada would answer that call again after 9/11.

There were 158 Canadians who gave their lives in Afghanistan before the combat mission ended in March 2011. For many who returned from both conflicts, the battles continued at home as recognition of service-related illnesses and access to veterans benefits remained an ongoing struggle.

On these important anniversaries, we honour every Canadian who served in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan wars. We remember their sacrifice. We acknowledge the challenges they faced upon return, and we reaffirm our commitment to never leave those who served and their families behind.

• (1105)

[Translation]

60TH QUEBEC GAMES

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Thérèse-De Blainville was honoured to host the 60th Quebec Games from February 27 to March 7.

For 10 days, our region was abuzz with excitement over sports, youth and personal achievement. Close to 3,000 athletes from across Quebec gathered together to push their limits and experience something unforgettable. Behind every competition and every medal, the solid support of an entire community was on full display.

Today, I want to applaud the outstanding work of the 2,500 or so volunteers who welcomed the athletes, supported the teams and made sure that the competitions ran smoothly. I also want to give my heartfelt thanks to Mayor Liza Poulin, François Rioux and his organizing committee for overseeing the event with professionalism and dedication.

Statements by Members

Their commitment made these games much more than a sports competition. They were a time of pride and fellowship for our entire region and for our Quebec. I was there. It was a wonderful sight to behold.

[English]

IRONMAN ATHLETE

William Stevenson (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I recently attended the Alberta Beef Industry Conference, and I want to send a shout-out to the cattle farmers facing today's challenges. Attendees learned about the issues of the day, but it was not all doom and gloom.

One inspiring session was presented by James Lawrence, an Alberta boy, born and raised in Calgary, known as the "Iron Cowboy". He ran Ironman triathlons, breaking many Guinness world records. In 2021, he completed 101 Ironman races in 101 days. That is 3.8 kilometres of swimming, 180 kilometres on a bike and then 42 kilometres running every day. His perseverance is a testament to how the human spirit can push through to accomplish anything. For one of those races, he pulled and pushed Dayton, a boy with cerebral palsy, through the race to make the boy's dream to be an Ironman come true.

A lesson I can take from this is that, no matter how bad the Liberal government has been over the last 10 years, there is hope. If we keep the faith, we can get through this.

WOMEN'S HOUSING INITIATIVE MANITOBA

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Canadian population ages and our older adults, along with our systems, face new challenges as a result, we need to be innovative and bold. My constituent, Beverly Suek, is both those things. When her husband passed away, Beverly faced the common challenge of loneliness, but she did not stay still. Beverly purchased a house, wrote up a questionnaire for prospective residents and shared on social media her plans for an idea that could help others like her.

The Women's Housing Initiative Manitoba is a co-operative home to six women ranging in age from 60 to 80. They share responsibilities, and most importantly, they look out for one another. This initiative, aside from saving health care and housing costs, is proof that aging in place in community reduces isolation and strengthens independence. There are lessons here for governments across the country to take note of.

I thank Beverly for showing us how innovation, community spirit and determination can help older adults age with dignity. Growing older should never mean growing alone.

*Statements by Members***FIREARMS**

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the decision made by the Cornwall Police Service this week to not participate in the Liberals' firearm confiscation program. Police services are already stretched thin, responding to real threats in our community, such as violent crime and illegal guns that have been smuggled across the border. Cornwall Police Service joined the OPP and the dozens of other services that have rejected this Liberal policy, saying that diverting officers and resources towards taking firearms away from vetted, law-abiding Canadians is not the best use of their time.

Our police officers should be focused on stopping criminals and keeping dangerous weapons off our street, not administering a costly \$752-million federal program that does little to address the root causes of gun violence. I thank the leadership and members of the Cornwall Police Service for being transparent about their concerns and for continuing to prioritize the safety of the people they serve. Canadians deserve policies that actually target criminals and strengthen public policy and public safety, not ones that burden local police and responsible firearms owners.

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[*Translation*]**ORDER OF CANADA**

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are deeply ignorant about Quebecers and francophones, but now they have outdone themselves. They have nominated Don Cherry for the Order of Canada.

If they had nominated his suits, that would have been one thing, but the man himself has been known for making francophobic comments his entire life. He has looked down on Quebec athletes and French-speaking athletes in hockey and other sports his entire life. He has looked down on Quebec and its commitment to protecting the French language and French-language signage.

He also spoke out against women in sports journalism. He went even further in his attacks on indigenous people by implying that they were savages and barbarians. He also targeted immigrants, which led to his firing from Hockey Night in Canada.

Canada is free to honour whomever it wants, but I am sure it can find someone who has not insulted just about everyone who is not a white, English-speaking Canadian man.

* * *

● (1110)

[*English*]**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on March 8, we marked International Women's Day, a time to celebrate the achievements of women and to recommit ourselves to building a country where every woman and girl can safely reach their full potential.

Gender-based violence continues to affect far too many women across Canada. In my own province of Nova Scotia and in communities across my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets, intimate

partner violence remains far too prevalent. That is why our government has launched Canada's first-ever national action plan to end gender-based violence, committing over \$500 million to prevention, education and supports for survivors. In its first year alone, 730,000 people across Canada received support through programs funded under this plan.

Let us all continue to work together to ensure every woman and girl can live free of violence and discrimination.

* * *

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have always been conflicts abroad. The government's job is to make sure they stay there, because when they do not, Canadians pay the price.

We fear a missing Iranian man may have been murdered by Tehran. Three more synagogues were shot at this week and another was vandalized. Meanwhile, IRGC agents continue to live in Canada, hanging out in cafes and going to the gym. Liberals make excuses as to why they cannot deport these terrorists: They can claim asylum; there are no flights; or their privacy must be protected. It is time to protect Canadians.

On behalf of Iranians in my community, I am calling on the Liberals to table a plan within one week to enforce deportations, crack down on regime financing, coordinate sanctions, get their act together on terrorism threat levels and gaps in national security laws, establish the foreign influence registry and stop approving refugee claims without in-person interviews. We need no more talk. It is time to act.

* * *

MINISTER OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMENDATION

Chris d'Entremont (Acadie—Annapolis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 23, at the southwest African Heritage Month gala, it was an honour to present the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation to my friend Eric "Chuck" Smith.

I have known Chuck for over 30 years. His service, leadership and vision have left a lasting mark on Yarmouth and far beyond. He embodies the very spirit of community. As a talented basketball coach, he gave time freely, helping young people build confidence, discipline and teamwork, and as a member of the board of the Nova Scotia Black cultural society, he advocates for the education, preservation and recognition of Black history and culture in our province.

Chuck worked tirelessly to install a monument honouring the men of the First World War's segregated No. 2 Construction Battalion in the town of Yarmouth, where many of the soldiers were from. Through his leadership, passion and persistence, that vision became reality. Chuck's hard work ensured that the men of the No. 2 Construction Battalion are recognized.

I thank Chuck for his commitment to honouring those who came before us.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the world is facing the biggest energy crisis since the 1973 oil embargo. Millions of barrels have been taken off-line, and Canada is one of the few countries that could provide critical energy to our allies.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources said that Canada would do its part, but the Liberal government has no plan to get our energy to world markets. After 10 years of Liberal anti-energy policies and economic mismanagement, we have missed the greatest opportunity to show up for our allies in a meaningful way to address this energy crisis.

Meanwhile, today's job report shows that Canada lost 84,000 jobs and that unemployment is up to 6.7%. Last year, this Parliament gave the Liberal government the power to build at unimaginable speeds, but the Prime Minister has failed to deliver, and Canadians and our allies are suffering the consequences.

We can not afford another 10 years of Liberal anti-energy ignorance. It is time to lay some pipe, create jobs and get our country back on its feet.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, March 8 was International Women's Day. This day gives us an opportunity to highlight the progress made in advancing women's rights, while also recognizing the work that remains to be done.

• (1115)

[English]

On March 6, I had the honour of hosting my 12th annual International Women's Day breakfast, followed by the Orléans Leading Women and Girls Recognition Awards, celebrating outstanding women and girls.

[Translation]

At that event, 31 inspiring women and girls were honoured for their remarkable contributions to the vitality of our community, as well as their resilience, leadership and ability to inspire others.

[English]

It was especially inspiring that the youngest recipient was just 10 years old. Julianna Labelle delivered a rendition of *O Canada* that received a standing ovation. This reminds us that generation after

Statements by Members

generation, remarkable women and girls continue to inspire, lead and make a lasting difference.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians simply want the opportunity to work hard and bring home a paycheque in order to support their families, but under the government's mismanagement, job opportunities are disappearing out the door.

The February numbers are extremely troubling. Data from StatsCan shows that 108,000 full-time jobs disappeared, marking the largest one-month decline outside of COVID since 2009. The damage is being felt where it matters most, with 73,000 of those jobs lost from the private sector, the very sector that drives growth, innovation and opportunity. Young Canadians are down 50,000 jobs.

After years of the Liberals, Canada now stands out for all of the wrong reasons. Not only are we the only shrinking economy in the G7, but we also have the second-highest unemployment rate in the G7.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve an economy that creates opportunity, rewards hard work and helps families get ahead. That is what Conservatives are going to continue to fight for.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, less than a year ago, Canadians elected a new Prime Minister and a new government. As part of that election platform, we talked a great deal about crime and making our communities safer. We came up with a holistic approach of bringing forward a number of important pieces of legislation dealing with combatting hate, bail reform and protecting victims. There is a lot there that the Conservatives need to get on side with.

Now we have just introduced lawful access once again. The Conservative Party has had months to recognize that it is time to step up to the plate. If they really want to make our communities safer, they need to start supporting the legislation to deal with extortion and child exploitation.

It is time the Conservatives get behind us, stop filibustering and let the legislation get through.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***EMPLOYMENT**

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, February's job numbers are crushing, with 108,000 full-time jobs lost, the largest collapse in full-time employment since 2020, since COVID. Youth unemployment is more than 14%. Canada now has the second-highest unemployment and the only shrinking economy in the G7. Let us be clear. It is because of Liberal policies that the private sector is hemorrhaging jobs, making the affordability crisis more acute.

Will the Liberals admit that Conservatives were right and scrap their carbon and fuel taxes that are killing Canadian jobs?

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians all across the country know that we were thrust into a trade war not of our choosing. Our government is doing everything in its power and using every lever at our disposal to support the Canadian economy and insulate it from further shocks that are, again, beyond our control. What we are doing is diversifying trade.

While the Leader of the Opposition was trotting around London, giving speeches on free markets, trying to impress Liz Truss, the Prime Minister was signing tens of billions of dollars in new trade deals to create more opportunities for Canadians.

John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the numbers do not lie. The levers that the Liberals are pulling are obviously wrong, with 73,000 private sector jobs lost and youth unemployment at more than 14%. It is clear that young Canadians are being locked out of the workforce, cannot afford housing and cannot afford food, while the Prime Minister jet-sets to cocktail parties with global elites.

Will the Liberals admit that their policies and fiscal plan have failed? Will they adopt the Conservative youth jobs plan that will give Canadian youth hope to build a future here at home?

• (1120)

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will never adopt the Conservative plan because the Conservatives do not have a plan. They do not propose anything that works on behalf of Canadians or that will deliver results for them. Our plan is the plan that we are following. That is the plan that Canadians voted for. That is the plan that is working to create jobs for Canadians.

Yes, there are choppy waters. We are in a trade war that was not of our choosing, but we are using every lever at our disposal to ensure that Canadians can get ahead. We have offered affordability measures and are signing tens of billions of dollars of new trade agreements to create opportunities for all Canadians.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister travels the world promoting Brookfield's

interests like he is their PM, portfolio manager, here at home, “shocking” is the only way to describe this morning's job numbers: 84,000 Canadians lost their jobs in February and 108,000 jobs were lost in full-time work, while private sector employment fell by 73,000. Employment mostly fell among men aged 25 to 54, the core working age group, and young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

Why can the Liberals not finally admit that everything they are doing is an illusion and that they are failing Canadian families and young people?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, overseas efforts are delivering concrete results. Last week in India, we secured a \$2.6-billion uranium deal. This is not about the billions. It is about the 90,000-plus nuclear workers in Ontario that it is powering. In Australia, the Prime Minister secured a commitment of \$10 billion to build major projects across the country. VistaJet, based in the gulf, recently placed an order for 40 Canadian-made planes valued over a billion dollars. This is about the thousands of workers producing the world-class goods that the world is buying.

John Brassard (Barrie South—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here at home, our people want to work. They want to produce and they want to provide for their families. Young people want a family and a home for their kids to grow up in. Because of the last 11 years of Liberal failures, a generation has lost hope that this will ever happen. Today's job numbers are a national crisis.

Maybe the Prime Minister can focus, for once, not on his Brookfield interests abroad but on what is happening here at home and work with Conservatives to solve the job crisis impacting Canadian families and our young people.

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while their leader tours Europe, trying to reboot his image for the fourth time, our Prime Minister just returned from the Indo-Pacific, signing trade deals with world leaders. Let us talk about \$2.6 billion in uranium for Saskatchewan. Premier Moe certainly supported it. We did not hear a word from any Saskatchewan MP on that side.

On this side of the House, we are serious about building the strongest economy in the G7. It is time for that leader and that party to stop the rhetoric, stop the obstruction and help us build Canada strong.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the February jobs report is troubling and, as everyone knows, numbers do not lie. In just one month, this government is reporting a loss of 108,000 full-time jobs. That is the worst drop since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020.

While our G7 partners are moving forward, Canada is falling behind. We are still waiting for the results this government promised Canadians. The Liberals' economic policy is failing.

Will they stop punishing job creators and cut the taxes and red tape that are killing jobs in Canada?

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, the employment figures for the last two months have been very negative. We are well aware of that.

Why is this happening? Why are we here? It is because we are in a trade war with our American neighbours. Our Conservative friends have a hard time understanding that. Given how hard it is to export to the United States, businesses are not investing. That is the crux of the problem. It is not Canadian taxes. It is American tariffs.

Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, businesses are not investing because they have no confidence.

Young people are suffering because of the government's economic incompetence. In February, youth unemployment hit 14%. In Quebec, 57,000 jobs disappeared in a single month. Young people are out of work because the Liberals' policies simply do not work. While the Liberals pat themselves on the back, our constituents are left wondering how they are going to pay the rent.

Will the government stop denying the obvious, listen to the Conservatives and put our plan into action?

We are giving them all our ideas. They just need to implement them.

• (1125)

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about putting the Conservative plan into action, but what plan? There is no plan. There is no plan because, in the minds of the Conservatives, everything comes down to the industrial carbon tax. It is to blame for everything. Come on.

We announced a defence industrial policy that is generating a lot of interest from SMEs in Quebec and Canada. We have made massive investments. Yesterday, the Prime Minister announced investments in the north and in infrastructure. We are transforming Canada's economy.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the start of the conflict in Iran, Tehran launched dozens of air strikes. All of them were made public, except for the one on the Canadian military camp in Kuwait. Worse still, the Ali Al Salem base, which

houses the Canadian military camp, was also hosting Italian forces. On the very same day, Italy shared the news publicly, but not Canada. Canada hid the news of this strike for two weeks. It did not even disclose the information during the House debate on the conflict, which the government itself had organized.

Why does the whole world inform its citizens, but Canada does not?

Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe we all need to prioritize the safety and security of the Canadian Armed Forces and not expose them to unnecessary risks.

There are members of our armed forces, brave men and women, operating in a theatre of war where Iran is launching missiles and drones. For reasons of operational security, specific measures to protect the forces are not disclosed.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals cited operational security as a reason for their silence, but we are simply asking them for the same information that every other country discloses. It is only right to keep the public informed when Canada is attacked.

This just raises further questions. The public does not know why the Prime Minister blindly supported Donald Trump. They do not know why he has been changing his mind every other day since then. They do not know why he wanted to hide the attack on our armed forces.

Does the government realize that this is undermining public trust?

Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the most important thing is that all members of the Canadian Armed Forces in the region are safe.

Our priority as a government and as parliamentarians should be the safety and security of our armed forces who are currently operating in a theatre of war. I will say that our government's priority will always be to maximize the safety and security of our armed forces.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the war in Iran began while the Prime Minister was away on a trip. After backing Washington, he spent several days refusing to hold a press briefing with the media travelling with him.

When he returned, he boycotted a debate on the conflict, even though the debate had been requested by the Liberals. He refuses to explain why he stayed silent regarding the Iranian strike against Canadian troops. Today, he headed off again, this time to Europe.

Does he understand that, on an issue as important as a war that he supported, his mandate requires that he answer questions?

Hon. Mona Fortier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was clear.

Oral Questions

First of all, Canada was not consulted, did not participate, and has no plans to participate in the offensive actions against Iran. We support efforts to end Iran's nuclear program and decades of state-sponsored terrorism.

Canada's priorities are clear. As the Prime Minister said, civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected, international law must be respected, and we will stand for the safety and security of Canadians wherever they may be in the world.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning's job numbers are a scathing indictment of the Liberal government's economic performance. There were 108,000 full-time jobs lost, the largest one-month drop since the beginning of COVID, and youth unemployment is now over 14%. We have the only shrinking economy in the G7, and we have the second-highest unemployment.

Will the Liberals accept our Conservative proposals, including our youth jobs plan, and remove the taxes, red tape and bureaucracies that are killing Canadian jobs?

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. opposition knows, there is a war raging that is affecting prices everywhere. In this chaos, Canada is in a strong position. Why? It is because we prepared. We invested in jobs and industries like auto, steel and aluminum. We made sure to keep life affordable for all Canadians with our groceries and essentials benefit for 12 million Canadians. We are cutting taxes. Why? We have a plan.

Preparing before a crisis is our way; complaining after a crisis is theirs. They should get on board.

• (1130)

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, talking about before the crisis, for 10 years, the Liberal government has passed antidevelopment laws, run up the national debt, driven down productivity, driven up the cost of living, bloated the bureaucracy, enriched Liberal insiders and made Canada the only G7 country with a shrinking economy. Today's job numbers are the result of a decade of failure and lost opportunity, and the current Liberal Prime Minister is still taxing, spending and regulating like the last one.

Will the Liberals commit today to cut taxes and regulations so Canadians can get back to work?

Hon. Evan Solomon (Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is breaking news for the hon. member: We cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. Here is breaking news for the hon. member: Our groceries and essentials benefit will help 12 million Canadians put food on the table. Here is breaking news: We have

made it easier for first-time homebuyers. Here is breaking news: We are helping families. We are investing in our defence.

This is what a plan is like when we knew there was a crisis. We prepare for a crisis. Complaining afterward with no plan is not helping Canadians.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, February's job numbers send a troubling signal for Canada's economy. More than 100,000 full-time jobs have disappeared, youth unemployment has climbed above 14%, and our economy is now among the weakest performers in the G7. Young Canadians are trying to start their careers at a time when opportunity is sinking.

When will the Liberal government start working with the opposition to advance practical solutions, including our youth jobs plan, and to remove taxes and red tape that is making it harder for businesses to create jobs?

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do the Conservatives live under a rock? We are in a trade war. We have a war raging in the Middle East. Those are not of our choosing. Those global issues and forces, just to explain causality, are not the fault of the federal government. There are factors in the world that are affecting the Canadian economy. We are moving through a period of unprecedented economic turbulence.

Canadians do not want politicians to stand up in this House and celebrate job losses for political gain. They want a serious government doing serious work to help them get ahead, and that is what we are doing.

Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington—Tyendinaga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, February's jobs report demands serious attention. Instead, Canadians are hearing dismissive responses to legitimate concerns. The government's very own data shows that last month's decline in full-time employment was the largest decline, outside of COVID, since 2009.

Canadians were promised strong economic leadership. If the Liberal government cannot deliver jobs, growth or hope for the next generation, why should Canadians have any confidence that its economic plan will work at all?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite the Conservative rhetoric, we know that we are in a trade war, and we know our economy has challenges.

Last April, Canadians elected a leader with world-class business and economic experience versus a Conservative leader who has never worked one day in the economy. In fact, the only job he has ever created was one for the member for Carleton.

We are going to continue to focus on our economy. We are going to build our economy into the strongest one in the G7.

Mel Arnold (Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the February “no jobs” report shows the Liberal policies are not working for Canadians.

There were 108,000 full-time jobs lost, the largest one-month decline in full-time employment since 2020. Youth unemployment shot up to 14%. We have the only shrinking economy in the G7, and now we have the second-highest unemployment. Canadians are not working because Liberal policies are not working.

When will the Liberals accept Conservative proposals, including our youth jobs plan, and remove taxes and bureaucracies that are killing Canadian jobs?

• (1135)

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are creating high-paying jobs for young people with our investments in housing.

Build Canada Homes will invest \$13 billion in housing. It will catalyze new methods of construction, new jobs in factories, new jobs from coast to coast, using Canadian materials, Canadian steel and Canadian lumber. Yes, that is trees to keys. It will get our youth working, and then they can live in those homes.

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, numbers do not lie, and the employment figures this morning are especially dismal. We learned that 108,000 Canadians lost their jobs in February. The fact is, 108,000 women, men and heads of households are now looking for work. In the private sector, 73,000 jobs were lost in February. This proves that after 10 years of Liberal governance, the Liberals' policies are not working.

When will the government start taking effective action?

Carlos Leitão (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking effective action. We are in a situation that was created by U.S. trade policy. American tariffs put us in this situation. Canadian businesses are finding it very difficult to invest because they cannot predict what the operating environment will be like, given the uncertainty created by the United States.

What we can do and what we are doing is investing heavily in infrastructure and repositioning our economy in the defence sector. I see that Quebec SMEs are very enthusiastic about the possibility of joining this national defence supply chain, and it is going to work.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is so easy to blame the United States.

Oral Questions

The reality is that Liberal bureaucracy and Liberal taxation are 100% in the hands of this government. It is worth noting that the Prime Minister got elected by saying that the tariffs would be lifted by July 21, that it would be over, but they are still here. We are a long way from elbows up. It is more like thumbs down from the White House. That is the reality.

Worse yet, youth unemployment is at 14%. Young people are struggling with affordability when it comes to groceries and housing, but now they are also struggling to get work.

Does the government realize that these youth policies are not working?

Hon. Nathalie Provost (Secretary of State (Nature), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tariff war with the United States is extremely challenging, but we have a plan and that plan is working.

Our country is attracting more investment than any other country right now. We are seeing it. The industrial defence strategy is working and the automotive strategy is producing results.

These things do not happen overnight, but we are making progress and Canadians have faith in us. They continue to support us. We will succeed in rebuilding Canada. That is our plan and we are going to see it through.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec National Assembly was unanimous and now so is the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. All of the parties, including the Liberals, are asking the government to hold an inquiry into the following federal IT fiascos: Cúram, Phoenix and ArriveCan.

Every time Ottawa gets involved in an IT project, it results in serious problems for citizens and staggering cost overruns. The House will soon be presented with the committee's unanimous call for an inquiry, but let us save ourselves some time.

Will the government respect this unanimous call and hold an independent public inquiry?

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 7.7 million seniors are getting the right amount of benefits on time. Yesterday, we gave a briefing to all of the opposition members who wanted to participate. We told them about all of the technical problems.

I am entirely at your disposal if you have any questions, if you have other problems or if you have cases that you want to discuss with me.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to remind the parliamentary secretary that when members say “you” they are not talking directly to other members but to the Chair.

Oral Questions

The hon. member for Jonquière.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals continue to bury their heads in the sand, there are still 69,000 pensioners who are having problems with their OAS pension because of Cúram.

After 10 years of problems with Phoenix, the public service union said two weeks ago that there are still 233,000 files to be settled. These are not statistics. These are people who deserve these fixascos to end once and for all.

When will there be a public and independent inquiry?

Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Jobs and Families, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, 7.7 million seniors are getting their benefits on time. The old benefits system was fragile. It was constantly out of service and it was expensive to maintain. Keeping that system would have been disastrous or would have led to a system failure in which no one would have received benefits.

We are working on finding solutions.

* * *

• (1140)

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the February jobs report is dire news for Canadians. Canada lost 108,000 full-time jobs in February. This is the largest one-month decline in full-time employment since COVID. Further, we saw 73,000 job losses in the private sector, and youth unemployment shot up to over 14%. Under the Liberals, Canada has the only shrinking economy in the G7, and now the second-highest unemployment in the G7 as well.

When will the Liberals listen to Canadians and the plan that we have put forward to remove taxes and the bureaucracies that are killing jobs in Canada?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously the jobs data that came out this morning is unfortunate, but the Conservatives can fixate on month-to-month data. They never mention, or their script never recites, anything on long-term trends.

What did we see just a few days ago? It was a very clear announcement in Bloomberg. My colleague can go look at it. The largest amount of foreign investment that Canada has seen since 2007 was secured for this country. That means jobs and that means opportunities, for young people in particular.

What did we see yesterday? We saw a huge investment in Canada's north: ports, airports, the construction of the Mackenzie Valley highway and the securing of Canada's north. That is how we build Canada.

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the difference between the Liberal rhetoric and the realities facing Canadians is stark. Canadians are not working, because Liberal policies are not working. We have the only shrinking economy in

the G7, and now the second-highest unemployment in the G7. To make matters worse, Canada has the highest food price inflation in the G7. We are leading in all the wrong categories.

When will the Liberals remove the taxes and bureaucracies that are killing jobs in Canada and driving up the cost of living?

Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is very well read. He will look at the recent reports of the International Monetary Fund, which has made clear that Canada stands as an example for the G7, and in fact for the entire OECD and beyond.

What we have now is an opportunity to engage in serious policy to build up this country. I mentioned yesterday's investments in Canada's north. We have investments in Canada's west. I hope the Conservatives support that at least. We have investments in Canada's east. It is a jobs focus. It is a focus on opportunity because opportunity leads to jobs, which leads to purchasing power, which leads to affordability. That is how we build up this amazing country.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true that we cannot control what happens abroad, and we cannot make excuses on affordability issues that stem from bad decisions from the Liberals.

The Prime Minister continues to go ahead with bad policies, like the industrial carbon tax and the fuel standard tax, which will rise to 17¢. This applies to every Canadian, especially those who bring us our food, driving up the cost of our grocery bills even more.

When will the Liberals accept responsibility for what they can control and remove policies that make life more expensive for Canadians?

Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and National Revenue and to the Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have good news for the hon. member. Just yesterday, our Bill C-4 on affordability measures got royal assent in our Senate, which is fantastic news. That means 22 million Canadians will receive a tax cut on their income tax, saving \$840 for dual-income families. Families that are trying to purchase their first home will save up to \$50,000 on homes under \$1 million. That is good news for Canadians all across this country.

We have also moved forward with the groceries and essentials benefit, which will save families just under \$1,900 this year. That is—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Central Newfoundland.

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe what I heard yesterday. The housing minister blames skyrocketing housing costs on the war in Iran. Everyone knows this affordability crisis is due to 10 years of his government. Canadians are facing the worst food inflation and the only shrinking economy in the G7, yet the Prime Minister is pushing ahead with his industrial carbon tax and his fuel standard tax, which will rise to 17¢ a litre.

When will the Liberals stop blaming events abroad and take responsibility for policies at home to make life more affordable for Canadians?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member opposite back. The last time we heard from him, members will recall, we established a permanent national food program for 400,000 children. What was his response? He said that it was garbage. How dare he stand up and talk about affordability? When we wanted to feed children, what did he say? He called the program garbage. It is silliness. That is what the member is all about. He should get on board and support the budget.

• (1145)

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the worst food inflation and the only shrinking economy in the G7, and rising unemployment rates now. Canadians are facing a serious cost of living crisis. Grocery prices are skyrocketing. Paycheques are spread so thin right now that they do not cover the cost of basic necessities.

Canadians deserve an economy where hard work pays off. When will the Liberals take responsibility for their punishing taxes and their policies?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to fight for Canadians like Paul Britt, Steve McQueen, Pat Allen, Gordon Vail, and Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

On this side of the House, we are going to focus on building the strongest economy in the G7. We have one of the fastest-growing economies in the G7, the best net debt-to-GDP in the G7, and one of the best credit ratings in the world. Wages are outpacing inflation.

Canadians made a choice. They elected a leader with strong economic and business credentials versus a Conservative leader who has never worked one day in the economy.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Philip Earle (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that building a stronger economy means opening new markets and bringing investment home. From advancing major projects to attracting billions in investment and creating new demand for Canadian manufacturing, international trade is creating real opportuni-

Oral Questions

ties for workers here at home, including opportunities in our aviation, aerospace and defence sectors, and Canada's seafood sector.

Can the Minister of International Trade update the House on how our government's work abroad is delivering investments and jobs for Canadians?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people of Labrador have sent a strong champion here to Ottawa, and together we are unlocking new global opportunities.

In China, we achieved tariff relief on crab and lobster, welcomed by harvesters across Newfoundland and Labrador.

In Australia, the Prime Minister secured a \$10-billion commitment to build Canada.

In the Gulf, VistaJet ordered 40 Canadian-made airplanes worth over \$1 billion.

Together, these wins are unlocking opportunities and jobs in construction, aerospace, fisheries, seafood and more. This is how we build Canada strong.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the energy minister said, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste".

It takes 20 years to get a mine built in Canada, while the U.S. approves mines on federal lands in 28 days under emergency crisis rules. Canada sends rare earths to Beijing, which controls 90% of world refining and processing, while Bill C-69 blocks the Ring of Fire with endless regional assessments. It sounds like a waste of a crisis to me.

When will the Prime Minister approve the Ring of Fire permits so the private sector can build mines here at home?

Claude Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sit on the natural resources committee with the hon. member. She knows too well how complicated it is to do a project like the Ring of Fire, which is actually multiple projects. We are working with the Government of Ontario. We have already started to work with them on the road to access the Ring of Fire, because it requires major infrastructure to get to the Ring of Fire. She should understand that.

Oral Questions

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, four years after the Liberals' fake critical minerals strategy, not one inch of road exists to the Ring of Fire. There is nothing on the two first nations-led roads to get it done. Liberals let both foes and allies into Canada's backyard while they drag timelines the rest of the world rejects. The Ring of Fire would connect globally strategic minerals to first nations, manufacturers, Canadians and our allies. It has always been true, but with new global conflicts, the world needs Canada's minerals.

For the love of God, when will the Liberals unlock the Ring of Fire for affordability, sovereignty, security and self-reliance before it is too late?

Claude Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found it very interesting that the member talks about benefits for the first nations when what the Conservatives would like us to do is bulldoze and ignore the constitutional rights of the first nations. I do not understand what they are saying. Should we help them, or follow the rules?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

• (1150)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member got a question. The member got a response.

The member for Regina—Wascana.

Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources promised that Canada would “do its part” to help release oil reserves in order to stabilize the market, but Canada does not have a strategic oil reserve, in part because of Liberal energy policies that have kept Canadian oil and gas in the ground. Conservatives have proposed a strategic oil stockpile that would allow us to fuel our friends abroad, power paycheques at home and diversify our trade.

Will the Liberals adopt our plan so we can be stronger at home while building unbreakable leverage abroad?

Claude Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me explain something to the member opposite. A strategic reserve is for importing countries. We are an exporting country. Guess what. We have centuries' worth of reserve in this country.

Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we should be extracting those reserves out of the ground and exporting them to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the Liberals have killed the northern gateway pipeline, the Keystone XL pipeline, the energy east pipeline, all of which could be exporting Canadian oil at \$100 a barrel to the rest of the world.

How much higher does the price have to go before the Liberals flip-flop again and admit that there is a business case for exporting Canadian oil and gas to the world?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian energy is bringing the world to our doorstep. The LNG Canada project alone is linking Canadian natural gas to major energy markets in Asia: to Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, China and more. These partnerships

show that Canada's energy is respected and it creates good jobs here at home. That is exactly what we are doing to get more energy to new export markets around the world.

Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada should be standing ready to provide our energy both within our borders and to global allies, but a decade of Liberals' “leave it in the ground” policies have hampered our energy industry, divided our country and left Canada as the only G7 country without a strategic oil stockpile. Conservatives have a plan for a strategic energy and mineral reserve to control the distribution of our resources around the world.

Will the Liberals adopt our Conservative plan so we can be stronger at home and build unbreakable leverage abroad?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us get a reality check. The Conservative plan, when the member's leader was in government, did not construct even one inch of pipeline to the tidewaters. That is the truth, and they want us to follow the—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order. I cannot hear the parliamentary secretary.

I will let the parliamentary secretary restart from the beginning so I can hear the response, and then we will continue.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, this is the reality, the facts. We cannot change history. Not one inch of pipeline to tidewater was constructed while the Conservatives and the leader of the Conservative Party were in government. Contrast that to the current government, where there are record amounts of oil and gas being exported. We can look at LNG alone.

This is a government that realizes the potential of the Prairies, unlike the Alberta MPs, who stand up and do nothing. They do not even listen to Danielle Smith. Shame on you.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the parliamentary secretary to not speak directly to members but through Speaker.

The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

* * *

ETHICS

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, remember the sponsorship scandal? It was a bunch of Liberals running around with money in brown envelopes, handing it out to other Liberal insiders.

Well, the Trudeau Liberals said, “That’s too complicated. We have to get the money, then we have to get the envelopes, then we have to run around and hand it out.” Therefore they created the green slush fund and appointed the people to run it, and the people who ran it gave the money to their own companies. However, they got caught, so the so-called new Liberals came up with a new plan: to give loans well below market rate to Liberal-controlled companies to pad their profits.

No matter how many Liberal governments there are, why is it the same corruption?

• (1155)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how the Conservative Party is so focused on character assassination. That is fine. It can be concerned with that.

We, the government and the Prime Minister, are concerned with what is happening in Canada. That is why the Prime Minister is going out and bringing in billions of dollars in investment. That is why export opportunities are being created. That is why there is billions of dollars’ worth of development by the government, by the Prime Minister, because we care about what is happening across Canada.

Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we care what happens in Canada as well. We want development. We just do not want corrupt Liberal development, because no matter which government it is, the Liberals find a way to engage in corrupt practices. Under the Chrétien Liberals, it was the sponsorship scandal, handing out money in envelopes. Under the Trudeau Liberals, it was creating a fund run by Liberals who gave the money to their own companies. Now the Liberals have said, “We found a new plan.” The so-called new government has a new plan, and this is to give subprime loans to Liberals to pad their profits.

Why is every new Liberal government corrupt?

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want action, not political games, and that is what our government is delivering. We are creating hundreds of local jobs, supporting communities and building energy projects and infrastructure projects from coast to coast to coast that power homes and grow our economy.

The Conservatives opposite can keep talking on that side of the House, but we are about action.

[Translation]

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when families are struggling to pay their bills, oddly enough, the Liberals are able to find tens and hundreds of millions of dollars to help their well-connected friends.

There is nothing confusing about that. Anyone who wants to be successful in Canada today has to be a Brookfield shareholder or has to have Liberal friends in the federal Parliament. The Liberals gave a \$206-million loan to well-connected friends for a wind turbine project in Nova Scotia. However, another project was launched around the same time, and that one was funded by the private sector.

Oral Questions

Why is it with the Liberals that their friends get the deals but Canadians have to foot the bill?

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that project involves clean energy, the creation of local jobs and economic growth. It was approved by the Canada Infrastructure Bank through an arms-length process led by non-partisan public servants.

Even the Progressive Conservative government in Nova Scotia supports the project. It is easy to see why. It will create hundreds of good jobs for Nova Scotians, strengthen local communities and help build—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Montmorency—Charlevoix.

Gabriel Hardy (Montmorency—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is because of news like this that folks are losing faith in our institutions. The Liberals are saying that everything was done properly and that there was no favouritism. That is great. They should have no problem proving it.

Can the Liberals confirm today that no ministers, no members of cabinet and no Liberal insiders were involved at all in this matter? Will they commit to releasing all records related to the \$206 million in low-interest loans and the \$150 million in federal grants? Quebeckers and Canadians have the right to know.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think what we should do is give a tangible example to members opposite. When we talk about investing in Canadians and investing in Canada, making Canada a stronger and healthier nation, a good example of that is the major projects, where there is \$60 billion-plus in projects, including LNG in B.C., mining in Saskatchewan, the expansion of the Montreal port in Quebec, and nuclear energy.

That is how we invest in Canada, and it is something of which we should all be proud.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has a clear mandate to strengthen the sustainability of the immigration system. I know the minister is working hard to collaborate with Quebec, support Quebec businesses and fulfill our mission to build the strongest economy in the G7.

While we are reducing the number of temporary residents by the end of 2027, we also understand the importance of stability in the Quebec workforce.

Can the minister tell the House how our government plans to support the transition of workers—

Oral Questions

• (1200)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for his question.

Yes, we fully understand the challenges that businesses and communities are facing. The good news is that I have been working closely with Quebec to come up with a solution, and today we announced a new measure designed to help workers in the process of obtaining permanent residency contribute to Quebec for up to an additional year.

We are fulfilling the mandate we were given, and we will continue to listen to Quebecers.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, copper theft is not an innocent crime. When vandals target essential infrastructure such as cell towers and power transformers, they are not just breaking the law; they are also putting human lives at risk. Copper theft literally leaves people in the dark and stranded when they need help the most. Last year in the Cambridge area alone, there were at least 15 cell service outages linked to these crimes, leaving residents unable to call 911 in an emergency.

Do the Liberals realize that copper theft poses a significant threat to public safety, and do they agree that the House of Commons should take action now to protect our communities?

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question. It is indeed a very important issue.

The government is concerned about copper theft, as these structures are essential to ensure that people can communicate and that our telecommunications networks are secure.

We are taking all necessary measures. We are in communication with the RCMP and the police, and we are conducting investigations to prevent this type of crime.

[English]

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the response from the member opposite, but there is more we can be doing. With Bell Canada designating Cambridge as a hot spot for copper theft, it is a real and ongoing risk for people in my community who depend on reliable power and cell service, especially during emergencies.

The experts are clear: We need tougher penalties for thieves and vandals, deterrence for repeat offenders and concrete steps to stop stolen metals from being sold on the black market.

Do the Liberals agree that these are common-sense measures to stop copper theft, and will they commit to working with Conservatives to put these priorities into law?

[Translation]

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague that Bill C-14 will impose harsher sentences on repeat offenders who commit crimes over and over again.

However, I am quite willing to discuss with my colleague whether more can be done to tackle the specific crime of copper theft.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my private members' bill, Bill C-243, is being read for the second time today. It is a common-sense bill that would lessen the anguish of people who have had loved ones stolen from them by murder. This Conservative bill would reduce annual parole hearings for murderers from every year to every five years.

Parole hearings are traumatizing. This would be a compassionate law supporting the loved ones of murder victims, and it is endorsed by thousands of Canadians and police nationwide, so will the Liberals stand up for victims—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Patricia Lattanzio (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these crimes that are being committed on a practically daily and weekly basis are simply unacceptable. We are committed to putting forward robust laws to be able to tackle these issues.

It would be a pleasure for me to sit down with the member and go over his PMB. We will certainly engage in making sure that Canadians are always protected.

* * *

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Kent MacDonald (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise here today to represent the people of eastern P.E.I. Like many residents of Canada, they are frustrated by the trend of increasing banking fees and charges. Our government has taken action by capping non-sufficient fund fees. These can run as high as \$50, and they impact mostly low-income Canadians. In many cases these fees add up to hundreds of dollars over the year.

Can the Secretary of State for the CRA and Financial Institutions outline what this measure means for Canadians?

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Cardigan for the great work he does in the House and in his riding.

We are focused squarely on making life more affordable for Canadians. That is why, yesterday, we capped non-sufficient fund fees that banks charge at \$10. Before this measure came into place, fees were as high as \$50, and Canadians could be charged multiple times a day. That is not going to happen anymore, which means that more vulnerable Canadians will save hundreds of dollars per year.

We are focused on making life more affordable for Canadians.

* * *

• (1205)

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in a discussion about unsafe injection sites, I asked the Liberal Minister of Health the easiest possible question: Is injecting fentanyl safe? Instead of giving a straight answer, the minister laughed and said that research shows continuing to inject fentanyl saves lives. Extending addiction does not save lives.

I will ask it again: Does the minister believe injecting illegal fentanyl is safe?

Maggie Chi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me set the record straight. Fentanyl is a controlled substance, and the member knows that physicians use fentanyl in an extremely controlled environment to treat patients.

Supervised consumption sites save lives and connect people to services. This is only one tool in our many tool boxes that we are using to work collaboratively with provinces and territories. We are supporting communities to tackle the toxic drug crisis.

It would be wonderful if members on the Conservative side could join us instead of painting the record dark.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Davos, the Prime Minister declared that Canada will live the truth by acting consistently, applying the same standards to allies as to rivals.

Canada has rightly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as illegal, yet the Prime Minister is supporting the United States and Israel as they wage an equally illegal war on Iran. This double standard undermines Canada's credibility and erodes the rules-based order we depend on for our security.

Why is the Prime Minister walking away from the principles he championed just weeks ago?

[Translation]

Hon. Mona Fortier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the Prime Minis-

Routine Proceedings

ter has been very clear: International law must be respected. There is a situation unfolding.

I am not sure if we are talking about the sanctions lifted by the Americans on Russian oil, but we obviously condemn the strikes carried out by Iran against civilians and civilian infrastructure, specifically energy and maritime infrastructure in the Middle East. We know that Russia is attempting to capitalize on these price increases, and Canada is opposed to that.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, some people are getting calls that go a little bit like this: "Hi Grandma, it's your grandson. I really need help. I just need your PIN." Obviously, we know what happens next.

With AI, bank fraud horror stories are on the rise. The current position of the banks is that they cannot do anything when people voluntarily divulge their information to fraudsters. It is the victims' own fault for getting tricked. The banks should be required to protect and reimburse us.

What does the Prime Minister, a former banker, think about holding banks accountable for these scams? Will he side with ordinary Canadians or with his banking friends?

Jacques Ramsay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say that, quite recently, the Minister of Finance and National Revenue announced the creation of a new agency that will help to combat organized crime and money laundering. The agency will also investigate this type of fraud as part of its program to combat money laundering and financial crime.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

DEPARTMENTAL PLANS, 2026-27

Hon. Wayne Long (Secretary of State (Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table, in both official languages, on behalf of 90 departments and agencies, the departmental plans for 2026-27.

* * *

• (1210)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 20 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, entitled “Improving Productivity in Canada”.

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

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-9, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places.

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

[English]

Patricia Lattanzio: Mr. Speaker, as the member was online, I have the report to table.

* * *

**PROTECTING CANADA’S ESSENTIAL
INFRASTRUCTURE METALS ACT**

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-271, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (scrap metal trafficking and essential infrastructure protection).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce my private member's bill, the protecting Canada's essential infrastructure metals act.

This legislation would take concrete steps to crack down on out-of-control metal theft and vandalism in communities across the country. The bill would strengthen penalties, target repeat offenders, protect critical services and disrupt the illegal resale of stolen metal. The theft of metals, like copper, has skyrocketed by more than 200%, according to some estimates, putting at risk essential services that Canadians rely on in emergencies, including 911 services, electricity infrastructure and cellular networks. The time for us to act to protect our communities is now.

I look forward to working with colleagues from all parties to ensure that this common-sense proposal becomes law.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

PINNIPED MANAGEMENT

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of fishers and anglers across British Columbia.

The petitioners are calling on the Minister of Fisheries to manage the exploding population of invasive predatory pinnipeds and its

impact on valuable and vulnerable salmon stocks. The invasive species of California and Steller sea lions consume more salmon than the commercial and recreational fishing industries combined. The petitioners call on the government to work with local communities and first nations to implement a pinniped management program to protect our salmon stocks, which are important to first nations and commercial and recreational fishers, as well as to our southern resident killer whales.

I am pleased to present this petition, and I urge the minister to act immediately.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of Canadians concerned with Bill C-9, the Liberal censorship bill, including Canadians who joined us yesterday on Parliament Hill to rally against it.

The petitioners are particularly concerned that the Liberals and Bloc have passed an amendment that would remove long-standing protections for the good-faith expression of religious belief and the good-faith reading from and expression of religious texts. These changes would subject Canadians to criminal sanction for simply reading the Bible, Torah, Quran or other holy texts.

Therefore, these Canadians are requesting that the government withdraw the bill and protect freedom of religion.

• (1215)

Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook—Brant North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are opposed to Bill C-9 and the threats it poses to freedom of religion and freedom of expression, and to have joined some of those Canadians on Parliament Hill yesterday rallying against the bill.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition. It is the first petition of what I believe will be many on the subject of the Alto high-speed rail project. There is currently an online petition with, at this point, over 10,000 signatures, and I know other print petitions are circulating.

The petitioners draw the House's attention to the fact that the cost of this project will be as much as \$90 billion, which is \$9,000 for every single family of four in Canada. They note the aggressive use of expropriation orders to prohibit work on private property and other measures, such as the right of first refusal, that will destroy or reduce the value of property for many people who are on the line who will see their properties affected. They also note that the high-speed rail will create an impenetrable barrier between two sides of the same community.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the government to do three things. First, they ask the government to immediately cancel the Al-to high-speed rail project. Second, in the event that the project is pursued, they ask that the Ottawa-Montreal portion be finished before any expropriations occur west of Ottawa. Finally, they ask that the full protections of the Expropriation Act should be returned to property owners along the route instead of being stripped away, as has been done under the budget implementation bill.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I continue to receive many phone calls, visits to my office and emails from residents in Stormont—Dundas—Glengarry concerned about Bill C-9 and the Liberals' and Bloc's attempts to attack religious freedom and attacks on freedom of expression. Despite the censorship efforts of the government in the course of this past week, in team with the Bloc Québécois, to ram this legislation through, the irony is that they are censoring their own censorship bill by ramming it through.

I wish to add the names of dozens of petitioners in my community who are speaking out against this. Whether they be Christian, Muslim or of other faiths, they remain concerned about the ability to read their own sacred texts and to be able to practise those teachings in a public or private setting.

I stand behind them and firmly oppose Bill C-9.

SERVICE MEDALS

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, service medals represent the formal recognition of dedication, service and sacrifice by members of our Canadian Armed Forces, workers in emergency services, firefighters and other eligible public servants. These service medals have been taking longer and longer for people to receive. There are cases of folks passing away before they get their long-service medals.

I thank the folks who spearheaded this petition, the firefighters of Newfoundland and Labrador, who are calling on the government to fix this and to make the process much more expedient, so those who have sacrificed and served are honoured on time.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the citizens of Cambridge. I am still getting numerous calls and emails from hundreds of people. They are calling on the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-9 and to protect religious freedoms, uphold the right to read and share sacred texts, and prevent government intrusion into their faith.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition virtually today.

[*English*]

The petitioners expressed deep concern for the historic wrongs and injustices done to indigenous peoples by settler culture Canadians over the experience of colonization. To summarize, they specifically call on the government to follow through on the many long-

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overdue promises to implement the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the calls for justice from the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls commission, and to follow closely our commitments under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is a timely petition.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792 and 793 be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUILD CANADA HOMES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-20, An Act respecting the establishment of Build Canada Homes, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Jim Bélanger (Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. After a decade of Liberal government, housing prices in Canada have doubled and the dream of owning a home has never been further out of reach for millions of Canadians, especially in Sudbury East—Manitoulin—Nickel Belt.

For generations, owning a home was a cornerstone of the Canadian dream. It represented stability, security and the promise that if we worked hard and saved, we could build a future for our family. Today, that dream is slipping away.

Government Orders

Young northern Ontarians are increasingly asking themselves whether they will be able to buy their first home. Many have done everything right. They studied hard, found good jobs and saved what they could, yet still find themselves priced out of the market. At the same time, Canadians are carrying record levels of household debt. Today, that number stands at \$2.6 trillion, much of it tied to mortgages. Families are stretching themselves financially to simply put a roof over their heads. Mortgage payments have skyrocketed, and rent has climbed dramatically. For many Canadians, the cost of housing now consumes a larger portion of their income than ever before.

This is not a small challenge. It is not a temporary problem. It is a full-blown housing crisis, and Canadians are asking a simple question: How did we get here?

The reality is that after years of failed policies and immigration influx, the Liberals have utterly broken the housing market. Buyers cannot afford to buy. Sellers cannot afford to sell, and builders cannot afford to build. The supply of housing has not kept up with demand, and the barriers to building new homes have grown higher and higher. Instead of removing those barriers, the government has too often added to them. Regulations have multiplied. Approval processes have slowed. Costs have increased, and every delay means fewer homes being built for Canadians who desperately need them.

One of the most frustrating aspects of this crisis is the gap between the government's rhetoric and the results Canadians are actually seeing. We hear announcements, slogans and promises, but when Canadians look around their communities, they do not see homes being built at the pace that is needed.

The Prime Minister's latest budget provides another example of this pattern. Not long ago, the government promised to cut municipal homebuilding taxes in half in order to make it easier and cheaper to build new homes, yet in the most recent budget, that promise has been broken. At a time when we should be reducing the cost of building homes, the Liberals have instead allowed costs to continue rising. Industrial taxes imposed by the federal government are increasing the price of key materials like cement, steel and glass. Every time the cost of those materials goes up, the cost of building homes goes up. As the cost of building homes rises, those costs are ultimately passed on to Canadians.

The result is a system where everyone is stuck. Young families cannot buy their first homes. Parents worry that their children will never be able to afford to live in the communities where they grew up. Seniors want to downsize. Often, there are not enough suitable options available. Builders who want to construct more homes are facing rising costs, delays and uncertainty. Instead of focusing on removing barriers and enabling builders to build, the Liberals have chosen another approach. Their latest proposal is to create yet another federal housing bureaucracy. Canadians are now being told that the solution to the housing crisis is a fourth federal housing agency, Build Canada Homes.

Northerners are right to ask an important question. If the existing housing programs and agencies have not solved the problem, why would creating another bureaucracy suddenly change the outcome? More bureaucracy does not build homes. More paperwork does not

build homes. More announcements do not build homes. Builders, workers and communities build homes. What they need is the ability to move projects forward quickly and affordably.

• (1225)

Unfortunately, the early result of this new initiative raises serious concerns. So far, the only thing Build Canada Homes has delivered is paycheques to bureaucrats, with zero dollars spent on actual capital investment. After months and months of discussions, Canadians have not seen a shovel in the ground. They have not seen cranes in the sky. They have not seen the kind of progress that this crisis demands. In fact, far from building at generational speeds, it took nearly a year simply to introduce legislation that still would not result in homes being built.

Canadians do not measure success by the number of press releases issued by the government. They measure success by results. They measure success by whether their children can afford to move out of the basement. They measure success by whether families can buy a home in the community where they work. They measure success by whether young people can start their lives together with confidence about the future.

Right now, too many Canadians feel that the system is working against them. They feel, no matter how hard they work, the goalposts keep moving further away. This is not the Canada people expect, and this is not the kind of Canada people deserve.

The housing crisis demands urgency. It demands practical solutions, and it demands a willingness to remove barriers that are preventing homes from being built. That means reducing red tape. Most importantly, it means focusing on outcomes rather than announcements because, at the end of the day, Canadians are not asking for more bureaucracy in Ottawa. They are asking for more affordable homes in their communities. They are asking for a fair chance to build a future. They are asking for leadership that understands the urgency of the moment.

A Conservative government would cut the GST on all new homes under \$1.3 million, tie federal infrastructure dollars to homebuilding, cut development charges by 50% and end the capital gains tax on reinvestments in new housing in Canada.

After a decade of Liberal housing policy, the results are impossible to ignore. Housing prices have doubled. Household debt has reached record levels. An entire generation feels increasingly locked out of the dream of home ownership. After 10 years of Liberal housing policy, the only thing they have managed to build is a housing crisis.

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• (1230)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look at this in terms of what is happening on the ground. On the ground, we have municipalities, provinces and many other stakeholders working along with Ottawa to ensure that we can address a very important issue that Canadians are concerned about. I reflect on the City of Winnipeg, the local mayor, the premier of Manitoba and others, who are saying this is a good thing. The Conservatives seem to be the only ones who are kind of out in the cold.

Does the member support what our municipalities, premiers and provinces are saying, and the deals that are being struck?

Jim Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, Canadians need more homes. Northern Ontario needs more homes. The Prime Minister promised to build 500,000 new homes a year at speeds not seen since the Second World War, but his own agency confirmed that housing starts have collapsed.

While the Liberals fail to get housing built, Conservatives will bring real solutions to restore a country that puts home ownership within reach. That means increasing the supply of homes by cutting building taxes, tying federal infrastructure dollars to homebuilding, ending the federal sales tax on all new homes under \$1.3 million and axing the capital gains tax on reinvestment in Canadian companies.

[*Translation*]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I get the feeling that the government is going about things the wrong way. There is a major housing crisis. They are going to set up a Crown corporation to address this crisis, but they are not securing the materials we will need to build these homes.

Right now, the forestry sector is facing the worst crisis in its history, and we are losing forestry sector players month after month, week after week. By the time the government is ready to roll out its strategy, where will the building materials come from? We will have lost a significant portion of our forestry sector players, and the government is not taking action. The government does not seem ready to negotiate with the Americans to end the tariff war that is still raging.

Does my colleague agree that the government is going about things the wrong way and that, for now, it should focus on securing the forestry sector?

Jim Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with my colleague that construction costs are too high. Something definitely needs to be done for the forestry sector to help with housing construction.

[*English*]

Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with my hon. colleague about the frustration, which I know I am feeling, and people in my riding are feeling it too, about this increase in bureaucracy and it not resulting in more houses being built.

I would ask my neighbour, because my colleague is my neighbour to the north, if he is seeing the same real-world consequences, especially for our youth. This lack of housing for the next genera-

tion sees youth having to move out of our respective ridings, or at least my riding, to go to the major cities to find a place, and even there they cannot find a place to live that they can afford.

Is the member seeing the same sort of challenges with youth not having a place to live and that then dwindling the workforce in his riding?

Jim Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, first-time homebuyers need supply and affordability. That means more homes being built in communities across Canada, not another federal bureaucracy. We need to be cutting unnecessary taxes and lowering material costs. Speeding up approvals would give young Canadians a real chance to own a home rather than staying in their parents' basements.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-20, the badly misnamed Build Canada Homes act.

Before getting into some of the problems with Build Canada Homes, let me just outline the very real housing crisis that this country faces. After 10 years of the Liberals, housing costs have doubled. In fact, housing costs are now 50% higher than they are in the U.S. Consequently, many young Canadians cannot afford a new home. The aspiration of home ownership has become unattainable, something that would have been unimaginable only a few years ago. The Liberals have literally priced an entire generation of Canadians out of the market.

What is the root of the problem? The root of the problem overall is one of supply. The reason housing is expensive is that we are not building enough of it. We are not building enough homes fast enough. Indeed, we are building fewer homes today than we were in 1972, at a time when Canada had half the population we have today.

According to CMHC, Canada needs to build anywhere from 430,000 to half a million new homes for a sustained period, year upon year, to restore affordability. We are nowhere near that mark. In fact, in 2025, new housing starts languished at 259,000, and according to CMHC data, the trajectory is not a positive one. The projection from CMHC is that new housing starts are trending downward year upon year, falling to a mere 212,000 new housing starts in 2028, which is less than half the number of new homes needed to restore affordability.

We enter into Build Canada Homes, which is the Prime Minister's brainchild to solve Canada's housing crisis. What is Build Canada Homes? Well, it is about getting the federal government into the business of building homes. It would establish a Crown corporation wherein the federal government would act as a real estate developer for affordable housing.

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The overriding problem with Build Canada Homes conceptually is that it seeks to solve a problem that does not exist. In Canada, we are not lacking real estate developers. We have plenty of real estate developers, but that is what Build Canada Homes is. It is about the federal government acting as a real estate developer.

The real problems that we face when it comes to housing are layer upon layer of red tape, regulation, development charges and taxes, which have discouraged builders from building. Indeed, if one looks at building permits in Canada, we rank 34 out of the 35 OECD countries. It takes, on average, 250 days for a building permit to be issued in Canada. By comparison, for a residential building permit in the U.S., the time is, on average, a month, and in some cases, they are issued in the span of a week.

The source of the layers of red tape and regulation largely falls at the municipal level with big city mayors and councils that have acted as gatekeepers. These local gatekeepers have created some of the most unaffordable, most expensive housing markets in the world. Vancouver is the most extreme example, being the third-most unaffordable housing market in the world, but other cities, such as Toronto, are not far behind. According to analysis from the C.D. Howe Institute, gatekeepers, with their red tape and regulation, have added \$1.3 million to the cost of the average home in Vancouver and \$350,000 in Toronto.

• (1235)

Given that, is it any wonder that we are not building the homes that we need and that we have a supply issue that has resulted in housing being very expensive, pushing Canadians right out of the market? In the face of that, the solution, intuitively, is to get the gatekeepers out of the way to let builders build. To that end, Conservatives have put forward a number of common-sense proposals.

For example, we proposed the building homes not bureaucracy act. Under this proposed legislation, federal infrastructure dollars would, in part, be tied to the building of new homes to municipalities, so that municipalities that sped up permitting and increased the housing supply would receive a building bonus, whereas those municipalities that insisted on being gatekeepers would see a similar percentage or the same percentage of federal infrastructure dollars withheld.

However, we did not stop there. We are calling for the cutting of the GST on all new homes. That would save the average family \$65,000 on the purchase of a new home. The Liberals promised something similar during the election campaign. What they delivered instead is to take the GST off new homes for first-time homebuyers. The problem with that, of course, is that very few first-time homebuyers purchase a brand-new home, meaning that the Liberals' GST cut helps very few purchasers.

Conservatives have also called for the government to take action to reduce development charges. This is something that the Prime Minister campaigned on. In fact, the Prime Minister quite correctly noted that taxes can contribute to 30% of the cost of a new home. When it comes to actually doing something about it, we have not seen action from the Prime Minister, just talk.

Conservatives have proposed taking the capital gains tax off reinvestments in Canada, including reinvestments in housing,

which would help unlock billions of dollars in Canada's home building sector. In contrast, what are the Liberals offering? They are offering Build Canada Homes, which does nothing to address the underlying cost factors that have stifled supply, resulting in housing being unaffordable due to a lack of supply.

Now, what will Build Canada Homes do? One thing it will certainly do is build a big, fat new bureaucracy, a \$13-billion bureaucracy, but what it will not do is build new homes. In fact, according to analysis from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Build Canada Homes will build approximately 5,000 new units per year. That is 1% of the half million new units that we need to restore affordability. This is the brainchild of the Prime Minister, his solution to the housing crisis. He said during the election that he would accelerate housing at speeds not seen in generations. He has put forward a bureaucracy that will build 5,000 new homes.

As I noted at the beginning of my speech, Build Canada Homes is badly misnamed because it will not build new homes. It will build bureaucracy. We do not need bureaucracy. We need to get gatekeepers out of the way and let builders build the homes that Canadians need.

• (1240)

Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps more of an invitation than a question, but I would very much like to offer to my hon. colleague an opportunity to come to Winnipeg and visit, in my riding of Winnipeg South Centre, significant developments that are being made on former public lands to help support indigenous communities and build the local economy more broadly.

Does the hon. member acknowledge that Build Canada Homes allows us to leverage these opportunities in ridings like mine, which are going to help spur development for much-needed growth and to support communities that have historically been disadvantaged?

• (1245)

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, Build Canada Homes would build 5,000 new units at an extraordinary cost. It would be totally inefficient and would not achieve the results that are needed to restore affordability.

By the way, it is a concept that is not particularly new. In fact it has been tried and tested, and it failed, as recently as the last few years in New Zealand. The socialist government there put forward KiwiBuild, which had the target of building 100,000 new affordable housing units in 10 years. After six years, KiwiBuild managed to build 2,400 units.

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[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's concern that we may simply be adding another layer of bureaucracy. Will setting up a Crown corporation give the government the flexibility needed to respond to the housing crisis? That is also my concern.

Could the government not have addressed these concerns by simply transferring Build Canada Homes funding to Quebec and the provinces, who have jurisdiction over housing construction? Does my colleague agree with me that the government is creating a centralized structure that may serve no purpose, when it could simply have transferred the money to Quebec?

[English]

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, there is a role for the federal government to play when it comes to working with provinces and municipalities. In that regard, I concur with the hon. member, but at the root of the problem is supply.

The reason we have an issue of supply is red tape and bureaucracy due to policies of gatekeepers. We need to get gatekeepers out of the way, cut taxes and reduce barriers in order to increase supply, build the homes that Canadians need and bring home affordability. Conservatives have put forward a number of concrete measures to do just that.

Scott Anderson (Vernon—Lake Country—Monashee, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we face a situation similar to the one we faced after the Second World War, with millions of people looking for homes. The solution then was quite different and quite a bit more effective. By 1947, Canada was building 80,000, 90,000 or as many as 100,000 homes per year. Not one Crown corporation was involved, though I should say there was only one, CMHC, and that was explicitly for veterans. How was it done? The private sector did it by responding to demand at the time, and the government helped by getting out of the way.

I wonder if the member could explain to the Liberals how that possibly happened without a giant bureaucracy to do it.

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, if it were a matter of building bureaucracies and spending money, we would have more housing and the most affordable housing in the world, because the government has added layer upon layer of bureaucracy. It has spent tens of billions of dollars around so-called affordable housing, but at the end of the day the results are that fewer and fewer Canadians can enter the market. Housing has never been more unaffordable than it is today after 10 years of the Liberals.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that when the leader of the Conservative Party was the minister of housing, he built six houses, and the Conservative policy today says, "Just get out of the way."

We understand the Conservatives' policy position on housing, but what makes the member believe that we would have more houses being built under the past policy of the Conservatives?

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the past record of the Harper government was a solid one. We did not have a housing crisis in this country at the time. Housing costs were half of what they are

today. The idea that a first-time homebuyer would be priced out of the market was not the reality in 2014 or—

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Jonquière.

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I recall very well the Prime Minister's rhetoric during the election campaign when he introduced this initiative, Build Canada Homes, as part of a strategy that would allow the federal government to support the forestry industry. I have to say that we are disappointed. I will come back to that.

It is very commendable for the government to want to respond to the housing crisis, but is creating a Crown corporation really the only solution? As the saying goes, once bitten, twice shy. Generally speaking, federal government initiatives take a long time to be felt on the ground in Quebec. In addition, housing falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. I have to wonder why the government did not simply transfer the money to the provinces, which are in a position to undertake this effort to build more housing. I have to wonder why the government wants to create this infrastructure.

However, if we look on the bright side, there are some worthwhile announcements here, such as the Canada housing infrastructure fund. I know that many municipalities raised the issue with us before the last election campaign. That was something they were calling for. Along with the housing crisis, municipalities are also experiencing various infrastructure-related problems, whether it be with the water or sewer systems. This is a major concern for municipalities, so it is encouraging to know that Quebec has been allocated \$1 billion from that budget to help deal with the crisis. That was one important aspect. Another important aspect of the housing crisis is the need for construction materials. Wood is the best construction material, and I want to make a quick aside to talk about that.

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I do not want to get too far off topic, but I do want to say a little more about the forestry industry. Right now, this industry is experiencing an unprecedented crisis. The industry's lifeblood has been weakened by absolutely appalling conditions, including insect infestations, the historic wildfires in 2023, the caribou order, which created a lot of concern in the industry, and the infamous softwood lumber dispute, which has been dragging on and undermining the entire sector in Quebec. Quite frankly, the softwood lumber industry is now at a crossroads, and its survival is threatened in many regions of Quebec. The vital role it plays for many communities has been seriously weakened. In short, we are well aware that we can no longer rely on the commodity product model, the ubiquitous two-by-four, in the forestry sector. It makes us too dependent on the United States. We must urgently come up with a strategy that would enable us to produce more value-added products. To do that, we need to transform the forestry industry.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources has spoken on a few occasions about wanting to revitalize the forestry sector. That is very commendable, but given the severity of the crisis facing the forestry sector, we cannot wait for the federal government to roll out a strategy. Immediate action is needed. It is also important to keep in mind that we will not be able to fully replace the American market by increasing domestic use with a program like Build Canada Homes or by developing new markets. In these circumstances, it seems futile, to me at least, to believe that the industry will make it through this crisis without substantial financial support from the federal government.

The major players in the forestry sector are facing a liquidity crisis that is closing off any opportunities for investment in infrastructure and equipment. The federal government needs to understand that. The forestry industry is being asked to invest in new equipment so it can supply the engineered wood needed to build homes at the worst possible time in the forestry industry crisis, that is, when forestry companies have virtually no access to cash.

• (1250)

In my view, before even thinking about implementing a strategy like Build Canada Homes, the government must ensure that it can help as many stakeholders in the forestry industry as possible continue to operate.

Therein lies the problem. So far, the government's actions do not seem to take into account the fact that the forestry sector operates like a chain. When one link in the chain is cut, all related economic stakeholders are weakened. By failing to protect sawmill operations and the operations of small forestry businesses, the government is putting the entire forestry industry at risk.

Quebec's ministry of natural resources and forestry estimates that, since April 2017, when the countervailing and anti-dumping duties came into effect, 35 plants have permanently closed and 29 others have temporarily closed. That represents a net loss for Quebec of 2,158 permanent jobs and 1,927 part-time jobs.

Let us not forget that this whole fiasco mainly affects Quebec's disadvantaged regions. Right now, the softwood lumber dispute is resulting in a 45% decrease in revenues for sawmills that export their products to the U.S. market. I do not need to point out that no industry can survive with a 40% cut to their profit margins.

With countervailing and anti-dumping duties, plus a 10% tariff, this sector is facing the highest tariffs in Canada, yet the government refuses to take action. Not only is it failing to prioritize softwood lumber negotiations, it is also refusing to introduce a duty buy-back scheme, as industry representatives are calling for. I will explain this later.

In response to the crisis, the government announced a loan guarantee program in collaboration with the Business Development Bank of Canada in early August. Seven months have passed. Having spoken to many stakeholders in the forestry sector, I can assure members that no one is feeling the impact of the program put in place by the federal government. Without a short-term resolution to the liquidity crisis facing the forestry industry, by 2026 we will see many companies significantly wind down their operations, leading to the loss of thousands of jobs and the accelerated decline of numerous communities that depend on forestry.

I say this because the first thing the federal government should do is protect Canada's capacity to manufacture building materials to ensure these materials remain accessible when Build Canada Homes is rolled out. That is what the federal government should be doing.

How can it go about it? How can we maintain our capacity to produce construction materials? It is fairly simple. The forestry industry will not be able to turn things around overnight. It will take months and months to rebuild its capacity. It will take a fairly long time before it is able to supply materials for the construction of new homes.

If we want to keep jobs in the forestry industry in the meantime, the only solution is for the federal government to accept the proposal that was made by industry stakeholders and the major unions. We, too, have been pushing for the government to accept that proposal.

At the end of every month, the government could easily buy back 50% of the anti-dumping and countervailing duties from people who sell softwood lumber to the United States. That way the government could keep lumber mills operational and ensure that, when its Build Canada Homes strategy is deployed, we have an industry that is capable of supplying lumber in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

• (1255)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through a joint collaboration table, the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec agreed to work together to fund affordable housing projects aligned with their shared priorities. On this side of the House, I am pleased to sit with more than 40 Liberal MPs from Quebec who understand the importance of working together to address housing needs.

In light of this formalized collaboration between the two levels of government, will the Bloc Québécois member vote in favour of the bill to create the Build Canada Homes Crown corporation, or will the Bloc Québécois decide to oppose it by voting to block housing construction in Quebec?

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I said that the agreement with Quebec and its \$1-billion infrastructure funding was a good thing.

I certainly will not stand in the way of housing construction. It is the government's ineptitude that is killing one of the economic sectors that is essential to housing construction: softwood lumber. The federal government is literally allowing this sector in Quebec to die. There has been no negotiation to resolve the tariff crisis that is affecting the softwood lumber sector. I am not hearing anyone across the way express concern for forestry workers or their plight. Sawmills might eventually get a retooling program, but they are all in the process of closing down.

I am not the one slowing down housing construction in Canada. The government's inaction is to blame.

• (1300)

[English]

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every time the government has an issue, it either throws money at it or creates another bureaucracy. Would the hon. member agree?

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague on the bureaucracy issue. I do not believe that creating a Crown corporation is the way to solve the housing crisis.

The simplest solution would have been to take the money associated with this program and transfer it directly to Quebec and the provinces, which have the capacity to build these housing units. However, the federal government likes to slap a little Canadian flag on its measures and continues to be a little less efficient than it should be.

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech.

It is rather shocking to see that, throughout his speech, my colleague pointed out the lack of support for the forestry industry, which will be vital for the housing construction, but nobody on the other side has responded. What does my colleague have to say about that?

When he says that the \$1 billion is a good thing and a good start, he is right. However, what does he think of the fact that this \$1 billion represents 16.6% of the amount, while Quebec's share of the population is 22%?

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, what my colleague so eloquently highlighted is the injustice that Quebec has become accustomed to.

Specific sectors of the Quebec economy are overlooked when it comes to government policy. Which two sectors are currently subject to the highest tariffs? They are the aluminum sector, which is predominantly based in Quebec, and the softwood lumber sector.

Is anyone in government expressing concern about those two sectors? All we hear about are the gas, oil and automotive indus-

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tries. That is Canadian history in all its glory. That has been the case for the last 30 or 40 years.

There is a fairly simple solution: independence.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a very specific question for the member. The federal government has programs that really promote things such as housing co-ops. My question for the member is this: Does he make any attempt to communicate with his constituents about programs the federal government is offering from which they would actually benefit, such as housing co-ops and things of that nature, including, in the future, this particular corporation being established today?

[Translation]

Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I understand that there are federal programs to support housing co-operatives. It is only natural for an MP to support projects in their constituency. That is simply part of an MP's job.

What I wish the member for Winnipeg North would take away from my speech today is that the government is putting the cart before the horse. The government is creating a framework without first securing the materials that are logistically required for housing construction. That is what my colleague should worry about.

Creating a framework to address the housing crisis without taking care of the underlying logistics makes no sense.

[English]

Eric Melillo (Kenora—Kiiwetinoong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on Bill C-20, a piece of legislation purportedly aiming to address the housing crisis in Canada. We know that the Liberals are talking about the legislation in the light of believing that it would build Canadian homes, but we know from reading through the legislation and from the past work, after 10 years or 11 years of Liberal governments, that it would only build more Canadian bureaucracy.

There is no question that we are in a housing crisis. We see it right across the country in communities big and small, whether large cities like Toronto or the small rural communities of northern Ontario that I represent. It is the result of Liberal policies and a high tax-and-spend agenda that has driven up the costs of housing construction, interest rates and mortgage rates, and has led to a situation where people right across all walks of life, at different income levels and different ages, are struggling to find appropriate housing. As I mentioned, this is something we see right in northwestern Ontario.

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I do not know how many seniors I have spoken to who are looking to downsize but cannot find an appropriate place. They are in too big a home. They want to be able to downsize and to move out of their home. They want to allow a young working family to be able to buy their home, but they are unable to do so. As a result, an entire generation of young Canadians are being priced out of home ownership. Mortgage rates are rising, and many people, even those who have a home, perhaps even their dream home, are now worried they are not going to be able to continue making payments. In fact, Canadians are carrying record household debt of \$2.6 trillion, and most of that is from mortgages.

There is no question as well that homebuilding is trending down. The Liberal government likes to talk a big game about building housing and other infrastructure at speeds never before seen, but homebuilding has been trending down under Liberal governments over the last 11 years, including under the current Prime Minister. From spring to fall last year, 26% fewer permits were issued to build homes. This is a dramatic decrease, showing that the government's policies are continuing not only to not address the issue but also to make the issue even worse.

We see it right across the country in the headlines. I would like to look at a few headlines from the real estate section in *The Globe and Mail* today. I will point out that *The Globe and Mail* is not necessarily known for its street cred as a Conservative newspaper. Nonetheless, we see, "Townhouse seller in Bolton accepts bid \$24,000 under asking". There is also "Five bidders vie for semi-detached in [Toronto]" and "Buyer waits for Calgary condo price to come within range".

These are just a few headlines from today's paper. We see this over and over, week after week, right across the country. The Liberals have created a housing market where buyers cannot buy, sellers cannot sell and builders cannot build.

How does that look locally? Of course, what is going on in northwestern Ontario is not likely to be captured in a national newspaper, unfortunately, but in northwestern Ontario, the city I live in, Kenora, currently has a shortage of 1,620 units, and that deficit is projected to grow to 2,500 units by 2031 as population grows and service demands increase. This has led to rising rents and home prices, of course.

Businesses and organizations are also reporting difficulties attracting workers to the region and retaining them, due to the lack of housing and rental options. Many business owners are looking into buying houses that would be owned by the business, strictly for their workers to live in, because there is no other way of bringing workers to the region or keeping them there.

In northwestern Ontario, in Red Lake, I was speaking with the mayor last night, and he told me that the community must build at least 40 new homes over the next decade, with an expected population increase of 1,900. That population increase they are expecting is good news. It comes from new mining developments in the region and job growth, with 1,000 jobs at the Kinross Great Bear project. First Mining Gold is bringing in 600 jobs, and Frontier Lithium is bringing over 700 jobs. In addition, there is an expansion of the current Evolution Mining operation by 300 people. West Red Lake Gold Mines is also looking to hire another 200 people.

• (1305)

These are just a couple of local examples of the massive gap in housing that exists, but in northwestern Ontario, I think we can see some of the solutions to the housing crisis, namely the land we have. There is a lot of land in northwestern Ontario, and indeed, a lot of land right across the country. Much of it is either vacant land or properties that can be used for housing development. I would include in that the underused and, quite frankly, deteriorating Health Canada-owned properties in Sioux Lookout. I implore the government, once again, to release these properties for housing development to help address the massive gap in housing that we see in the community of Sioux Lookout. It is a hub of the north and a service centre for many remote first nations.

We see it in Ear Falls as well. Ear Falls is an interesting community. It is about 336 square kilometres and has a population of less than 1,000. There is a lot of space to build in Ear Falls. There is nothing but space. In fact, there are even many lots that are serviced for housing development in Ear Falls. They are ready to go. Residents in Ear Falls are hoping as well to capitalize on some of the mining activity that we are seeing in the Red Lake and Ear Falls region, but they need to be able to build the houses to make that happen.

I would note as well that the government is always talking a big game when it comes to first nations but not following through. That is certainly the case when it comes to housing in first nations. We have seen a number of reports, whether on housing, drinking water or other critical infrastructure, where the government is spending a lot of money, making a lot of announcements and creating a lot of programs, but the results are not changing. Life is not improving in the communities. I am proud to represent 38 first nations across Treaties 3, 5 and 9, and each of these communities has their own unique housing challenges.

We have seen reports from the Auditor General, which have repeated that the government is failing when it comes to first nations housing. The Auditor General has pointed out that, despite massively increasing spending, as I mentioned, the Liberals are not meeting their obligations. In fact, homes are being built without being up to code. The prices are skyrocketing because of red tape and a lack of competition in the builders that are available to build these homes. However, instead of addressing these concerns, the Liberal government just keeps throwing money at the issue, and not just in first nations but right across the country. The Liberals are creating more bureaucracy, and communities are not receiving adequate housing as a result.

When we look at the Liberal approach overall over the last 10 years, they have failed to recognize that housing is a crisis of their own policies and of their own making. Under their watch, housing prices have doubled, and many young Canadians have given up completely on their dream of home ownership. The Liberals have now admitted that it is a crisis, but their answer is only to create another multi-billion dollar housing bureaucracy, their fourth housing bureaucracy, which is only going to construct 1% of the promised homes they need. They promised 500,000 per year, and in reality, housing starts are expected to fall to just 212,000 per year by 2028.

However, Conservatives have a solution. We do not support adding more bureaucratic red tape to the housing sector. That is why we would cut the GST on new homes under \$1.3 million, which would save families up to \$65,000 and unleash new buildings. We would tie federal infrastructure dollars to homebuilding, ensuring that municipalities must permit at least 15% or more for homebuilding each year. We would cut development charges by 50%, something the Liberals have promised but have failed or refused to do after being elected. We would also end the capital gains tax on reinvestments in the country's homebuilding sector.

It is clear that only Conservatives have a plan to restore the Canadian promise of home ownership by axing bureaucracy and taxes on homebuilding, requiring municipalities to issue more permits and letting builders build the homes we need.

• (1310)

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me first to correct an error I made in my remarks earlier. Tuesday is my 25th wedding anniversary, not my 20th, and my husband let me know immediately when I left the chamber. I wish a happy anniversary to Mike.

To the member opposite, we agree that we need to see housing prices come down. We have had a housing bubble since the 1980s, so when we are seeing homes selling under their asking price when we increase the supply, that is the housing bubble starting to deflate. When we increase housing, we create competition, both with new homes and the ones for resale.

I am just curious about development charges. I was a city councillor for six years. I wonder if the member opposite knows that if we cut development charges, and he voted against supporting infrastructure, that is a direct download of the cost of infrastructure to the property taxpayer.

• (1315)

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I would simply remind the member that she ran on a platform to cut development charges. This is something the Liberal government promised it was going to do in the election campaign and, after being elected, has completely walked away from. It is one of many solutions I have laid out, solutions to address the Liberal-made housing crisis. We know that housing prices have doubled since they took office in 2015. It has priced many young Canadians completely out of home ownership altogether.

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague's husband. If 25 years have felt like

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20 to her, that is a good sign for their relationship. It means that time is flying by.

On a more serious note, I have a question for my Conservative colleague. I would like him to comment on the fact that the government is creating a new centralizing structure that will incur administrative costs, among other things, rather than transferring the money to the provinces, which have jurisdiction over housing.

I would like my colleague to comment on that. Does he agree with that?

[*English*]

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with the premise that the government is creating another Ottawa-knows-best bureaucracy that is not going to be effective. I would submit to the member that we should look at ways of incentivizing the provinces and the municipalities to get more homes built. That is part of what I mentioned in my remarks, tying infrastructure dollars that municipalities receive to homebuilding permits. This would ensure that we are not just giving a blank cheque and expecting that something is going to happen with that, and that these dollars are going toward houses being built, doing everything we can as a federal partner to work with municipalities and provinces, and doing all we can to incentivize that development.

Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague brought up a number of good points. Right now, in northwest Ontario, the mining companies desperately need people. Bill C-20 seems to be another bureaucracy by the Liberal Party and the government, and it is just going to hold that whole northwest part of Ontario back. How can we hire people when we do not have housing? I want to ask the hon. member about that.

I have a similar situation in Saskatchewan. They have these big plans but no housing. When we do not have housing, we do not have companies willing to build.

Eric Melillo: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right. As I mentioned, this is something we see across northwestern Ontario and many regions of the country, including in Saskatchewan. There is a lot of opportunity for development. Northern Ontario has what the world needs in terms of critical minerals. There are many opportunities for that, but we need the housing to be able to house the workers. It is a very simple concept. We see it in major development. The Liberals talk about self-reliance and getting things built here in Canada. They need to start with housing in northern Ontario if we are going to see that reality.

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Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today on behalf of the great people of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford on Vancouver Island to discuss Bill C-20, the Build Canada Homes act.

Simply put, Vancouver Island, and indeed Canada, is in a housing crisis. There is an entire generation being priced out of home ownership, and far too many, including young Canadians, have lost the hope of ever owning a home. This crisis will not solve itself, and it is the job of the government to take action to fix it.

Last week, I held a round table in Langford specifically to discuss housing with my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka, the shadow minister of housing. We spoke to builders, developers, mayors and other local industry leaders to discuss the challenges they are facing, along with possible solutions, to get homes built. They all said the same thing: Extraneous regulations, long and unpredictable approval periods, expensive taxes and the rising cost of materials and services are killing the industry. Companies like Viking Properties, a small developer on Vancouver Island that has successfully built over 400 housing units in the Langford area, including 250 units since 2019, told us about increased fees, development cost charges and the long wait times they face to get permits approved. These all add significant costs to their projects and are holding them back from building at a faster pace. These are costs, by the way, that all end up being passed on to the buyer.

These are the real problems that are slowing homebuilding in Canada and making housing unaffordable for an entire generation. Compounded delays and skyrocketing costs have created a cycle where buyers cannot afford to buy, sellers cannot afford to sell and builders cannot afford to build. We see this in crumbling housing starts across Canada.

This brings me to Bill C-20. The Build Canada Homes agency, or bureaucracy, will be the third housing agency created in the last 10 years and the fourth housing bureaucracy, none of which have succeeded so far. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results, yet here we are, doing the same thing again. Canadians, frankly, deserve better.

Building enough homes to meet the demands of a growing population is the only way to make housing affordable again. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has said we need to reach a target of 430,000 to 500,000 homes built per year for the next 10 years to meet this demand. Originally, the government promised this new housing agency would build 500,000 homes per year. That was promising, yes, but it was just a promise. So far, it has not delivered.

In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has reported that the Build Canada Homes agency will build only approximately 5,200 homes per year. That is only 1% of the original promise, 1% of the targeted amount needed to make housing affordable for Canadians again. This simply is not enough. This will not solve the crisis we find ourselves in, so we must rely on our private developers and builders who have the proven skills, ingenuity and fortitude to get this done. To do that, we must address the challenges they are facing so that they can build. Builders across Canada share the same message. They need less government involvement, fewer taxes and quicker, predictable approval times. We need to cut red tape so

homes can be built effectively. What we do not need is a fourth remix of the same song.

The last 10 years have proven that adding processes does not fix the problem. Instead, it adds another layer of reviews, which take time, which leads to delays, which lead to added costs, which lead to higher sale prices. Another government agency is not the answer to the crisis. Under its current mandate, Build Canada Homes will not change zoning laws, eliminate discretionary rezoning, impose firm timelines on reviews, reduce development charges or remove environmental duplication charges, so it will not build enough homes to meet the necessary targets or address any real challenges the industry is facing. Not only does this new agency not address these challenges, but it does not address the root cause of the crisis. We cannot build homes fast enough to keep up with our growing population.

Conservatives have put forward alternative solutions that would target some of the industry challenges head-on. One is cutting the GST on all new homes under \$1.3 million, which would save families up to \$65,000 on new homes, making these builds more affordable. Another is, importantly, tying federal infrastructure dollars to homebuilding, which would encourage municipalities to permit more homebuilding each year with a target of 15% more.

We have suggested cutting development cost charges by 50%. This was a campaign promise by the government last year, but I am sad to see that it has not followed through. We would also like to see the removal of capital gains tax on reinvestment in new housing in Canada, which would unlock billions of dollars of investments in the country's homebuilding sector.

● (1320)

These are solutions that tackle the real problems the industry is facing and put the power back into the hands of Canada's home builders. I encourage my colleagues across the way to seriously consider these solutions so we can reach the goal I believe we all share, which is making housing affordable to Canadians.

Private Members' Business

Yesterday in the House, the Minister of Housing told Canadians the reason housing prices are so high is the war in Iran. This is a ridiculous statement to make for a multitude of reasons, none more so than the fact that we know the housing affordability crisis did not start a few weeks ago. It has been years in the making, indeed 11 years in the making, I would suggest.

My colleagues across the way keep telling us to focus on what we control, so I urge the minister to take that advice. Let us focus on the issues that truly burden the industry: too much government involvement, long wait periods, taxes. These are all the things that destroyed the housing economy in Vancouver when the minister was the mayor there. I spoke about insanity before. Here it is again. More of the bureaucracy, rules and regulations that caused costs to skyrocket in Vancouver when he was the mayor are now imposed on all of Canada under his leadership, and it has been a year.

The minister knows his grand plan is not working. His big announcements and promises of building at speeds never seen before, catalyzing the housing industry and 500,000 homes per year have gotten us nowhere. Instead of taking responsibility and focusing on positive solutions, the minister has decided to lay blame elsewhere. This is why my Conservative colleagues have put forward a plan, and I have reiterated it in my speech today. Canadians know the reality of the crisis they face, so I challenge my colleagues opposite to look at the reality of the last year of promises and slogans and compare it to the results, compare it to the reality. We have collapsing housing starts. Prices remain unaffordable. Despite lowering, they remain unaffordable to those who have lost jobs, are having their wages cut and are struggling just to pay for everyday costs. The supply levels are plummeting.

Conservatives have put forward a plan to unleash our trades, our investors, our workers and our resources so we can build homes quickly. Build Canada Homes will not remove those barriers. It only creates a massive new one. It does not solve the issue of delays. Therefore, it does not solve the issue of costs. Sometimes, the best thing a government can do is simply to get out of the way. I call on all my colleagues in the House. Let us work together to have homes built by builders, not bureaucracy.

• (1325)

Jennifer McKelvie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering if the member maybe could share the importance of partnerships and building partnerships with municipalities, with provinces, with the non-profit sector and with indigenous communities, and comment on the fact that this really is a whole-of-government approach. We need all hands on deck if we want to build the housing Canadians need right now. In particular, I would like to point out that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is very happy with this Build Canada Homes announcement. In fact, it has said:

[It] welcomes the federal government's Build Canada Homes...initiative as a strong signal of leadership on the housing crisis. This announcement shows a clear commitment to working in partnership with municipalities—as well as provinces and territories, Indigenous governments, housing providers....

How is the member building partnerships in his community, and how can we all build together?

Jeff Kibble: Mr. Speaker, indeed, we do need to partner with municipalities, but part of that is getting out of the way and removing the extra layers of bureaucracy. I have spoken to builders and groups across south Vancouver Island, and they have said that they have had stuff cancelled and that they cannot afford to do these things, so they need help. As far as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities goes, they are signalling approval, but when they start looking at the realities I have pointed out, such as the cancelled projects and the promises of 500,000 homes that simply are not being built, the reality will quickly sink in that this plan is not working and we need to get out of the way and let our builders build.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties, and I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to put the question on Bill C-20 at second reading.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. member: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that it pass on division.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried on division. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from October 31, 2025, consideration of the motion that Bill C-243, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (parole review), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the public is used to hearing politicians talk about importance of victims' rights, especially when a horrific crime is committed. What we have before us today is not just talk about protecting the victims of crime, but to actually do something.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-243 is designed to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to provide that in the case of an offender who is serving a sentence for first-degree murder or second-degree murder, parole is reviewed in accordance with the statutory time frames instead of an application by the offender. This would be done after the parole board has decided not to grant day or full parole to the offender.

It is a simple change, but one that would have a profound effect on the families of crime victims. Most of us will never know the pain that comes with losing a loved one to murder. Thankfully, such crimes are rare in Canada, but they do occur. When they occur, families are thrown into a legal system that can be overwhelming. Frequently, it seems weighted in favour of the accused and the convicted killer with the rights of families forgotten.

According to our Criminal Code:

Culpable homicide is murder

(a) where the person who causes the death of a human being

(i) means to cause his death, or

(ii) means to cause him bodily harm that he knows is likely to cause his death, and is reckless whether death ensues or not;

(b) where a person, meaning to cause death to a human being or meaning to cause him bodily harm that he knows is likely to cause his death, and being reckless whether death ensues or not, by accident or mistake causes death to another human being, notwithstanding that he does not mean to cause death or bodily harm to that human being; or

(c) if a person, for an unlawful object, does anything that they know is likely to cause death, and by doing so causes the death of a human being, even if they desire to effect their object without causing death or bodily harm to any human being.

I am repeating those words from the Criminal Code to remind us of the gravity of the offence. The taking of a human life is the worst crime we can imagine. Every life is precious. For someone to deliberately and unjustifiably end a life is deserving of the most serious punishment we can mete out. That is why we hand out life sentences. That is why we limit eligibility for parole.

At the same time, Canadians believe in the possibility of rehabilitation and redemption. That is why even those convicted of murder are eligible for parole. We believe there is hope even for those who commit the worst crimes. That is why even those convicted of first degree murder have the right to a parole hearing once a certain amount of time has passed. We acknowledge that people can and do change.

The Corrections and Conditional Release Act reminds us:

The purpose of conditional release is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by means of decisions on the timing and conditions of release that will best facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens.

It also says:

The protection of society is the paramount consideration for the Board and the provincial parole boards in the determination of all cases.

In order to do that:

Parole boards take into consideration all relevant available information, including the stated reasons and recommendations of the sentencing judge, the nature and gravity of the offence, the degree of responsibility of the offender, information from the trial or sentencing process and information obtained from victims, offenders and other components of the criminal justice system, including assessments provided by correctional authorities;

As the system is now structured, and what this bill sets out to correct, an offender can apply for parole a year after being refused parole by a parole board. I do not think that is right when it comes to those who are convicted of murder, our most serious crime.

● (1335)

A parole board hearing is a serious affair. Prisoners hoping to be released make a case as to why the punishment they have already received is sufficient. They explain why they are no longer a danger to society. However, that is not all that is presented. There is also a case made as to why the parole application should be denied. The prisoner's progress is evaluated, the case is revisited and memories are stirred.

For the families of the murder victims, the trauma of the crime is revisited. They are expected to testify and to describe the impact on their lives of the untimely loss of a loved one through the criminal actions of another. They are asked to revisit a nightmare and, as the law now stands, they can be asked to revisit this nightmare every year. The system revictimizes the victims of the crime for no good purpose.

One of the great things about being human is that we have the capacity for change. We can repent our actions and be redeemed, but for most of us, that is a process, which is why I support Bill C-243. This legislation would take into account the reality that change can be a slow process. I believe there is hope for even those who have committed the worst crimes. I believe that people can and do change their ways. I believe that those who show true remorse for their actions and have been rehabilitated deserve another chance. That is why we have parole boards to consider whether those who have committed crimes can now be safely returned to society.

I do not believe that the parole application process should be used by convicts to revictimize Canadians. To me, it seems highly unlikely that someone deemed inappropriate for release by a parole board this year will change so completely in 12 months that the board will change its mind. There is a provision for mandatory review whether the offender requests it or not.

This legislation would not change mandatory review. What it would do is put an end to the annual revictimization of the families of a murder victim in a hearing that is almost predestined to end with the offender remaining incarcerated.

Those who care about victims' rights should support this bill. I congratulate my hon. colleague and neighbour from Edmonton Griesbach for putting together this important bill.

[*Translation*]

Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the bill addresses a very serious issue. We agree with many aspects of the bill. First, there is the seriousness of murder, of course. It is the most serious crime one can commit, and there are also different degrees.

I am also grateful to my colleague for highlighting the importance of rehabilitation, even though that can be very difficult to imagine. However, with this type of bill, we must always be careful not to overstep the courts' authority. I am neither a legal expert nor a lawyer, of course, and it always bothers me when processes are changed or when lawmakers impose something. I will explain why.

I understand the intent behind the bill, especially when the goal is to protect victims' families. I will start with that, actually. There may be other ways to approach this. It is true that it is heartbreaking when people who have lost a loved one are asked to testify and take part in the process. Most experts say that testimony from family members does not influence the process at all in the vast majority of cases, so is this even necessary? Could we not do without this more often? We could have family members testify only when necessary. There are definitely issues.

Under Bill C-243, a person whose first parole application is denied would not be able to reapply. That takes away the ability of judges and courts to make a nuanced assessment. That troubles me, and it could even have the opposite effect in some cases. Currently, 32.4% of applications for full parole are granted, or three out of every 10 applications. That means that seven out of 10 are rejected.

When we talk about this topic, we all recall certain notorious criminals, whose names I will not bother to mention here. I will simply describe the circumstances: the Quebec City mosque tragedy, serial killers and so on. Generally, the system seems to be working quite well. Of course, sometimes horrific crimes are committed by repeat offenders, but these are exceptional cases. If there is something we can do to limit that even further, we should.

However, what this bill is saying is that people who have applied once will never be able to apply again. That could have a negative effect. I am concerned that it could influence the Parole Board of Canada's decisions. It is the duty of the board members not to grant parole if they feel that there is even the slightest chance that an individual could pose a danger to the public. That explains the Bloc Québécois's position. We will be voting against the bill for that reason. The decision needs to remain with the Parole Board. If there is a problem, then we need to review the appointments to that board and perhaps its workload as well, so that members have enough time to properly analyze each case.

I am worried about what might happen when board members are on the fence, when they think that a person may be fit to be released back into society but they still have a niggling doubt. They might think that, if they say no, the person will never be able to apply again, and so they might be tempted to release the person, despite that niggling doubt. They might end up taking risks that they are not currently taking. We therefore have to be careful about the unintended consequences that a bill may have.

Private Members' Business

The bill has very noble intentions. I am not challenging the bill's intentions which, by the way, I support. I think this is just an issue that we have. Our society needs to be better protected, especially victims of crime. However, we have to be careful about the bills we propose. For that reason, I do not believe that this is a good bill.

It could have targeted prolific offenders or repeat offenders, people who committed a crime, were released, returned to society, committed other crimes, were re-incarcerated and released only to commit more crime. That would have brought some nuance to a bill that is otherwise much too broad.

● (1340)

I really appreciated the member's point that human beings are the most able to evolve and change. I thought that was an interesting point, and he is quite right. It is normal for the individual to believe that they are fine and they can rejoin society. It is also normal for parole board members to conclude that, even if the individual thinks they are fine, they might still have a long way to go.

There has also been discussion about the annual review, which is generally required by law. However, a judge may also decide that the individual will not be ready to come back in one year's time. That does happen. The member also referred to the automatic review process after five years. However, the Conservatives have forgotten about day parole. Some individuals may be in prison but allowed to leave during the day and return in the evening. There is actually a very high success rate for this kind of release. I will provide a few statistics at the end of my speech to prove my point. In the case of day parole, there is no such thing as automatic review after five years. What this means is that, under this bill, if someone is refused once, that is the end of that.

We also need to be careful about what we say in Parliament. I mentioned at the beginning that I am neither a lawyer nor a legal expert. However, I am very careful to read my files thoroughly and not to say just anything. When people in the House say that murderers are sentenced to only 25 years in prison, that is not the truth. Murderers are sentenced to life in prison, with the possibility of parole after 25 years. That is the full nuance. We must also be careful when informing the public, so as not to spread misinformation. If parole is not granted, it will not happen. Even in cases where parole is granted, there will always be conditions and supervision, because a life sentence remains a life sentence.

It is always difficult to speak to bills like this, because we know we are touching on sensitive issues and things that are excruciating for families who have experienced this kind of tragedy. I want to reiterate my empathy and sense of duty toward these people. However, that does not mean we should pass an imperfect bill that will cause harm to other individuals. That is the reason, in broad terms, why the Bloc Québécois will unfortunately oppose the bill.

Private Members' Business

Now I want to talk about statistics, as I said I would. When it comes to full parole, the approval rate is 32.4%. That is about three in 10. In the case of day parole, the approval rate is 77%. That is closer to eight in 10. The day parole rate is much higher because there is much closer supervision. It is therefore possible to assess this more effectively.

Now let us consider the results regarding parole and day parole without a repeat offence. The goal is not to say that this person is terrible and must die in prison; the goal is to protect society. This is our duty as legislators: to ensure these people do not reoffend. In the case of day parole, 99% of parole periods are completed without a repeat offence. In the case of full parole, 97% of parole periods are completed without a repeat offence.

With numbers like that, I do not think that, as legislators, we can say that the situation is so appalling and outrageous that the laws need to be changed. Some adjustments may need to be made, as I said earlier. Let us come up with some categories and some level-headed ideas. What I am concerned about is that there might be negative impacts that could lead to people being released sooner, as I said earlier.

Above all, let us continue to focus on victims and their families. I think this is an observation I can share with my Conservative friends. Victims are not being heard and supported properly in our society. We need to support them more. I mentioned earlier that experts are saying that the families' testimony is not very useful. If the testimony is not useful for the decision, why are families being forced to go through that? Why are they made to go through it several times? Some changes could be made.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here to support Bill C-243, Brian's bill, for my friend the Conservative MP for Edmonton Griesbach. He has been a tireless fighter, especially for how deeply this impacts Alberta families.

In 2012, 35-year-old Brian Ilesic and three of his co-workers serviced an ATM machine at my alma mater, the U of A. They never made it home. Brian and two co-workers were killed, and the fourth person was seriously injured. All four men were ambushed, shot in the back of their head, point-blank, for cash. Brian's life was over. Dianne and Mike, Brian's folks, are here today. They say their son had an infectious smile, a warm heart and a giving nature.

A day later, the coward who killed Brian was caught trying to flee the country. He pled guilty to first-degree murder, two counts of second-degree murder and one count of attempted murder. He was sentenced to 40 years without parole. That is good, but nine years into the sentence, the Supreme Court struck down a Conservative law that enabled judges to extend parole ineligibility for killers who murder multiple victims.

The Conservative law was for a clear reason: to keep the worst criminals behind bars for as long as possible so everyone else can be safe. However, that ruling changed things, so Brian's killer could now apply for parole after just 12 years. That means the friends and family of the people he murdered must face the guy who killed their loved one, online or at parole hearings, and relive all over

again the trauma that never really leaves them, to plead that brutal killers should not be let out, in order to keep themselves and, frankly, every other Canadian safe.

However, it does not stop there. Currently, murderers can apply for parole every single year. That is wrong, and it is what the bill tries to fix. Bill C-243 would ensure that when a murderer is denied parole, they cannot apply again the very next year. They would have to wait at least five years. I personally do not think loved ones of victims of the worst kinds of murder should have to go through that even once, but our Conservative colleague brings a reasonable material change for the better. All MPs should support it. The bill would help the now always-vulnerable peace of mind of the living victims of these torturous crimes, everyone who loves the souls and lives taken too soon.

The brave people who sacrifice themselves to protect, serve, help and save the rest of us, and the people who fight for victims all across Canada, support this common-sense fix. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, and police associations from Ottawa, Calgary and Toronto all support it. Victims' loved ones and advocates support it, such as the Edmonton's Victims of Homicide Support Society; Christina Trang, whose dad, Hung Trang, was murdered in Ottawa; and Oshawa's Lisa Freeman, who turned the pain of her dad's murder into selfless service for victims in the scary and complex maze of court, trial and parole systems where the deck often tilts against victims.

I support the bill, for all victims, and it is personal. In 2011, my lifelong and best childhood friend, Dana Turner, was murdered. The killer got a sentence of obstruction of justice and second-degree murder. I have a warning: I will speak the truth. After previously stabbing her in the head with a paring knife an earlier time, her ex-boyfriend stabbed her in both eyes with a pencil, a theme for him in other crimes; strangled her with shoelaces; and ran over her head and body repeatedly with a car, because the farmer's field near Innisfail was somewhat soft, to make sure she was dead.

Private Members' Business

In 2016, during debate on the life means life act from former Conservative MP Ron Liepert, I spoke about Dana; her sons; all her siblings; her extraordinary older sisters, who took on more than anyone could imagine; her mother, who will never be the same; her dad, one of my many volunteer dads; and the damage done to everyone who loved her. That bill would have made life sentences for murder truly mean life, but the Liberals defeated it.

I have read Dana's sister Paula's victim impact statement here. To reflect the gravity of what MPs debate, I will share parts of it again. Paula said the following:

Dana's death has left me often depressed, anxious, suspicious, scared and angry. Dana's murder required me doing things that I would never wish on anyone. I, along with the help of my parents and siblings had to go through Dana's belongings item by item, box by box, sorting through her clothes, baby memorabilia, mail, and personal belongings all of which made me feel like I was stealing and violating her privacy. I had to decide what items to keep for her children when they got older, and sold the rest at a garage sale almost giving it away like everything she had worked for her whole life was suddenly garbage. I made phone calls to and met with Dana's pastor and helped arrange her memorial. I had to print large photos of her to place on a table at the front of the church as there wasn't a body to put in a casket as her "remains" stayed with the medical examiner as evidence.

● (1350)

At that memorial, Paula asked me to read a poem Dana wrote about friendship, the greatest, gutting duty of my life. Dana's loved ones, like me, spent months putting up missing person posters and searching everywhere. We found out later he had killed her long before any of us had given up.

Paula said:

About a year later, when Dana's remains were released to our family and we were able to have a funeral for my sister. I will always be haunted by the image of my father falling to the ground at her casket in a small room at the funeral home and there wasn't anything I could do to comfort him. I wanted to hold Dana's hand and say good-bye but when I felt in Dana's casket for her hand I wasn't able to find it in the vacuum sealed bag of bones that was placed under a satin sheet where an inflated pillow was where her head would have been.

That is the reality families live with after murder. In 2018, Dana's killer dragged the family back to court for an appeal. He failed, but Dana's family had to go through the trauma and legal proceedings just to keep him in jail. By the way, Mark Lindsay, Dana's killer, is now Roxanne Lindsay or Demaris Lindsay, and tried to get into a hospital instead of prison a couple of years ago. An MP's top job is to ensure killers cannot repeatedly traumatize the people they already hurt.

Another Alberta example of Canada's backward so-called justice system is RCMP Constable David Wynn. On the job in St. Albert, he found a stolen truck and a suspect shot and killed him. Constable Wynn died, as the RCMP say, to uphold the right. The killer was out on bail. He had 60 prior criminal convictions and 29 outstanding charges.

A fellow RCMP officer, Roland Misik, was originally from Lakeland. My husband and I remain close to his brother. He shared what he saw that day on Facebook a couple of weeks ago. He wrote, "His head was wrapped in bandages and there were tubes coming out of everywhere imaginable with a breathing apparatus for someone on life support. He was an organ donor and time was of the essence to use his loss of life to save others. The memory of him fighting for his life will stick with me forever, and he fought, his body never gave up. The man who murdered Dave took his own

life when surrounded by [cops] and knew he would have to face the consequences of his actions. The coward's way out."

Constable Wynn inspired Bill S-217 by a senator and the Conservative MP for St. Albert—Sturgeon River, who previously tried to pass it before 2019 to require courts to know an accused criminal's history at bail hearings, which is insanely optional right now, to make it harder for repeat offenders to walk free. If it had been law, David Wynn might still be alive, and Shelly Wynn, a tiny, bubbly, lovely, fierce warrior of a woman, might have her husband.

Murderers should not get to force victims' families before them year after year as though the pain of the loss comes with an expiry date. It does not. No parent should have to prep statements each year about the worst day of their life, as if it ever gets better after that. No sister should have to recount how her sibling was killed just to keep him-her behind bars. No one should have to watch a loved one break down again since the system makes them relive their trauma. Brian's parents, Dana's children, David's family and everyone devastated by murder already carry a life sentence of grief.

Nothing restores those lives or fills empty chairs at tables. Nothing stops the wish for phone calls or texts that never come. Nothing changes the past, but MPs can change the future. I urge all, for everyone forced to bury someone murdered by a monster, for every brave first responder and for every innocent Canadian, to support Bill C-243, because the least we can do for victims' loved ones is to pass this reasonable measure to give some time, just half a decade, to not have to bare their souls and beg, to not have to face the uncertainty and to not have to tear open those wounds over and over each year, for justice.

I love the Turners.

● (1355)

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Lakeland for that very impassioned and personal speech. I was very moved by it. I want to thank the member of Parliament for Edmonton Griesbach for bringing forward this very practical and reasonable legislation that I think would make a significant difference in the lives of victims' families, something that I have been very passionate about ever since I was first elected to Parliament just over eight years ago.

Private Members' Business

I want to frame my remarks around the principle that our justice system has to strike a balance between protecting the rights of offenders and recognizing the lifelong suffering endured by victims and their families.

I believe that my colleague has brought the bill forward because Canadians have identified a very real problem in our parole system, one that is forcing families to repeatedly and regularly re-undergo the trauma of their loved one's loss through parole hearings that can happen as often as every year. I am supporting this legislation because I want to ensure that we have a justice system that does not impose these unnecessary traumas on families who have gone through the worst experience imaginable.

I want to talk about what brought this law forward. It is called Brian's bill for a reason. I am referring, of course, to Brian Ilesic, a father, a son and a hard-working Canadian whose life was taken in a brutal murder in 2012.

I remember where I was the night of the HUB Mall shooting. I was working the night shift at the Imperial Oil refinery in Strathcona, Edmonton, and I could see the helicopters flying overhead. All of us working on the job site were asking ourselves what had happened. It was a fatal shooting, a fatal and evil betrayal.

Brian was working as an armoured car guard with his colleagues at the University of Alberta HUB Mall in Edmonton when a co-worker, somebody who should have had their back, turned on them and murdered them. In that attack, Brian Ilesic, Michelle Shegelski and Eddie Rejano were murdered, and another colleague, Matthew Schuman, suffered severe and life-altering injuries.

When I reflect on that tragedy, I think about the families of those victims and the entire community in the Edmonton area that knew them. I want to focus for a moment on the families that were left behind, because they are the people who must carry the consequences of this tragedy for the rest of their lives. I think about Brian's parents, Mike and Dianne Ilesic, who are here today and who lost their son in this tragic, senseless act of violence. I think about Brian's daughter, who was only a child when her father was murdered and who grew up experiencing many of life's milestones without him.

When I consider those realities, it reminds me that the pain of losing a loved one to violent crime does not simply fade over time. It is not something that heals. In my view, our justice system does not reflect and recognize that reality. It does not ensure that the processes that we have do not unnecessarily reopen the pain those families feel every day.

I think of the McCann family, who I have been advocating for through my private member's bill, which I hope to get passed in a couple of weeks here in Parliament. They have to go through parole hearings for the man who murdered their elderly parents.

I want to quote from a CBC article that quotes the Parole Board head in the most recent Parole Board meeting, stating that it is not a requirement that the offender admit to their crimes. How traumatizing is that for families, to have somebody brought before a parole board, face the uncertainty and the potential that this person who murdered their loved ones could be released, and hear the head of

the parole board saying to the offender that they are not even required to admit to what they have done?

When the murderer in this case was convicted, the court imposed a life sentence with no chance of parole, at 40 years. At the time, that sentence reflected the seriousness of a crime that had taken three lives and permanently changed the life of another. I understand that for those families that were involved, this significant sentence provided some degree of certainty and reassurance that they would not have to repeatedly confront that offender through the parole process. However, that situation changed dramatically in 2022, when the Supreme Court issued its decision in Bissonnette. That decision struck down legal provisions allowing for consecutive periods of parole ineligibility for multiple murders. As a result of this decision, parole timelines for offenders have been significantly reduced.

● (1400)

I fully recognize that our courts have a role in interpreting the charter and our laws, and I believe Parliament has an important responsibility to examine the broader impacts of those decisions and to enact the democratic will of the Canadian people through the laws we make. In this case, one of the consequences of this court decision has been the increased uncertainty and distress for victims' families who believed at the time of the sentencing of their loved one's killer that they would not have to go through these repeated annual parole hearings but now, because of this decision, are being forced to.

Under the current system, once somebody who has been convicted of first- or second-degree murder becomes eligible for parole and applies for it, if that application is denied, the offender can apply again the following year. When I think about that process, I imagine what it must be like for those families to receive notice of another parole hearing year after year. I know some people might say these families do not have to attend the hearings, but I can tell members that every single victim's family I have spoken to feel it is their duty, as a family, to their loved one to show up to every one of those hearings, so they can stand up for their loved one who cannot be there because of the crime. That often means a very painful experience of preparing victim impact statements and revisiting the details of the crime again and again. I am not saying this process is completely flawed. Obviously, we know, it is necessary for people to have the right to a parole hearing. However, to force these families to go through this process year after year is a grave injustice.

When I look at other cases in Canada, I see how these repeated parole hearings can have a deep impact on families. One example we are very familiar with is the Bernardo case. His parole hearings have required the families of his victims to repeatedly revisit the horrific crimes committed against their daughters and their friends. When I hear the testimony of those families, I am reminded of the emotional toll of those hearings and that the process itself can create more trauma.

Private Members' Business

These examples reinforce my belief that the parole system must be reformed and structured in a way that respects victims and victims' families. That is why I am proud to support Bill C-243. I believe it proposes a reasonable and balanced solution. It would not eliminate parole eligibility, nor would it prevent offenders from having their cases reviewed. Instead, it would ensure that after a parole application is denied, the next review would occur at the automatic review period already established in law, which is approximately five years. I see this as a practical adjustment that would reduce these unnecessary repeated hearings while maintaining a fair process for evaluating parole eligibility. It would also reduce the administrative burden within the system while ensuring that families are not forced to revisit their trauma year after year.

When I consider everything we have discussed in the House today, I believe that Bill C-243, which is supported by a wide range of law enforcement and victims groups, represents a balanced and compassionate reform to Canada's justice system. I see it as legislation that would acknowledge the pain experienced by victims' families and seek to reduce their unnecessary hardship within the parole process. Supporting the bill, in my view, is about ensuring that families like the Ilesics and others are treated with the respect and compassion they deserve. It is about ensuring that our justice system would recognize not only the rights of offenders but also the enduring impact of violent crime on families who have been left behind.

For these reasons and many others, I strongly support Bill C-243. I encourage all members of the House to support this bill to get it to committee so we can finally get it passed and stand up for victims' families.

• (1405)

The Deputy Speaker: To conclude debate, I recognize the member for Edmonton Griesbach for his right of reply.

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, June 15, 2012, was a dark day in Edmonton. A young man named Brian Ilesic was one of three armoured-car guards who were murdered. The other victims were Michelle Shegelski, Eddie Rejano, and Matthew Schuman. As they serviced ATMs in the Hub Mall on the University of Alberta campus in Edmonton, their co-worker, Travis Baumgartner, shot and killed Brian, Michelle and Eddie. Baumgartner then locked them in a vault behind the ATM and fled like a coward in the armoured truck. Thankfully, Matthew's life was spared, although he was critically injured.

Brian was just 35 years old, a devoted father, a loyal friend and a cherished son. In 2012, the savage murderer Baumgartner was found guilty, but Brian's parents, Mike and Dianne Ilesic, are dreading the day when they will have to face him at a parole hearing.

I want to dedicate this speech to Brian and to his parents, Mike and Dianne, who are watching what is happening today. This bill is for them, and it is for all the victims left behind.

For families, the suffering goes on for decades. In many cases, those left behind must face the person responsible at parole hearings. As it now stands, if a convicted murderer applies for parole and is denied the first time, he or she can apply for another parole hearing just one year later and year after year afterwards. Under Bill C-243, convicted murderers could only apply for parole every five years instead of each and every year.

The trauma endured at these parole hearings is well documented. The families of the victims of Paul Bernardo have spoken about this. They spoke about the pain of being forced back into that nightmare again and again.

Another person watching today is Christina Trang. Her father was murdered in Chinatown, which is part of my riding of Edmonton Griesbach. She supports this bill.

Our justice system must protect the rights of the accused and the rights of the victims and their families. Right now, many Canadians believe that balance has tipped too far. They feel that the rights of murderers are placed before the rights of the loved ones left behind. Hundreds of Canadians coast to coast have signed my petition in support of this bill.

This bill would not undermine justice. It would strengthen it. It would ensure that victims and their families are treated with the dignity they deserve, while still respecting the integrity of our legal system. I believe all MPs on both sides of the House will support that, and I am hoping they will vote for this bill to go to committee for further study.

To colleagues on both sides of this aisle, I ask them to think about the Canadians in their riding who have signed petitions and written letters asking for this bill. Please represent them, stand up for them and support this common-sense legislation.

I am grateful that this bill has received support from the president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the president of the Canadian Police Association, the Alberta Federation of Police Associations, the Calgary Police Association, the Toronto Police Association and the Ottawa Police Association. It also has the support of Teamsters Canada and Teamsters Local 362, which represented Brian.

I would also like to thank Senator Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu and Senator Denise Batters for their support, as well as my good friend, the MP for St. Albert—Sturgeon River, for his support. I thank again Brian's parents, Mike and Dianne.

This bill is not about politics. It is about people. It is about victims. It is about families whose lives have been shattered by senseless, brutal violence. We can build a justice system that treats victims with the respect and compassion they deserve. That is what Bill C-243 seeks to do.

This is for Brian Ilesic. This is for every victim of violent crime and for every family left behind.

• (1410)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

Private Members' Business

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

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, March 25, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 2:13 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, March 23, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:13 p.m.)

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