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Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Speaker: The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[English]

STRONG BORDERS ACT

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-2, An Act respecting certain measures relating to the security of the border between Canada and the United States and respecting other related security measures.

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

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, or APF. The first concerns its participation in the commemoration of the the 30th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide in Kigali, Rwanda, on April 6 and 7, 2024. The second concerns its participation in meetings of the APF presidency in Paris, France, and Luxembourg from April 22 to 26, 2024. The third concerns its participation in meetings of the APF Political Committee and Working Group on Reforming the APF Constitution in Luxembourg from April 27 to 30, 2024. The fourth concerns its participation in the 30th Assembly of the Africa Region of the APF in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on May 28 and 29, 2024. The fifth concerns its participation in the 36th Regional Assembly of Europe in Pristina, Kosovo, from November 11 to 13, 2024. The sixth concerns its participation in the meeting of the APF Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Economic Parliamentary Symposium in Budapest, Hungary, from April 2 to 4, 2025.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker. I am presenting a petition that I suppose could have been from petitioners in almost any electoral district across Canada.

Petitioners from Saanich—Gulf Islands have asked me to present this petition, which points to the crisis across Canada regarding access to primary health care and having a regular family doctor. In my community, in the Sidney and Victoria area of British Columbia, the average wait time for a walk-in clinic is two to four hours, depending on the community.

The number of physicians in Canada is growing, but the number of Canadians without a regular doctor remains stable. The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to work with all the provinces and territories to come to a holistic and fair solution that addresses the critical shortage of family doctors across Canada.

* * *

● (1005)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. John Zerucelli (Secretary of State (Labour), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from June 2 consideration of the motion, as amended, for an address to His Majesty the King in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Braedon Clark (Sackville—Bedford—Preston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Brampton South.

The Address

It is with a profound sense of gratitude and humility that I rise for the first time as a member of Parliament in the House of Commons. I want to start by thanking the good people of Sackville—Bedford—Preston, who have placed their trust in me. From my hometown of Bedford to Sackville to Fall River, Waverley, Wellington, Beaver Bank, Preston and beyond, these communities have bestowed an honour on me that I can never truly repay.

My family, without whom I would not be here today, also deserve everlasting thanks. I thank my wife Caitie, who is the best person I have ever known, for everything. I thank Caitie for taking a chance on the skinny kid from down the hall that first year at Dalhousie University. It has been the ride of a lifetime, and there is so much more to come. To my kids Beau and Heidi, Dad loves them. I cannot stand missing so many soccer games and play dates at the Barbie Dreamhouse, but I will make it up to them.

I thank my mom, my dad and my siblings, Deirdre and Travis, for always believing in me, and I thank my predecessor, Darrell Samson, who was a great MP for the past 10 years and whose advice and counsel to me have always been wise.

As we all know, a political campaign is the sum of countless tiny acts of political courage: that first timid knock on a stranger's door, that first phone call with an uncertain conclusion, the sometimes, or maybe always, inexplicable decision to put one's name on the ballot. To my amazing campaign team, who knocked on thousands of doors and suffered through far too many days of damp maritime weather, the kind of weather that seeps into our bones, our victory belongs more to them than it does to me.

Speaking on the second-to-last day of the address in reply gives me an advantage compared to some of my colleagues who preceded me: the advantage of perspective and time. It has now been one week since King Charles III delivered the Speech from the Throne, and in a mere seven days, the threads of that speech have begun to stitch together into a concrete vision of what our government plans to do.

We will make life more affordable by cutting taxes for over 22 million Canadians from coast to coast to coast. That means that, for each one of us in this chamber, thousands and thousands of our constituents will have more money in their pockets. This will save the average two-income family \$840 per year. That is enough for swim lessons, dance lessons, soccer or a well-deserved night out for tired and busy parents.

We will eliminate the GST on homes under \$1 million for first-time buyers, saving people up to \$50,000. Through “build Canada homes”, we will embark on the most ambitious homebuilding plan since the Second World War and deliver 500,000 new homes a year. We will cut development charges in half, support modular and pre-fabricated housing, and simply make it easier and faster for people to have a safe and affordable place to live.

In partnership with the provinces and territories, we will break down trade barriers and create true free trade in this country. This will unlock up to \$200 billion in economic activity and reduce our dependence on trade with the United States. Coming out of the meeting with the premiers in Saskatoon yesterday, it is clear that there is consensus on this issue. Progressive Conservative premiers,

NDP premiers and Liberal premiers alike all agree that one Canadian economy is much stronger than 13. We will identify projects of national significance that will break down the silos of narrow political self-interest and generate growth across this country. These projects will create jobs, diversify trade and create a self-sufficient national economy that can weather the storms of an uncertain and changing world.

As laid out in the communiqué from yesterday's first ministers' meeting, we will identify “Nation-building infrastructure and corridors, such as highways, railways, ports, airports, pipelines, nuclear projects, clean and conventional energy projects, and electricity transmission systems [that] are crucial for driving Canadian productivity growth, energy security, and economic competitiveness.” Under this plan, approvals that once took five years will now take two.

● (1010)

In a word, we will build, and as we build, we will prove that government can do big things and do them well. Many people will be skeptical of that, and I can understand why. Far too often and for too long, government has asked why instead of why not. Instead of solving problems, government has thrown up roadblocks in front of good ideas, but this is not inevitable or unchangeable. If we look to the past, we are overwhelmed with examples of government, often in partnership with the private sector, building the foundations of our country, foundations that still support us to this day.

When the last spike was driven to complete the Canadian Pacific Railway, it was the culmination of a dream that was, to borrow the Prime Minister's phrase, Canada's first project of national significance. During the Second World War, the Bedford Basin, in my own riding, was the gathering point for dozens of ships and convoys that would cross the ocean and liberate a continent. In 1955, a ribbon of steel, rising gracefully above the water below, connected Halifax to Dartmouth for the first time: the Angus L. Macdonald Bridge. In 1981, the Canadarm entered the final frontier of space with the logo of the Government of Canada on its side. It is an extraterrestrial example of what government can achieve.

The Address

In the years to come, I know more examples will emerge. My hope is that this government, a government that builds, will restore Canadians' faith that big things are not beyond our reach. Government can be and must be a catalyst for growth, not a drag on innovation and productivity. I also hope that this Parliament, the 45th, can be one defined by productivity instead of partisanship, that MPs can work collaboratively and across party lines in a minority government to get things done.

As we all know, there is no more direct, insightful and humbling experience than going door to door during a campaign. We have all knocked on thousands and thousands of doors, I am sure. As I have reflected on my own campaign over the past several weeks, I have been struck most of all by what I did not hear when I met people at their doorsteps.

Nobody asked me to be angrier. Nobody asked me to double down on cynicism and pettiness. Nobody asked me to heckle more and heckle louder. Nobody asked me to do those things, because most people, thankfully, are lucky enough to live their lives outside of the political bubble. They live in the real world, where the scoreboard is not measured in seat counts or vote totals, but in the feeling someone gets when they wake up in the morning with a sense of purpose and hope, or the feeling someone gets when they know their kids will be better off than they are.

This place, this chamber, exists in the real world, but sometimes it feels like stepping into the twilight zone. Being in politics can sometimes feel like being a racehorse with blinders on. Our field of vision is so narrow that all we see and all we care about is what is in front of us. We lose sight of the big world around us and become obsessed with narrow wins and small goals. I do not pretend to be perfect, and I am sure my blinders will come on from time to time. However, I will do my very best to remember what the people at the doors expect from me, and I would ask my colleagues to do the same.

Many of us in this chamber want to see politics as black and white, but the truth is that it is almost always drawn in endless shades of grey. We should accept and embrace complexity, not toss it away in favour of a cheap sound bite or easy-to-remember slogan.

This is not the first legislative body I have had the honour of serving in. I am a former member of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, the oldest legislature in the country and the birthplace of responsible government in Canada. On the grounds of the House of Assembly on Hollis Street in a quiet corner, there is a statue of who I would say is the patron saint of Nova Scotia politics, Joseph Howe.

Like all who have been politicians, Howe struggled to find what the true purpose of the job was, but I think he found it. I will finish today with his words, which will guide me and I hope guide my colleagues as well. Howe said, "when I sit down in solitude to the labours of my profession, the only questions I ask myself are, What is right? What is just? What is for the public good?" I, for one, think that is a pretty good place to start.

• (1015)

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a week, and our hon. colleague talked a lot about the Speech from the Throne and how the words that were spoken by His Majesty have woven a clear and concrete plan forward for our nation. He also talked about what he did not hear on the doorsteps.

I want to tell our hon. colleague what I did not hear in the Speech from the Throne. I did not hear mention of our opioid crisis. Over 51,000 Canadians have passed away from overdose since 2016. What is the government's concrete plan for the opioid crisis?

Braedon Clark: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that whether one is in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Saskatchewan or any part of this country, the opioid crisis has taken tens of thousands of lives needlessly, many young lives and many lives that otherwise would have been full of hope and productivity. This is something the government certainly is aware of and wants to fix. It wants to make sure that the lives that have tragically been ruined by the scourge of opioids can be healed over time.

I take the member's point. However, this is something that goes to my point about non-partisan issues, and it is one I think we can all agree we need to solve, and solve very quickly.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague touched on an issue that is also concerning to me, and that is the need for us to be less partisan and more collaborative.

He talked about the minority government, so he seems to realize that this is a minority government, that this is the mandate that voters gave us here in the House of Commons.

Will his party take note of the amendment that was adopted yesterday by a vote of 166 to 164? Will the Liberals decide to table a budget and recognize the need to shed light on the state of our public finances?

[English]

Braedon Clark: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to transparency and finances, this is something that, again, I think our government is working quickly on. This is the second-fastest return to Parliament in the history of our country, which is a testament to the urgency of the Prime Minister and the government.

We are here in the House. I have been in opposition before; now I am on the government side. I know that the job of opposition is to ask questions and hold government to account, and I appreciate that role. That is what we are here to do. There are plenty of details and things to discuss in the House, and that is what we are here to do.

[Translation]

Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House. Of course, I will miss the deep and powerful voice of Darrell Samson, the member my colleague is replacing. However, I am sure that my colleague's voice will be just as strong in defending his constituents.

The Address

My colleague said that he knocked on a lot of doors and met a lot of people during the election campaign. Can he tell us which of the measures proposed in the Speech from the Throne will help his riding and constituents?

[English]

Braedon Clark: Mr. Speaker, one thing that is really important to my riding, and all ridings across the country, is housing. When I was in the provincial legislature, I also served as the housing critic, so it is an issue that has been very important to me for a number of years, particularly for people my age and younger, I would say, who are extremely worried about how they are going to pay rent or afford a mortgage.

It is particularly important for seniors as well who want to downsize but cannot afford to because rents are too expensive where they live. Therefore, there might be one person living in a house where ideally there would be four or five, a young family. That is a problem as well.

In our throne speech and in our platform during the campaign, we laid out a plan to get the government involved in housing. Again, this speaks to what I was talking about: The government can and must do big things. Housing is an area where it has done great work in the past. I expect we will do it again through “build Canada homes” and other programs.

• (1020)

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to respond to the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Majesty King Charles III. Before I begin, I would like to extend my appreciation to the residents of Brampton South for once again placing their trust in me to represent them in the 45th Parliament. This continued trust gives me the honour of being their voice in the chamber, standing up for their priorities and working to make our community stronger, safer and more inclusive for everyone.

I also want to extend heartfelt thanks to my family, staff, volunteers and residents for their continued support. As we begin this new parliamentary session, we are setting a course for a bold and forward-looking Canada, one that reflects the hopes and aspirations of Canadians across the country.

At the doors in Brampton South, I heard directly from our community members on priorities that matter to them the most. More than that, people told me they want to see real solutions, not slogans, action that meets the moment and sets us on the best path forward. That is exactly what the throne speech delivers: a clear, ambitious agenda to tackle the challenges head-on and build a more secure, more affordable and more prosperous future for generations to come, where Canadians can afford a home, find a good-paying job and feel safe in their neighbourhood.

First, our Liberal government is delivering a middle-class tax cut. Residents in Brampton South work hard every day to support their family, and they deserve to keep more of their hard-earned money. That is why one of the first actions of the current government is to deliver meaningful tax relief for the middle class. Starting July 1, we plan to reduce the lowest personal income tax rate from 15% to 14%. This tax cut will benefit nearly 22 million Canadians and save two-income families up to \$840 a year by 2026. For

families in Brampton South, that is money that can go toward groceries, kids' activities or saving for the future.

Over the next five years, this tax cut will return more than \$27 billion to Canadians, dollars that remain in our communities and support local economies like ours in Brampton South. Our message is clear: We are cutting taxes and delivering changes so all Canadians can get ahead.

Second, our government will continue to invest in health care and affordability measures. The government is building on progress that is already making life more affordable for families in Brampton South, like \$10-a-day child care, the national school food program and the Canadian dental care plan. Thanks to our \$10-a-day child care program, parents in Ontario are saving over \$10,000 per year per child.

In Brampton, we are seeing new child care spaces opening. For example, there is the SimplySmart Child Care Centre and Montessori school. I have spoken with parents first-hand, especially mothers, who are now able to return to work or take on more hours, knowing their children are in safe, affordable care. This is more than good social policy; it is also smart economic policy. It gives our children the best possible start and supports parents as they build their career.

We are also making progress with the national school food program, an ambitious step in strengthening our social safety net. With over \$1 million in federal funding over five years, the program will provide nutritious meals to more than 400,000 students in Ontario alone, helping our students focus, learn and thrive.

Through the Canadian dental care plan, we are delivering real savings, up to \$750 a year on essential dental care. This historic program has already helped over 3.6 million Canadians, including 1.8 million who have received care to date. Now all uninsured eligible Canadians can apply, with the goal of reaching up to nine million Canadians.

• (1025)

These are not just numbers; they are life-changing supports. I have spoken with single mothers in Brampton South who are now able to work full-time thanks to access to affordable child care. I have heard from seniors who can finally get the dental care they need without the burden of high costs. These are the people we are fighting for, and we will keep working every day to deliver for them.

Third, our Liberal government remains committed to building more homes for Canadians. In Brampton, housing demand has increased. That is why I welcome our government's ambitious plan to double the rate of homebuilding in Canada and support a new wave of affordable housing construction. We are launching the new “build Canada homes” initiative to unlock new projects for prefabricated housing and to make it easier for builders to get shovels in the ground. By cutting development charges and offering significant financing to non-profit and affordable housing providers, we are addressing the root causes of unaffordability.

This work is already happening in Brampton. Through the housing accelerator fund, the federal government is investing \$114 million to fast-track the construction of more than 3,150 new homes in the city of Brampton. This funding is helping Brampton officials cut red tape, speed up zoning changes and support higher-density development near transit and essential services.

We are also taking action to make home ownership more affordable for first-time buyers by eliminating the GST on new homes valued up to \$1 million, saving them up to \$50,000, and reducing the GST on homes priced between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. These are concrete steps that are making a difference right now so more families in Brampton South can find an affordable place to call home.

Fourth, our Liberal government will continue to make our communities safer and more inclusive for everyone. Safety is a top priority for our communities, and when it comes to keeping our streets and neighbourhoods safe, all levels of government must work together. That is why the Liberal government is taking concrete action with respect to supporting local municipalities, law enforcement and the Province of Ontario to combat and prevent organized crime and auto theft, and to keep assault-style weapons off the street.

In the Region of Peel, theft of motor vehicles has declined significantly, with a 16% drop in 2024 and a further 45% decline in the first quarter of 2025 compared to the same period last year. These are not just statistics; the numbers represent real change that our partners can bring with the support of the federal government. That is why we are investing in stronger bail enforcement and tougher laws to keep repeat violent offenders off our streets, 1,000 new RCMP officers to strengthen law enforcement capacity across Canada, federal funding and intelligence coordination to disrupt organized auto theft rings, and technologies like drones, scanners and K-9 units to intercept stolen vehicles and illicit goods.

Our message is clear: We are committed to ensuring that our communities are safe, and our investments are working. Together, with local, provincial and federal collaboration, we are making our streets safer for everyone.

Fifth, our Liberal government will build one Canadian economy and safeguard Canadian values and sovereignty. We are living in a time of deep uncertainty around the world. In recent months, we have heard alarming rhetoric from south of the border, but let us be clear: Canada is not for sale, and the true north is indeed strong and free. As outlined in the Speech from the Throne, our government is responding with confidence, conviction and vision.

The Address

Our Liberal government will continue to diversify our trading partners. Canada has 15 free trade agreements cover 61% of the world's GDP and open markets to 1.5 billion consumers worldwide. Most important, we are building one Canadian economy, removing internal trade barriers, strengthening supply chains and empowering our industries with the local tools required to lead and compete in a rapidly changing world. We will create one Canadian economy, not 13 Canadian economies. This will lower prices up to 50%, increase productivity up to 7% and add \$2 billion to the economy.

Together, we are building a Canada that is united, resilient and ready to lead, not just today but for generations to come.

● (1030)

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to the member, I say that I think it is pretty obvious to everyone that fear was a major motivating factor for the Liberals winning the election, and specifically Donald Trump's bizarre threats of annexation, which appealed to a significant number of people. We heard, during the election, the Liberals constantly talking about Trump, “elbows up” and retaliatory tariffs, but it has been revealed that the Prime Minister dropped these retaliatory tariffs during the election without informing Canadians. There was doublespeak, and I would suggest that this was dishonest.

Can the member recognize that actions like these undermine confidence in the government and the Prime Minister?

Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, together we are building a Canada that is united, resilient and ready to lead, not just today but for generations to come.

Yes, unjustified tariffs are here from south of the border, but our Liberal government will continue to deliver. That is why the Prime Minister had a meeting with the premiers yesterday. It was so that we can build a resilient economy, one economy, to make Canada strong. Our Liberal government will continue to diversify our trading partners. Canada is the only G7 economy with comprehensive free trade access to the entire G7 and European Union, totalling 50 countries. Canada is the only country that has 15 free trade agreements, covering 61% of the world's GDP—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Shefford.

The Address

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I had the opportunity to spend some time together, particularly at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and I know that we are both committed to this issue.

However, I want to make the following observation. Apart from announcements on firearms, there is nothing specific in this throne speech to address violence against women. There is nothing, even though we have learned that there may have been a fourth femicide in the Eastern Townships, in my region of Sherbrooke, and that we may even have reached the tenth femicide in Quebec this year.

What will we do to help these victims of domestic violence? How are we going to fight the scourge, the epidemic of femicide? Is there any money? I have not seen anything about any kind of action plan to address violence against women.

[English]

Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I shared sitting on the status of women committee with the member from 2019 until the last Parliament. We did a lot of work in the status of women committee together on betterment for women. Our Liberal government is committed to working for betterment for women. As members know, child care is also there, even \$10 day care. When I was door knocking, I heard very positive feedback from women, single mothers, and it is a big help. In this 45th Parliament, let us work together to do more on betterment for women.

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the work she has done for all Canadians in the last decade. We all knocked on doors and heard the concerns of our constituents, so I would like to ask my colleague a question.

Canadians are finding it difficult to make ends meet in these difficult times. Can the member shed light on how our tax breaks will help Canadians get through these difficult times?

• (1035)

Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, as members know, we got a clear mandate, and we have an ambitious plan with the tax cut. I was just talking about the 15% to 14%. We have an ambitious plan, and I want to talk about three more things. We are helping Canadians with dental care. As members know, in Scarborough, in that member's riding, seniors and everyone got a good benefit. There is child care and the school food program. We have a lot of good plans—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Niagara South.

Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin to speak about the Speech from the Throne, I hope members will indulge me in a bit of reflection and a few personal comments.

First, I am honoured and humbled to be here. It is a very special privilege to be a member of the House of Commons. Indeed, I recall that even this space, when I was a young staffer here in 1979, was a courtyard. I remember having my lunch on the picnic table somewhere around here. Boy, has this place changed.

I was brought here by my predecessor in 1979, Mr. Girve Fretz, who represented the riding of Erie, now my riding of Niagara South. I was then mentored by a member of Parliament from Prince

George—Bulkley Valley, Lorne McCuish. I spent many years with this gentleman, and he was indeed a huge influence on my life and one of the reasons I am here today.

Getting here was no easy task, with a campaign of hundreds of volunteers. I want to thank a few key members of my team: Marisa, who is here today, Hunter, Jason and Donna. A special thanks goes to Teresa, also a former staffer of Girve, who encouraged me over four decades in this journey.

A special thanks also goes to Chris van Kralingen at Barber Hy-mac in Port Colborne, who hosted our leader at his plant and is a strong champion of our effort in Niagara South. I appreciate his support and counsel.

I give a very special thanks to my wife, Monica, for the love and support, which carried me through a year and a half of door knocking, sometimes in pretty incredible weather, along the shores of Lake Erie. I am forever grateful for that, as well as the support from our kids and our family and friends from coast to coast.

I also want to thank my predecessor, Vance Badawey, who was a member opposite, for his 10 years of service in the old riding of Niagara Centre.

The new riding of Niagara South includes Thorold, Welland, Port Colborne and Fort Erie. It has a rich history of industrial excellence and strength, with companies that helped build Canada.

In a post-World War II Canada, Niagara was the epicentre of industrial growth and middle-class prosperity. Back then, Niagara was the new frontier, and I believe now that it is the last frontier that can lead Canada again in the years ahead, provided we are focused on key economic priorities through the strength of our residents and our workforce.

Niagara South is also a border riding. The Peace Bridge in Fort Erie sees over \$40 billion of economic activity crossing back and forth between Canada and the United States, the second-busiest border crossing in Canada.

Our beautiful Lake Erie shoreline leads us to the Welland Canal, the backbone of the Great Lakes economy. Around 80% of the St. Lawrence Seaway's economic activity passes through the Welland Canal, starting in Port Colborne and intersecting three communities in my riding. When I was growing up, I was often frustrated when the bridge was up in downtown Port Colborne. Watching one of those huge lakers slowly pass through the locks as a kid was a bit frustrating, but today I am grateful to see that site going through the middle of our downtown and the middle of the Niagara region, because it is such an economic performer and job creator in our region.

As we focus on lowering internal trade barriers, we need to understand that Canada's marine sector is the key driver of economic growth, with a strong potential to enhance internal trade, support nation-building projects and strengthen national supply chains. I know this because in my community in Niagara, we have one of Canada's key marine hubs, supported by companies such as Algoma and Allied Marine. The role of short sea shipping in the Great Lakes and our coastal regions underscores the importance of reducing regulatory barriers to fully develop our Canadian marine potential. All the leaders in my riding recognize this as well.

This may be my maiden speech, but I offered mayors in my riding an opportunity to put their views on the record today as I speak here for the first time.

Port Colborne mayor Bill Steele describes our city as a “close-knit community with a proud marine heritage celebrated through our signature Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival. As part of the new Niagara South riding, Port Colborne is poised for transformational growth.”

Thorold mayor Terry Ugolini states, “The Welland Canal Corridor mayors are committed to developing Niagara Ports into something special. On an international scale, the Thorold Multimodal Hub is an excellent example of that success.”

• (1040)

Welland mayor Frank Champion says, “Welland is a city built on resilience, diversity and opportunity, situated along the recreational Welland Canal that winds through the heart of our community. From our rich industrial heritage and ongoing industrial renaissance to a vibrant cultural scene rooted in deep history, Welland is a place where past and future come together.”

Finally, Fort Erie mayor Wayne Redekop highlights our history: “Fort Erie is the site of the first British fort built on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes, a quickly growing community with a rich history and diverse population including indigenous peoples and newcomers from around the world. Many battles of the War of 1812 were fought on the farms and fields of Niagara South. It is indeed true that Canada may not exist today had we not defended our territory in Niagara. The history is all around us. We must celebrate it and preserve it. Sir Isaac Brock, lost at the Battle of Queenston Heights, would be proud of Niagara today.”

This brings me to the Speech from the Throne. I have listened to many of my colleagues' perspectives and reflections on the lack of a real plan to build energy security, national security, sovereignty security, economic security and a safe country where our streets are secure from rampant crime and where our children can actually afford to purchase a home. The promise of Canadian citizenship should not be out of reach for an entire generation.

The Speech from the Throne, to me, should be like a blank canvas, transformed into a bold vision for Canada, but I am left feeling that the canvas remains mostly blank. There is no bold plan, just more of the same: massive increases in spending and no specifics on what that money will buy.

I have spent the better part of my life working in the innovation sector, helping and mentoring start-ups and early-stage companies.

The Address

The word “innovation” appears in the Speech from the Throne once but with no connection to the real innovation gap in Canada, which is bridging capital to Canadian entrepreneurs, the real backbone of our economy. There is nothing in the Speech from the Throne about small businesses and developing Canada's smartest minds.

The driving force of Canada's economy is our business sector. That was left off the canvas. Our venture capital ecosystem, the lifeblood of innovation, faces systemic challenges that demand urgent, evidence-based intervention.

The data before us reveals a troubling paradox: Companies have record dry financial powder, capital reserves, but this exists alongside cash-starved start-ups, funding gaps widening at critical stages and a hemorrhage of talent and intellectual property to foreign buyers.

I have seen and worked with the best and the brightest grown here in Canada, enthusiastic and brilliant young Canadians who are leaving here to go where investment capital is readily available. I have seen it first-hand, and the trends continue to go in the wrong direction. The government's response is simply to spend more money to see what will stick.

I know that, over the past 10 years, the regulatory hurdles faced by the innovation sector remained massive and restrictive. I will give a very important example. The process of SHRED reconciliation for innovation, research and development is often too much for businesses to bear because it simply takes too long. It is bogged down in paperwork and bureaucracy. We are losing companies to more hospitable jurisdictions where capital is more readily available and governments provide support, not complicated regulation.

There were programs that were highly successful that have been drastically downsized by the Liberal government. For example, the Harper government funded the creation of angel investor groups across Canada in response to the 2008 financial crisis. This was innovative and highly successful, and it brought investors across Canada together, aggregating capital to new Canadian companies. The Liberals effectively ended that support for the ecosystem. It is at the point where these groups are disappearing, just as the companies they supported are going south to where capital is more available.

The Address

We need to tap the creativity of our young entrepreneurs, help them bring good ideas to market and provide the economic platform that they need to succeed. We need to provide hope. Conservatives understand this, and we will fight to nourish the support of our entrepreneurial spirit to keep our best and brightest here in Canada. Only then will that canvas be painted with a bold plan for Canada.

• (1045)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his first speech.

One thing that comes to my mind is foreign investment. I believe the last record I saw said that in 2023 Canada had more foreign investment per capita than any of the other G7 countries. In fact, if we look at countries around the world, I believe we placed third on foreign investment. When foreigners look at Canada as a place to invest, which was clearly demonstrated in 2023, would that not counter a lot of the arguments that the member was putting forward? When he says that the Harper government had *x*, often it is replaced by something bigger and better through the years. I believe the economy and the number of jobs that have been created demonstrate that.

I am wondering if the member wants to comment on foreign investment.

Fred Davies: Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, if foreign investment is coming to this country and the companies that you are speaking about are rather large companies, I am interested in the innovation sector, the small companies that are the backbone of our Canadian economy. The government has failed miserably to provide the supports, the platform and the economic opportunities for companies and Canadians to invest their capital in these start-ups.

We are not talking about billion-dollar companies that you may be referring to as coming to Canada. I am talking about the small companies that will build entrepreneurship and innovation in Canada and create long and sustainable jobs for Canadians.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I would remind members to address their comments to the Chair.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his election.

I listened carefully to his speech, but there seemed to be one thing missing from it, and that is the issue of climate change. I was wondering if my colleague had any concerns about that.

There was also no mention of this subject in the government's throne speech, even though we know that unprecedented forest fires are currently raging in western Canada.

In that context, does my colleague not agree that we need to think about the fact that we are only adding fuel to the fire by consistently proposing oil projects that will only worsen climate change?

[*English*]

Fred Davies: Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we believe in technology, not taxes, as a way to fight climate change. I have worked with many companies in Niagara in the green tech sector that are creating new technologies rather than collecting taxes that change nothing and do not reduce CO2 emissions.

Yes, we have opportunities in this country to help grow our tech sector with these brand new companies that will change the world based on technology and not taxes.

Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell you how excited I am that the member has joined us in the House. No offence to all the lawyers in the House, but it is great to add another business person who understands what it takes to create jobs. The member for Niagara South is very humble. He has spent a long career in Niagara helping companies grow, helping people build jobs, helping create wealth for individuals and small companies.

I would like the member to comment on the industrial carbon tax. What does that do to our businesses in terms of competitiveness and how we trade around the world?

• (1050)

Fred Davies: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. I have spent a lot of time talking to companies in my riding. I made mention of Chris van Kralingen at Barber Hymac in Port Colborne. He told me during the campaign that one of the most oppressive issues that faced his company was the industrial carbon tax. He did not need that to be a barrier when he is trying to compete internationally against countries in Europe and the east that heavily subsidize their sector.

If we are going to tax our companies to death, we will never be able to compete on an international scale. I hope the government will finally decide to axe the tax.

Mike Dawson (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in this House today to give my first speech since being elected back home in Miramichi—Grand Lake.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your election to office and offer you my promise to assist in maintaining decorum and order in this House.

It is both humbling and an honour to sit in the chamber as a member of Parliament. While I am both proud and overwhelmed at the responsibility of this job, I take comfort in the fact that we would have no authority in this House whatsoever unless it had been given to us from above.

As this is my maiden speech in the House, I respectfully ask for the opportunity to explain my purpose for being here. My grandfather, Pat, used to joke that politics was just a chance to wear out a good suit and hang around a lower class of people. Today, I think a great many Canadians share his cynicism of politics in our country. For my part, while my grandfather is no longer with us, I remind myself daily of the need to restore public confidence in the elected offices in our country.

I am not a career politician; I am a tradesman and a contractor. My father, Mike Sr., died unexpectedly of cancer when I was in high school in 1992. I dropped out of high school and went to work, eventually building my own business in drywall and construction. I let my name stand for public office because I wanted to give back to the community and region that gave so much to me. I made only two promises to get here: that I would always be honest with my constituents and that I would always work hard on their behalf.

Let me further say, for the record, that I will always be accountable to my constituents. I will always put the needs of my constituents ahead of my own and make best efforts to meet with them whenever they need it. I will vote with my conscience on questions of ethics. I know that at the end of the day, I only sit in this House, which is impressive and inspiring, by the will of the people and the hard work of those who supported me to get here.

There are many individuals who deserve my thanks for helping me get here, too many to name, but I will mention just a few. To my wife Kathy, my children Mikey and Dylan, and our granddaughter Carter, without their love and encouragement, none of this would be possible.

Frank Trevors, my campaign manager, took on an incredible challenge and saw it through to the end. Mark Donnelly is my official agent and great friend since we were kids. Tilly O'Neill Gordon, our former and much-loved member of Parliament, is a kind and sincere woman who laid the groundwork for my opportunity to sit in this chamber. Jimmy Whalen was by my side, door to door, and knows almost everyone everywhere in my riding. Andrew Dawson was a key part of my success in Fredericton and will continue to do so in Ottawa. MLAs Michelle Conroy, Kathy Bockus, Richard Ames, Daniel Allain and former New Brunswick premier Blaine Higgs, who were all my colleagues the past three and a half years in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, contributed to my success then and now as well. To all my volunteers, and the list is growing very long, their long hours and dedication were instrumental in my success.

Please let me spend a moment explaining where my riding is and how it is a part of our great nation. Geographically, my riding begins in central New Brunswick, where the headwaters of the Miramichi River form, and it follows those waters through the communities of Boiestown, Doaktown, Blackville, Renous, Sunny Corner and Barnaby River.

My constituency contains the entire city of Miramichi, formerly Newcastle and Chatham. It continues on to Neguac, Baie-Sainte-Anne, Tabusintac, Rogersville, Richibucto and all points in between. It also includes the municipalities and communities that sur-

round Grand Lake, the communities formerly known as Chipman and Minto, as well as Sheffield, Noonan and Maugerville.

There are also several first nation communities in our beautiful riding: Elsipogtog, Esgenoôpetitj, Metepenagiag and Natoaganeg, which I will have open dialogue with, and I will work on their behalf for their interests as well.

Miramichi has a long history of contribution to our great nation, by way of both our natural resources and our people. The timber from our forests and the ore from our mines have contributed to our proud national history. Lord Beaverbrook, who served as a member of Parliament in England during the Second World War and as a part of Winston Churchill's war cabinet, was born and raised in our woods and along our shores. Former prime minister R.B. Bennett lived and worked in Miramichi. Former New Brunswick premier Frank McKenna, whom I recognize, despite the best efforts of the hon. member for Beauséjour, as the greatest living New Brunswicker, is also an honorary Miramichier.

● (1055)

As we have just finished an election campaign, and I have canvassed all the communities and regions that I have mentioned, please allow me to inform this House of the priorities of my constituents, which makes them my priorities.

Of course, the economy, inflation and the cost of living are very front of mind in my constituency. Over the last decade, life has become unaffordable for the people of Miramichi—Grand Lake. It is hard to understand how the government proposed a spending bill of half a trillion dollars, which does nothing to help this very worrisome situation. The money the government proposes to spend is money it does not yet have and must steal from individuals and businesses by way of future taxes. It is troublesome, to say the least.

This kind of reckless spending in Ottawa with numbers too large to comprehend takes hundred-dollar bills out of the pockets of the working poor and single mothers, and also from those on social assistance and retirees. It is becoming nearly impossible to find someone in these communities who is flourishing and living our great Canadian dream, if in fact the great Canadian dream still exists.

I am surprised that the Prime Minister, during his time in England, never picked up on the lessons in economics from Margaret Thatcher: that the problem with spending other people's money is that eventually we run out of it. We are there now. Because of this, let me state in my very first speech in the House that I am a small-government, low-tax, "keep government out of our business", free-speech, God-fearing Pierre Poilievre Conservative.

The Address

While the government proposes to spend recklessly, my constituents in Miramichi—Grand Lake are very concerned about job security as it relates to employment at the federal payroll centre in Miramichi. During the recent campaign, PSAC, the union representing the workers at the Miramichi payroll centre, accused me and the Conservatives of planning to cut positions at the payroll centre, when it was the Liberals all along who planned to do so. For as long as I am a member of Parliament, I will fight for the workers at the Miramichi payroll centre.

I will also fight for the federal government to address the very real concerns of our inshore fishers in New Brunswick. For many years now, the federal government has mismanaged the fishery and allowed tensions between native and non-native fishers to escalate on our waters. These issues must be addressed in real time if we are to create a safe, level playing field for all in this vital industry. For as long as I am a member of Parliament, I will fight and advocate for our small craft harbours and inshore fishers.

The community wharves in Tabusintac and Bay du Vin are unsafe and in desperate need of attention from the federal government, whose responsibility they are. The member for Beauséjour injected millions into the wharves in Shediac and Pointe-Sapin, which were in his constituency. I hope I can get these wharves on his radar, as I know he has sincere respect and concern for our fishermen in New Brunswick, and they quite rightly respect him as well. I will advocate for much-needed improvements to the wharves in Tabusintac and Bay du Vin.

Lastly, while on the topic of fisheries, no speech from Miramichi would be complete without mention of the Atlantic salmon. The Atlantic salmon have been in decline for two decades now. My constituents have been joking that with the job the government has done managing the Atlantic salmon population, perhaps the Liberal government could take over the responsibility for the black flies, in hopes that it could mimic these results with that most troublesome population. I will fight and advocate for the Atlantic salmon.

This brings me to the end of my allotted time. I look forward to representing my constituents and contributing to the debate in this most esteemed chamber.

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we were knocking on doors, each and every resident was asking about affordability, affordable housing and the tax cut. I will request that my colleague support our Prime Minister's program for the tax cut.

• (1100)

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, the tax cut that the Liberals are proposing does very little for my constituents in Miramichi—Grand Lake. If the Liberals wanted to make a difference, they would cut the carbon tax completely: not just the consumer carbon tax, but the industrial carbon tax. Axe the tax completely.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about my colleague's last statement that any measure limiting greenhouse gas emissions should be axed completely. On the contrary, I think it is important to have incentives to limit emissions. However, I will move on to another topic since I already asked his colleague that question and I expect he would give me the same answer.

In his speech, the member talked about how important infrastructure is to him. I believe I heard him mention a wharf in his riding that needs investment. There is a wharf in my riding that needs investment too. The federal government has been neglecting the Verchères wharf for about 20 years now. It is a real disgrace. It is an eyesore right in the middle of our village. Unfortunately, it is all too common for the federal government to give up on its infrastructure.

What does my colleague think of that?

[English]

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, on the question of emissions, I believe we have to work to fight emissions as well, but we also have to fight for the everyday living of Canadians. If Canadians cannot afford to live, there is no sense in worrying about emissions. The cost of living is going to be too high for people to live in Canada.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake on his election.

I share the concerns the member has about the fate of Atlantic salmon, as well as that of Pacific salmon. As he will know, and in Miramichi everyone knows, by the way, that I am actually bi-coastal. I am from Cape Breton Island and Vancouver Island. I grew up on Cape Breton Island. The Miramichi is famous, as is the Margaree River, which is my home.

Saving both of these salmon populations is going to be a struggle. I look forward to working with the hon. member. If he is prepared to fight for wild Atlantic salmon, I am prepared to fight for wild Pacific salmon.

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague on the other side. We need both Pacific salmon and Atlantic salmon to thrive. It is a major industry, and 25 years ago, it was a \$40-million industry in Miramichi—Grand Lake. We need to get back to the table to work with the government, as the opposition, to make sure that we keep our industries alive and well.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I send my congratulations to you on your election and your appointment.

I have a question for the member with respect to the budget. The fact is that the Liberal government has not brought forward a budget, and it does not seem to be serious about it. How does he think that bodes for the future of Canada and getting expenditures under control?

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the government expects to do this. If one runs a household, they do not just fill up their credit cards, empty their bank accounts, and then try to do a budget after the fact to find out how much money they have left. That is not the way people spend their paycheques. That is not the way they run their households. We should not be running the country that way either.

The Address

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Hamilton Centre asked a question about the tax break. The member opposite indicated that he does not like the tax break. Is it the Conservative Party's official position that its members are going to be voting against the tax break for Canadians? We were very surprised in 2016, when they voted against the tax break for Canadians. Is it the position of the Conservative Party to vote against the tax break?

Mike Dawson: Mr. Speaker, I never said that we did not like the tax break. I said that it did very little for the constituents of Miramichi—Grand Lake.

What I am saying is this: If the government wants to take care of the people of Canada, it should cut the carbon tax completely.

• (1105)

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment. I want to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Hull—Aylmer. I also want to congratulate all members of the House on winning their seats.

I am here today to support the Speech from the Throne. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Beauport—Limoilou for doing me the honour of choosing me as their member of Parliament. I will do everything in my power to live up to their trust.

Next, I want to thank all the volunteers who believed in me and in my election campaign. We certainly did not have a head start, but we took the time to talk to the people. I want to thank Jacques and Louis-Philippe.

I want to thank my family and especially my parents, Huguette and Paul-Émile, who instilled their values in me and made me the man that I am. I also wish to thank Mélanie, my partner in life, for her support. It is thanks to her that I am able to undertake this extraordinary commitment and embark on this amazing adventure.

I also want to acknowledge the people for whom I am here today: my four children, Christopher, Léa, Tristan-Olivier and Emma-Rose, and my two grandchildren, Jayden and Mason. The reason I ran for Parliament was to work to build a more prosperous Canada for them. I love them all very much.

I am the youngest of seven children raised on a dairy farm in a small village called Notre-Dame-du-Lac in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. I spent my childhood working on the farm, helping my father and siblings with the milking. Later, as a teenager, I followed my brothers into the bush, to work as a lumberjack until I was 25 years old.

At the age of 20, I became a father for the first time. I was plunged into a life full of challenges that I was not yet ready to face. At the banks, where I worked for two decades, I was lucky enough to be in a position to help people. I could help families, like my parents' family, become homeowners. Later, I had the opportunity to help entrepreneurs fulfill their dreams and create prosperity in our community. I fully understand the impact that uncertain times like these can have on the people in our communities.

I helped families who could no longer afford their mortgages. I helped business owners who felt they were at the end of their rope and were just days away from filing for bankruptcy. I took the helm of Quebec City's chamber of commerce and industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many business owners in the region did not know what lay ahead for their businesses. I know the value of things. That is why I was so deeply moved by the throne speech.

For me, the most important words in that speech were these: "the economy is only truly strong when it serves everyone". In short, if we want to create economic value in a lasting way, we must do so in a way that respects our deeply held values. We also need to make sure no one is left behind. In short, this throne speech, which I have read, is a government road map that aligns perfectly with my personal values and with my ambitions for the Quebec City region.

We need to invest, not just spend. The throne speech we heard last week gives me confidence that the Quebec City region will not only make it through this period of uncertainty, but will emerge stronger than ever.

The government will quickly address an issue that is a huge problem in Beauport—Limoilou: the housing crisis. The plan is simple yet highly ambitious. The government is going to launch a massive homebuilding project in order to lower prices. The vast majority of first-time homebuyers will also save up to \$50,000 in GST on homes at or under \$1 million. That will help young people get onto the property ladder.

Earlier, I quoted this phrase from the throne speech: "the economy is only truly strong when it serves everyone". That is why I am proud of the concrete measures our government has announced to directly improve people's lives. I am thinking in particular of the tax cut, which will put money directly into the pockets of the middle class. It will allow a couple to save over \$800 and will benefit more than 22 million Canadian citizens. That is not to mention the popular existing programs that will be maintained and enhanced, such as child care, pharmacare and, of course, dental care.

• (1110)

With respect to economic development, the Quebec City region has been at the heart of the government's strategy for years. Thanks in particular to the work of my colleagues from Québec Centre and Louis-Hébert, the Davie shipyard's future is secure. The Quebec bridge, a critical link and vital artery for Quebec City, is now owned by a government that sees its restoration as a priority. The government is also a key financial partner in Quebec City's strategic public transit project.

The work will continue. The throne speech signals a new era of growth for Canadians. In my discussions with the people of Beauport—Limoilou, one thing that often came up was the idea that economic development projects should not be pitted against each other. It is not either-or. We can build by saying "and" instead.

The Address

The same is true for the environment. The greatest challenge of our generation is to build a sustainable economy, an economy that respects our planet. Some would have us believe that we must choose between economic development and environmental protection. We can do both. There is no point in dividing people. We should work together to build for the long term.

I strongly believe that the Quebec City region has a major role to play in Canada's future. For millennia, my region has been a dynamic and essential trade hub. Quebec has always been and will always be the gateway to America. Having come to realize that our U.S.-centric supply chains are less secure than we thought, we are going to diversify our economy. Canada will increasingly look to Europe for its supply chains. My region was a builder yesterday and continues to be a builder today. It has always been a driver of prosperity for this country in the past, and that will not change.

In Mandarin, the word “crisis” consists of two ideograms. The first one means “danger”. We have certainly felt that over the past few months with our neighbour to the south. The second is “opportunity”. We are entering a period of opportunity. We have the opportunity to remove barriers to internal trade and labour mobility, which cost Canada as much as \$200 billion each year, and the opportunity to create a major energy corridor and become an energy superpower. Let us seize every opportunity to make our country a G7 economic leader. The people in my riding of Beauport—Limoilou are proud of this and intend to work on helping our country flourish and building a strong and united Canada.

In closing, I am proud of my professional career, proud of the values that make me who I am today, proud of our government's ambitious vision for its citizens and proud to be here with all of my colleagues to build the strong and united Canada of tomorrow. The true north is indeed strong and free.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment to the position of Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. I have had the pleasure of knowing you for almost 10 years, and I know you will do a great job.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague from the Quebec City region on his election and on the quality of his speech. Obviously, I agree with him that we are here for our children. I have always said that we are in politics because of our parents. We inherit what our parents gave us. We are here to leave Canada in a better place for our children, our grandchildren, which I am blessed to have, and our great-grandchildren to come.

The member was elected in the Quebec City region as someone with a background in the chamber of commerce, as a businessman and as someone who knows how to count. Could the member explain why his government refuses to table a budget?

Let me be clear. On February 4, the former minister of finance said he was preparing a budget. The current Prime Minister and the current Minister of Finance have been in office since mid-March. During the election campaign, the Minister of Finance suspended his campaign—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I must give the member a bit of time to answer.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou has the floor.

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, our current leader has a background in economics, and he is preparing a responsible budget for the fall.

It is current practice to take the time to listen to everyone and then to table a budget a few months later. Yesterday, he was with the premiers, hearing what they had to say prior to tabling a budget and learning about their needs in terms of creating an energy corridor. To make the right decisions, informed decisions for the future of our country, it is responsible and wise to wait for the fall before tabling a budget.

• (1115)

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on being elected in the riding of Beauport—Limoilou. I knew his predecessor, Julie Vignola, who was an excellent MP from 2019 to 2025. She worked hard on the issues and was very interested in the Quebec City region. I think that my Liberal colleague will have some big shoes to fill in the coming years.

How does he intend to continue the work that his predecessor, Julie Vignola, did for the Quebec City region?

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, Julie Vignola did indeed do exemplary work in the riding. We will continue that work.

There are currently 369 social housing units under construction in my riding. We will make sure that they are completed. We are working on reducing the cost of living, which was one of the most important issues raised when I went door to door. With the tax cut and the dental care plan, we are moving in the right direction. The government's ambitious plan to accelerate construction in order to reduce the cost of housing will help us get there.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is such a pleasure and honour to greet my colleague, and now my neighbour, the member for Beauport—Limoilou, for the first time.

He touched on the importance of building social and affordable housing in his riding. How does he see the future in his riding? He mentioned 369 social housing units. Is he happy with the Government of Canada's contribution to the construction of these units?

Steeve Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is important, because there are two subjects that came up over and over when I went door to door during the election campaign: the cost of living and housing.

The measures that have been taken are just the beginning. We need to move forward. The current government is working fast to implement measures and actions, and we need to continue in that vein.

This is a simple yet extremely ambitious plan that will lower the cost of housing and improve access for our families.

The Address

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment to the position of Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. I know you have been interested in the position for a long time, so it is nice to see you in the chair.

Before I begin, I would like to point out that we are gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people, who have lived here since time immemorial, to share, discuss and do all sorts of things. We are very grateful to be here.

This is my first real speech in the 45th Parliament as the member for Hull—Aylmer. I sincerely thank the people of Hull—Aylmer for once again placing their trust in me to represent them in the House of Commons. As we all know, elections are an essential part of democracy. In addition to thanking my constituents, I would like to salute the courage of all the people who ran for office in this election.

Many members here in the House already have considerable experience. Running for federal office is quite a challenge. The election campaign in Hull—Aylmer could serve as a model for the entire country. I say this because all but one of the candidates took part in debates organized by community groups. Each of these candidates did their political party proud. Yes, they were keen, and yes, they were passionate, but they were always polite. That is how we do things in Hull—Aylmer. Former Ontario premier Bill Davis often referred to Brampton, the city he represented, as a model to follow. Well, I can say that, at the federal level, Hull—Aylmer is the model riding for Canada. People there are informed and are not particularly partisan. They listen to all candidates and are demanding yet very generous.

The profile of the riding of Hull—Aylmer has changed considerably over time. We are very proud of our Outaouais, Quebec and Canadian roots. Hull—Aylmer has also seen an increase in its population of new Quebecers and Canadians. That is exceptional. Many of my colleagues, especially my colleagues from Quebec, live in my riding. I am convinced that many of them will recognize Hull—Aylmer as a true international crossroads, where people from around the world live in harmony.

It is well known that Gatineau is the fourth-largest city in Quebec. It is not so well known that Gatineau is the second most popular city in Quebec for newcomers. It is true that many newcomers start out in the big city of Montreal, but 18 months later, only two-thirds of them are still living there. It is remarkable that 98% of newcomers are still living in the Outaouais 18 months after their arrival. In my opinion, that speaks to the values of generosity, openness and hospitality that define my beautiful riding, just on the other side of the river.

Before I begin my reply to the throne speech, I first want to thank a few key individuals. I am thinking of my team of volunteers. No one runs a campaign alone, particularly one that ends in victory. Hundreds of volunteers took part, and I am truly grateful to all those who contributed to my campaign.

• (1120)

No politician stands alone. I owe everything to my children and my spouse, to whom I have been married for almost 34 happy

years. I thank her and I thank my two grandchildren. I am truly fortunate to have two grandchildren. Members of the House who are grandparents know what I am talking about: Grandchildren change everything. Yes, we want our children to succeed, but having grandchildren completely changes a person's perspective. We begin to think about the next century and future generations. If I am a passionate politician, it is because I want to make sure that we leave a better world and a better Canada to our grandchildren and future generations. I think we can do it.

All this brings me to the throne speech. I am extremely pleased with many aspects of it. One I would like to mention is the idea of building new relationships with the United States and the rest of the world. That really struck me. Yes, it is easy to trade with our American friends, but I finally heard a government say that it will focus on opening new markets.

Here is why that speaks to me. When I look at the diasporas in Hull—Aylmer, I see opportunities and the ability to create prosperity elsewhere. Many members of the diasporic communities are from Africa, and we know that, by 2050, Africans will make up half of the world's population. Africa will represent a large part of international trade and global prosperity. Canada has a golden opportunity to take advantage of our connections, of all of these wonderful people with African roots. They can help us to significantly increase trade between our countries.

There are other things in the throne speech that I think are very important for the Outaouais and for building a stronger Canada, in particular, free trade among the provinces and territories. I represent a border community, and I can say that it is extremely important for our businesses to finally be able to sell their products and services across the river. In the Outaouais, we are very proud of our businesses, and we have exceptional products. However, because of the trade barriers between Quebec and Ontario, we were unable to benefit. Now we can. As member for the region, I am looking forward to working very hard with entrepreneurs and business owners to take advantage of this opportunity.

Let us talk about the goal of building a united and more affordable Canada. A few years ago, a doctor in my riding told me about the importance of oral health and dental care for seniors. With the Canadian dental care plan, which is now in place, we are able to take care of seniors' health, which is very important.

I have so many things to say, but I do not have much time left. To summarize, suffice it to say that we have a golden opportunity to work together, hand in hand. Yes, we will have our political differences, but together we can make things happen. I hope that, in this 45th Parliament, all members will be willing to work together for the well-being of Quebecers and Canadians.

The Address

• (1125)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Hull—Aylmer, who is my MP when I am here. I am not going to say that he's my MP half the time, because I do spend a lot of time here in Ottawa, but it is much the same. In fact, I would like to thank the member for Hull—Aylmer, because he once gave me good advice when I needed professional services in Hull.

I also liked some aspects of the Speech from the Throne, such as where it says, "one project, one review". That is exactly what I said when I introduced Bill C-375 on February 12 of last year, but my colleague's caucus voted against it. The Liberals have finally changed their minds, which is a good thing.

However, there is something missing from the throne speech. There has to be a budget this spring. The House made that clear yesterday, when it decided that we need a spring budget. The government has been in power for over 10 years, the Prime Minister has been in office for two and a half months, and the Minister of Finance said on February 4 that the government was preparing a budget. Why will the government not table a budget immediately? Canadians need it.

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I have long admired my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, but, as he well knows because he lives in Hull—Aylmer and is therefore a very reasonable man, preparing a budget takes a lot of time and consultations, and there are many things to consider.

I am confident that this government will table a budget as soon as possible, probably early in the fall. I look forward to participating in the discussions on that budget, because I think it will send a strong signal about all of the government's priorities.

• (1130)

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, my colleague talked about democratic values, which we share. So much the better if the election went well in his riding of Hull—Aylmer. However, that was not the case everywhere. I am thinking of Nunavik, where not all citizens were able to be heard. There were irregularities, particularly with regard to polling station hours, which were not the same everywhere. I am also thinking of Terrebonne, where ballots were accepted with only the first name of the Liberal candidate, whereas normally the rules are clear: The candidate's first and last names are required. In short, there seem to have been irregularities in some places. This is a fundamental democratic issue.

Does my colleague not agree that everyone in Nunavik should be able to exercise their right to vote? In the case of Terrebonne, does he acknowledge that there were certain irregularities during the most recent election?

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Shefford on her re-election. It has been a pleasure working with her for three terms now.

I have complete confidence in the work of Elections Canada. In a previous life, I was the national director of the Liberal Party. I worked very closely with Elections Canada. I have full confidence in their system.

With regard to ballots that include only a first name, the law and Elections Canada regulations are very clear. In a judicial recount such as this, the important thing is that the judge is satisfied that the voter expressed a preference on their ballot. If it can be deciphered, the ballot will count.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work with and learn from my colleague from Hull—Aylmer. He is always eloquent and thoughtful. I am therefore very pleased to be part of the same team as he is and to work alongside him. I would like him to share his perspective on our ambitious plan to make life more affordable. What impact is that having on his riding?

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche. I was totally impressed yesterday when he asked his question with passion and clarity. I congratulate him on his election to the House of Commons.

The dental care plan is very important for affordability. Helping first-time homebuyers is very important. Outside Quebec, it is the national child care program that is very important. In Quebec, we are used to it since we have had it for a generation, and I am pleased that the federal government is following suit.

Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the wonderful member for Winnipeg Centre.

Since this is my first speech, I obviously want to begin by thanking the people of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for once again placing their trust in me as I begin my fifth term as an NDP member here in the House of Commons. Once again, I will do whatever it takes to represent and honour them. I want to be able to defend their interests and priorities. I also want to thank my entire election team. I am thinking of all the people who helped ensure that there were telephone operators, that there were volunteers on the ground, that calls were made and that people went door to door. I want to sincerely thank everyone who made this new victory possible.

Like many others here, I would also like to thank my family, especially my partner, Lisa Djevarhirdjian, with whom I have been sharing my life for a little over 15 years now. She is always by my side, always solidly supporting me in my political action. I thank Lisa very much. I give a shout-out to our youngest, Sevan, who was 10 months old when I was first sent to the House. This month, he will be 15 years old. For the first time in his life, he seemed to understand what was going on during an election campaign. It was very funny, because he was extremely afraid that I would lose. He put a lot of pressure on me to go to work. When he saw me at home in the late afternoon, when he came back from school, he would send me outside, telling me to knock on doors and make calls; there was no way I was going to lose, I had to win this election. I thank Sevan for that motivation.

I would like to come back to the Speech from the Throne. I will say that I found it rather peculiar that the monarch of another country was brought in to send a message to President Trump about Canada's sovereignty. The monarchy itself is a matter that could be discussed. As members of the New Democratic Party, we are committed to democratic values. Since the monarchy is not a democratic institution, I do not believe that it is all that legitimate.

What is in the throne speech itself? It has some good things in it, but it is missing a few things. The good things are nice because they highlight NDP achievements in the last Parliament. As progressives, we have worked to improve people's lives. I would like to remind members that, had the NDP not forced the Liberal government to move forward with the dental care program, it would never have materialized. Every other time the NDP proposed a dental care program for the middle class and the less fortunate, the Liberals voted against it. This time, the NDP forced the Liberals to do it because they needed support in the House. That was useful. Now the Liberals are bragging about it. They think it was a good idea, but the truth is, the program exists because of the NDP's work. Folks in Montreal and Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie talked to me about it during the election campaign. Some told me that they had not been to the dentist for 10 or 12 years and that, thanks to my work, thanks to the work we did in Parliament, they can now go to the dentist and it is paid for. People are saving a substantial amount of money. One woman told me that, when she went to the dentist, her bill was \$1,150 and she paid only \$57 out of pocket. We helped her save over \$1,000. That is a pretty big deal. I think this is one of the NDP's most significant achievements, and it has already helped more than 530,000 Quebecers. Thanks to us, people have had all or part of their dental work paid for. I think that is a wonderful legacy. We will keep fighting to ensure that people have access to more health care services. Incidentally, health care was barely mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. That is one of the big things they left out.

The throne speech included another of the NDP's achievements. Obviously, I am referring to the progress in terms of the universal public pharmacare program. That is near to our heart. It is also near to the heart of Quebec's civil society, particularly Quebec's union movement. The FTQ, CSN and CSQ have been demanding change for years, since Quebec's current public-private hybrid system has been unable to stabilize prescription drug prices. Prescription drug prices in Canada are among the highest in the world. It is always better to have a hybrid system than no system at all. Some people in English Canada have to go without their medications because they cannot pay for them, so they become even sicker, end up in the hospital, and fill up the emergency rooms. That is not good for anyone.

• (1135)

Canada is the only country that has a universal public health care but no universal public pharmacare. It is as if we had only one leg to stand on and were unable to walk. The NDP will continue to pressure the government to implement a universal public pharmacare program. The Union des consommateurs du Québec is demanding the same, because it understands how important it is for people's lives, for providing care and avoiding illness.

We have made progress with contraceptives and the price of diabetes medications. There are already agreements with the govern-

ments of British Columbia and Manitoba. I think there is also a letter of agreement with Prince Edward Island. We hope that Quebec will join in, because it would be a shame for Quebecers not to have access to medications paid for by the federal government after negotiations with Quebec. I am thinking, for example, about people with diabetes.

That is something that should be implemented everywhere, but it must be negotiated between the Government of Canada and the provincial governments, who manage their own pharmacare programs. Prescription drugs are too expensive, and every study, in particular the Hoskins report, has shown that a universal public pharmacare program is the best way of controlling prescription drug prices.

We will now go over what was not mentioned in the throne speech.

Though it talks about the housing crisis, it never says a word about non-profit housing, also called non-market housing. That is the one solution that will give people access to truly affordable housing. We have to be careful when we use the word "affordable". What exactly does it mean? In recent years, we have seen that some definitions of "affordable", like the one used by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, do not match up with what is truly affordable in the real world.

The people we meet on the street and on the ground tell us that they love Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie and want to stay in the borough, but they cannot afford housing there anymore. That is why we need to build social housing, co-operative housing, community housing and student housing. If we keep on building nothing but condos at \$2 million each, we will never get there. That is not the way to solve the housing crisis.

We have to move away from a purely commercial mindset. Yes, housing can be a profit-generating investment or even a nest egg. That makes sense. However, it is not right that 97% of the housing stock is used in that way. The proportion of non-market, non-profit housing has to be increased. There are community groups willing to make that happen. The government needs to facilitate stable, long-term funding. That is crucial for having housing prices that are based on a family's ability to pay rather than the mindset of an investor who wants to make a profit and maximize their returns.

Three or four per cent of our housing stock is non-market or non-profit. In Scandinavian countries in Europe, that proportion is 10%, 15%, or 20%. We will never reach 50%, but if the government increases the proportion of non-market or non-profit housing, that will also help the market's private sector. It will help stabilize prices, and it will prevent real estate speculation and stop the sector from heating up, two things that make it impossible for people to afford a house, an apartment or rent. That solution is not in the Speech from the Throne.

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There is also nothing about workers. The Liberals have been telling us for 10 years that employment insurance needs major reform, but there is no mention of EI in the throne speech. There is talk of a tariff war and perhaps a looming recession, but, once again, the majority of workers who lose their jobs do not have access to EI. It is ludicrous. This issue needs to be addressed, but there was nothing about it in the throne speech. As New Democrats, we will continue to fight for real EI reform.

We will also support the implementation of promising and meaningful projects. For example, there was no mention in the throne speech of high-speed rail, even though it had been announced. It is a truly exciting project that meets the needs of Canadians. We have long been saying that Canada should have high-speed rail. We are talking about projects of national interest or national scope. Why, then, is this public transit project, high-speed rail, not in the throne speech? There are also other projects that could be implemented but that do not meet our commitments in terms of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

Thus, I have mixed feelings about this throne speech, which highlights some of the good things the NDP has done but fails to address a number of issues, especially for workers.

• (1140)

Bienvenu-Olivier Ntumba (Mont-Saint-Bruno—L'Acadie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate my colleague on his re-election and on the kind words he had for his family.

We just want to know why his party did not support our efforts to abolish the tax.

Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and congratulate him on his election. Are we talking about the carbon tax? I just want to be sure. The NDP supported the carbon tax for years because it was the only measure the Liberal government brought forward. We have always said that a carbon exchange would be the best solution. However, with no other possible solutions, yes, we did support the consumer carbon tax a few times.

During the election campaign, we advocated for ambitious and strong measures to reduce our carbon footprint. This would include a substantial increase in the industrial carbon tax, which targets major polluters. We also need a real emissions cap for the oil and gas sector, which the Liberal government unfortunately still has not introduced.

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to congratulate my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie on his election. It is only polite.

Ideologically, we are worlds apart. My colleague just proved that by talking about capping production. However, there are some things we can agree on. For example, yesterday, he voted with us in favour of the motion calling on the government to table a budget.

Could he explain to us why this government is refusing to table a budget, when it has been over a year since a budget was tabled in Canada?

• (1145)

Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, and I too congratulate him on his re-election. I cannot explain why the Liberal government refuses to table a budget. It is not my decision. We voted in favour of the amendment put forward by the official opposition. To us, this is a matter of transparency, a matter of honesty.

We know that the Department of Finance was working on a budget in the spring, before the election. The then minister of finance told us that he was working on it. I should imagine that all that work did not disappear or fly away, that the papers did not blow away through an open window.

Fall is a little late to find out where we are headed. There are important decisions to be made for the Canadian economy, for taxation and for social justice in our country. If the Liberals really are rigorous and transparent, they will table a budget.

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie on his re-election. During his speech, I heard him underline something that I myself have raised several times today regarding the Speech from the Throne, and that is the absence of any serious commitment from this government regarding climate change. It is very disappointing. I would go so far as to say it is worrisome. I am pleased to see that I am not alone in thinking that. I would add that the current Liberal government also seems to be essentially copying the Conservative agenda in its ideas and policies. The Liberals are taking a hard right turn these days. This may also be worrisome, especially for a party like the NDP.

Seeing as this Parliament is made up of a very large majority of Conservatives and Liberals who are in perfect agreement about giving up on fighting climate change and shifting this country to the right, does my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie still love Canada as much? Does he not think this country needs to go back to the social-democratic values advocated by progressive parties like the Bloc Québécois?

Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his trick question. I can say that I love the people of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, and I can assure my colleague that I will be here as a left-leaning politician to defend socialist values, fairness, social justice and equality.

The people of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, Montreal and Quebec will always be able to count on me and my NDP colleagues to defend workers and to make the world a better place, where everyone belongs and where everyone is able to have a good job and a good retirement with rights. We will do that together, regardless of how many Liberals or Conservatives there are here in the House. We are here to fight, we are here for the people, and we will continue to do the work.

[English]

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member from my caucus on his re-election. How does he feel about the Liberal government's trying to fast-track energy projects without proper environmental assessments?

[Translation]

Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I share the member for Winnipeg Centre's concern. It seems as though the Liberal government is willing to cut corners on energy projects without respecting the rights of first nations, without respecting science and without respecting a real public consultation process. We will be keeping a close eye on that.

[English]

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my maiden speech by thanking my family, my wonderful team in Winnipeg Centre, my campaign team and, of course, the wonderful constituents of Winnipeg Centre, who have blessed me with the honour of serving them in the House.

Today I am here to make some remarks about the throne speech, a throne speech that builds the economy on the backs of people while lining the pockets of corporations, lining the pockets of developers, and cutting departments and services for communities most in need. We know that the Liberals are close allies with big corporations, and we are seeing that in real time. They plan to cut public spending: day-to-day government spending and the government's operating budget. Yes, it has been growing by 9% every year, and I know that the government is planning to introduce measures to bring it below 2%.

I am not saying that we do not need to cut government waste, particularly the amount of waste by the Liberals' high-paid consultant class, so if those are the cuts the current Prime Minister is talking about, I am 100% in favour. However, who is going to fall victim to the cuts, especially because Canada has made a promise to increase military spending to 2%? Where is that money going to come from?

Certainly the Prime Minister has not indicated that the money is going to come from taxing big corporations or putting in place an excess profits tax to make up for the economic deficit. Therefore my question becomes this: Where is he going to cut? The Prime Minister, in fact up until yesterday, after he was forced through a motion, refused to provide a budget prior to rising in the spring.

That has forced some of us, including me, to make sense of it just based on observation, and this is what I have observed: Youth, seniors, women and gender equality, labour, mental health and addictions, disability, and diversity and equity are positions all cut from the Prime Minister's cabinet. There is only a Secretary of State for Seniors, and not one minister, to represent a large aging population. It is only a secretary of state, who is not privy to sitting at the cabinet table, and we know that the economic gap for seniors is in fact widening.

This is particularly true for members of the disability community, a ministry that the government has cut, where it has failed. Time and time again, the Liberal government has failed to provide a benefit that would allow the disability community to live in dignity. Let

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us not forget the Prime Minister's initial cutting of the minister of women and gender equality position in the middle of a crisis of gender-based violence that some cities have called an epidemic. Only after over 400 women's organizations came forward with complaints did the Prime Minister choose to reinstate the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, which she has the onus to share as the Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism.

It is not a priority for the current government, when gender equality is under attack.

● (1150)

Let us not forget the fact that the Prime Minister cut the minister of labour position at a time when things are becoming harder and harder for workers, including workers at Canada Post. I was very honoured to attend their rally on Saturday to fight and to put pressure on the government to hold up, lift up, their rights as workers and lift up their rights of unions. Let us hope the Liberal government is not again trying to push in backdoor, back-to-work legislation, taking away the right to strike. Collective bargaining and the rights of unions and union workers are clearly not a priority for the government.

The only thing the government has in fact been clear on is nation-building projects that will be built on the back, and off the lands, territories and resources, of indigenous people. It is looking at quickening the process, looking at getting rid of environmental assessments. The Prime Minister has stated that he will uphold Canada's world-leading environmental standards and constitutional obligations; he has said that even though he plans to fast-track and get rid of environmental assessments at a time when places in Manitoba and places in Saskatchewan are burning to the ground. Places in B.C., like Lytton, were burned to the ground.

Even though he mentions consultations with indigenous peoples, the Prime Minister gives no details on how the government will do those. With the experiences we know, as first nations, with the government, we know this is another empty gesture from the Liberals. In fact, FSIN chief, Bobby Cameron, said, "The Prime Minister and Premiers [at the latest meetings] will be making decisions about our traditional territory without our voices at the table despite the fact Saskatchewan is First Nation ancestral and traditional lands. This continues the colonial pattern of excluding First Nations from decisions that directly affect our people and our lands."

AFN chief, Cindy Woodhouse, said, in regard to the fast-tracking of national projects, that it "suggests a serious threat to First Nations exercise of Treaty rights, inherent rights, title and jurisdiction." She said, "'free, prior and informed consent' must be obtained before any major infrastructure and energy projects move ahead."

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Let us not forget that in the province of Quebec with the James Bay Cree, the federal government is also bound to uphold treaties that have been made, agreements that have been made, with the James Bay Cree to uphold their rights to proper consultation.

The Prime Minister is fast-tracking projects, with no environmental plan, leaving people who were already falling between the cracks without a voice in his government. I am glad we were able to push the government to put forward at least a budget, because I am ready, along with my NDP colleagues, to hold the government to account on its failure to women and gender-diverse people, workers, labour, seniors, the disability community, and diversity and equity initiatives that are part of the Canadian identity.

• (1155)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think one of the reasons the NDP is falling out of favour with Canadians on a national basis is many of the policy positions it takes. Let us take a look at, for example, a very popular premier, the premier whom both of us call the premier of the province of Manitoba, and discussions with the federal government and other provincial entities, looking at the major projects and seeing that these major projects are absolutely critical at this point in time in our history.

To make the assertion that indigenous people are not going to be consulted, worked with and part of the decision process does a disservice, I think, to our premiers, including NDP premiers, whether in B.C. or in our home province of Manitoba.

I am wondering whether the member can provide her thoughts in regard to nation-building and the role that provincial premiers of all political stripes have to play.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I find that funny. It was not me who made those observations. It was Chief Bobby Cameron and National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak who made comments about the failure of the Liberal government to uphold constitutional obligations.

“Nothing about us without us” is not about who benefits; it is about being members with obligations. We are obligated to uphold the rule of law, and that includes the rights of indigenous people in Canada to free, prior and informed consent and proper consultations, something the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled in favour of for first nations over 200 times because of government failures.

• (1200)

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what message does it send to the friends, families and colleagues of the over 51,000 Canadians who lost their lives due to the overdose and opioid crisis since 2016 that the Liberals do not even have a minister of mental health and addictions and have done away with that portfolio? What message does it send to our first nations communities? What message does it send to all the rural and remote communities that are gripped in this overdose, addictions and mental health crisis?

I want to ask our hon. colleague what message that sends. There is not a mention of the opioid crisis in the Speech from the Throne.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, it is tragic that at a time when we are seeing a record number of overdoses, the Liberal government is

taking a tough-on-crime approach, totally throwing people suffering from mental health and addictions to the side and making it a non-topic for the government. Certainly, in my riding of Winnipeg Centre, we have had a record number of people die from toxic drugs. The fact that so many people in the riding of Winnipeg Centre have been left out by the government shows it is turning its back on the people most in need of assistance.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, whom I had the opportunity to work with on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

There are many questions I could ask my colleague because, apart from a brief mention of gun control, there was nothing in the throne speech about improving women's safety. We could also discuss the fact that wanting to speed up infrastructure projects and create one economy could be detrimental to the rights of indigenous peoples.

In the end, I would actually like to ask about something else. My colleague mentioned the widening economic gap among seniors, which prevents them from aging with dignity. Should we reintroduce the bill to eliminate the two classes of seniors and increase OAS for seniors aged 65 to 74, as was done for seniors aged 75 and over?

[English]

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, we know the poverty rate of seniors is increasing. The NDP has absolutely supported lowering the age for receiving pensions, yet the government does not even have a minister for seniors who sits around the cabinet table. Seniors are the ones who built the foundations of this country, and it is unfortunate that the government has turned its back on them.

Vince Gasparro (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for South Surrey—White Rock.

I rise today for the first time in this sacred institution with deep humility and gratitude as the newly elected member of Parliament for Eglinton—Lawrence. I thank the people of Eglinton—Lawrence for the profound trust they have placed in me. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly. I pledge to serve with integrity, energy and dedication for every corner of our vibrant, diverse and hard-working riding. From Lawrence Heights to Lawrence Park to Forest Hill North to Neptune Drive to Lytton Park to Dufferin and Lawrence to Yonge and Eglinton, I will ensure that the voices of my constituents are heard and that I fight for them in this esteemed chamber.

None of this would have been possible without the love and support of my wife Nicola Meyer, who I promised when we got married that I would keep life interesting. Well, to my love, promise made, promise kept. With Nicola I have everything; without her I have nothing. I am so proud of my two daughters, Isabella and Alessia. Their daddy loves them very much. I would like to thank Nicola and my daughters for letting me run not only once but twice in a matter of weeks. They stood by me through two campaigns and that means more than words can express.

I want to thank my mom and dad, Filomena and Albert Gasparro, for their love, support and guidance over the years.

I also want to recognize my grandparents, Vince and Donna Gasparro, who originally immigrated from Calabria, Italy, via Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Canada in 1959, and Gregorio and Irma Natale, who immigrated in 1954 and 1956, respectively, also from Calabria, Italy. They came to this country with nothing. They had families to feed and they worked hard. All they wanted was the opportunity to have a better life for themselves, their kids and the future generations they would never meet. The values of grit, hard work and sheer determination were passed on to future generations, but what was also passed on was the desire to preserve and improve on this great country, the country they chose to come to almost 70 years ago.

After an emergency room visit with my daughter Isabella highlighted deficiencies in Ontario's health care system, I decided the best way to change and improve things was to run in Ontario's provincial election. Even though we outperformed the Ontario Liberal Party by 19%, we still fell short by 167 votes, but as fate would have it, between Donald Trump threatening annexation and the Prime Minister becoming leader, calls from the community grew loud for me to run just weeks later.

With grit and hard work, hundreds of volunteers came out to work, and to see us win was remarkable. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my campaign team and all the volunteers who dedicated their time, rain or shine, through freezing cold and scorching heat, over the past four months. We knocked on over 90,000 doors.

To put it in perspective, on election day alone we had over 400 volunteers. We attracted not only Liberals but disaffected Conservatives, Greens and New Democrats who believed in our vision for Eglinton—Lawrence, one that is based on providing representation that is both fiscally responsible and socially progressive. None of our success would have been possible without each and every one of them. The support and dedication from all our volunteers have meant the world to me. It is truly the honour of a lifetime to represent them during these incredibly challenging times.

I began my political journey right here on Parliament Hill working for then prime minister Paul Martin. I learned the value of principled leadership, sound economic management and a government that balances ambition with responsibility. I was proud to serve as a fiscally responsible Liberal then, and I am equally proud to stand here today alongside the Prime Minister's leadership as we renew our focus on building a resilient and dynamic economy to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

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Canada is being tested by rising protectionism and economic intimidation from our closest partner. President Trump's threat of punitive tariffs seeks to undermine our unity and strength, but we are not yielding.

● (1205)

We are a proud, independent nation shaped by strong values, resilience and a commitment to a fair, rules-based international order. I am proud that our government is committed to strengthening relationships with partners and allies around the world and that we will stand by the principles of international co-operation. As the world changes around us, Canada must lead with confidence as a strong democratic country and a leader in the free world.

President Trump's threats have also provided us with a wake-up call. For too long, Canada has failed to harness the full potential of our vast natural resources. We have created barriers that have held us back from building essential infrastructure, clean energy and new housing. Instead of one strong, united Canadian economy, we are operating like 13 separate ones. That needs to change and is changing.

This is why it is with conviction and optimism that I rise today to offer my full support for the Speech from the Throne. The Prime Minister has presented a clear and compelling vision for the future of this country, and I am proud to stand behind his leadership in this House.

I have spent my career financing institutional clean energy projects and infrastructure, and I know the transformative power that bold investment and smart regulation can have on our country. Our government will be taking decisive steps to deliver new investment, remove bureaucratic barriers and build a stronger economy.

We recognize that Canada's prosperity depends on our ability to harness our natural resources responsibly, to innovate in the face of global competition and to move at the speed of opportunity. Our government will build both clean and conventional energy to make Canada the world's leading energy superpower.

Our goal is clear. It is to establish Canada as a global energy powerhouse. We will invest in renewable energy, hydrogen, carbon capture and the next generation of clean technologies. At the same time, we will ensure our conventional resources are developed to the highest environmental standards. We will achieve this in close partnership with provinces, territories, indigenous peoples and the private sector. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, we are once again demonstrating that we can lead with conviction and build Canada strong.

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Our government is firmly committed to fiscal responsibility by capping spending growth, eliminating waste and boosting productivity, while continuing to support our most vulnerable. The Speech from the Throne makes it clear that we will build a stronger Canada and a more resilient Canadian economy, one that spends wisely so Canadians can invest confidently in their future.

The Prime Minister's agenda emphasizes fiscal responsibility, but as Liberals, we remain steadfast in our commitment to protecting the vital and comprehensive social safety net that supports Canadians. Our government will continue the expansion of dental care, will support pharmacare and child care and will make a determined push to invest in skilled trades and clean energy industries, all reflecting our belief in the potential of every Canadian. We will cut taxes for the majority of Canadians, putting \$840 per year back in the pockets of people in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence and Canadians nationwide. Additionally, by eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers, we will help make home ownership more attainable, delivering savings of up to \$50,000.

We will protect our communities' ability to worship freely by introducing security zone legislation to make it a criminal offence to intentionally and willfully obstruct access to any place of worship, school or community centre and a criminal offence to willfully intimidate or threaten those attending services at these locations. My riding is home to a vibrant Jewish community that has faced intimidation at its schools, synagogues, day cares and homes. This legislation is an important step toward protecting not just Jewish Canadians' ability to worship freely, but all religious groups that make up our diverse country. Diversity will always be our strength, and protecting minority groups' ability to worship freely against lawlessness is a basic right guaranteed in our charter.

To truly be the true north strong and free, we must stand united, act with vision and show unwavering resilience. This throne speech marks a decisive step forward, one that will shape the future of the country not just for the next four years but for the next 40.

• (1210)

Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate the member opposite for his victory and welcome him to the House. I know the member thanked his family for allowing him to run and for their sacrifices. I want to yell out a quick happy birthday to my daughter Sarah, who is 18 years old today. We do miss some events because we are in the House doing our job.

Yesterday, we voted to have the government table a budget before the end of this session and the summer break. The Conservatives wanted to stay over the summer because we have so many issues to tend to in our country. What message does it send to the individuals in the member's riding and people across Canada that the Prime Minister will probably not follow the will of the House?

Vince Gasparro: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question, and I hope he gets back to his riding to see his family as well. It is challenging for all of us.

It is absolutely imperative that we get the budget right. In a vastly changing economic environment, it is important to get it right rather than just presenting a budget for the sake of presenting a

budget. We have to get it right. Canadians demand that we get it right and that it be as accurate as possible.

• (1215)

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you again.

I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. He emphasized the ability to worship freely. I fully agree with him on that point. There are, however, some nuances to consider.

My colleague may be aware that the Québécois nation has decided to pass legislation regarding religion in the public sphere in Quebec. I would like to know whether he believes his government intends to respect the will of the Québécois nation in establishing some restrictions surrounding religion in Quebec institutions.

I would like to hear my colleague talk more about that.

[English]

Vince Gasparro: Madam Speaker, people in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence have been under threat over the last 18 months. The global rise in anti-Semitism that we are experiencing here at home is completely unacceptable.

The government will be bringing forward the security zone legislation that we made a commitment to passing during the federal campaign. It is an important step forward in protecting the people not only in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence, and specifically the Jewish community, but in all communities.

It is completely unacceptable, what is happening on our streets. All levels of government have to do a better job at protecting minority groups. In this particular instance, I am referring to the Jewish community, which is something we take seriously on this side of the House. I know others on that side of the House take it seriously. We have to stand united to combat the threat of anti-Semitism and hate more broadly.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is awfully good to see this particular Speaker back in her chair and with continued health.

I want to welcome the new member for Eglinton—Lawrence to this place and ask him if he has reflected on the failure of the Speech from the Throne to pick up any of the recommendations on the report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which was tabled four years ago today.

I am wondering if the hon. member has any reflections on the failure to discuss the need for a guaranteed livable income, which was one of those key recommendations. The government did say it would implement the calls for justice.

Vince Gasparro: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

In my past life, I advised the Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation on infrastructure and sustainable finance investments it made. I can tell the member that the resiliency of indigenous Canadians is one to be marvelled at.

On this side of the House, we have a strong commitment to partnering with indigenous communities—

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

Resuming debate, the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Ernie Klassen (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with the greatest sense of honour and pride that I stand today in this chamber giving my maiden speech, where countless Canadians before me have given of themselves to help shape the landscape of this great country we all call home, which is the envy of people around the world. I congratulate all my colleagues on their election or re-election. It is truly an honour to serve alongside each of them.

I am the first MP in this riding elected for this party in a general election in more than 70 years. I would like to begin by acknowledging that my riding of South Surrey—White Rock is situated on the traditional, unceded territories of several Coast Salish nations, including the Semiahmoo, Kwantlen and Katzie First Nations.

I am truly fortunate to stand here, not through my efforts alone but because of the hard work, dedication and belief of many. Volunteers, friends, family and strangers who became friends, people of all backgrounds, colours, faiths, languages, abilities, sexual identities and socio-economic statuses, believed in the values and vision that this party represents. These are the friends and neighbours of South Surrey—White Rock whose voices I am privileged to represent in this House. To my husband, my children and grandchildren, and my family and friends who encouraged me at every step of what was an intense and deeply rewarding campaign, I offer my deepest thanks.

This seat also belongs to the many who came to this country as immigrants seeking a better life. I never imagined I would have the opportunity to publicly, in front of all Canadians, thank my parents for the profound gift they gave their children, the privilege of becoming Canadians.

My grandfather was arrested and executed for teaching his children about a god, an act considered treasonous under a regime that denied faith. My grandmother was left with eight children. As a child, I often heard how my parents survived by eating field mice and taking whatever was left in the fields after they had harvested the produce they had to give to the Communist Party. Fortunately, after the Second World War, my father, through the Red Cross, reconnected with an aunt in Canada who sponsored my parents to come to Canada. Due to a freeze of immigration policy in Canada, my grandmother, together with several unmarried children, left Ukraine for Paraguay, but ultimately also came to Canada through the efforts of my parents. Although my parents had seven children of their own, they always strove to help their family who ended up in various countries after the Second World War, from Siberia to East Germany and Paraguay.

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I thank all those who struggled so their children and future generations could prosper in freedom. To the indigenous and aboriginal peoples, the original stewards of this land, I offer my thanks, my respect and my gratitude. From them, we continue to learn the sacredness of the land we are honoured to live on.

It was a privilege indeed to be present in Ottawa during the historic royal visit of King Charles III and Queen Camilla and to witness the King deliver the Speech from the Throne in the Senate chamber. I heard a strong message of hope and renewal, a call to restore the values and dreams that define Canada. The 45th Parliament has a responsibility to identify and build on the strengths that have earned Canada admiration around the world, while also acknowledging the failures and injustices of the past and correcting our course when needed.

While our country faces challenges, our core Canadian values that define us, democracy, freedom, the rule of law and the right to self-determination, are laid out clearly throughout the throne speech. These core values guide us nationally but also align with my personal priorities for South Surrey—White Rock. Already, our Prime Minister is renegotiating Canada's relationship with the United States, our neighbour and one of our many economic partners of the future. This relationship is vital to my riding, which is home to two of Canada's 32 land border crossings, the Peace Arch and the Pacific Highway border crossings. These crossings are more than that; they support trade, tourism and jobs. The land border duty-free shops contribute over \$400 million annually to our economy and provide local employment.

• (1220)

The tariffs imposed by the United States, which have put pressure on businesses, including more than 500 small businesses in my riding, are unjustified. As a small business owner for over 30 years, I understand first-hand the challenges and pressures on a business to remain open and thrive. Pivoting one's business has become the new way of modern business. I support our government's core mission to build the strongest economy by removing internal trade barriers and working closely with all the provinces and territories.

At the doorsteps, I heard loudly and clearly that Canadians want the government to stabilize and focus on strengthening the economy for all Canadians, regardless of their political affiliations. Since occupying this chair, I see the opposition members criticizing but not bringing forward solutions. I hear them accusing us of copying and plagiarizing their platform. If indeed this is the case, is that not the greatest form of—

• (1225)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I interrupt the hon. member as I have a point of order.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

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Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, we all follow the various rules of Parliament, one being with respect to attire in the House that is suitable. Last night during the vote, a Conservative member's vote was not counted because the government made a point of raising an issue with respect to his attire.

I ask you for clarification on the outfit this member is wearing. As we all know, men must wear a suit jacket and tie in order to speak. I see now that he has actually put a suit coat on. I ask for clarification.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member. Yes, I remind all members that the proper attire for men in the House is contemporary business attire. We ask everyone to be reminded of that.

The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock may continue.

Ernie Klassen: Madam Speaker, since occupying this chair, I see the opposition members criticizing but not bringing forward solutions. I hear them accusing us of copying and plagiarizing their platform. If indeed this is the case, is that not the greatest form of flattery? If the platforms are the same, let us work toward the common goal of achieving them for the success of all Canadians.

We are a country with many people struggling to survive. The cost of living and affordability are top of mind for many Canadian families. Like many, my constituents are also struggling to get ahead. Our government is listening and acting by reducing middle-class taxes, saving two-income families up to \$840 a year. It will cut the GST on homes at or under \$1 million for first-time homebuyers and lower the GST on homes. The government will preserve essential programs like universal health care, child care programs, pharmacare and the Canadian dental care program, which is now covering eight million Canadians, saving the average person more than \$800 per year.

I have lived and operated my business in White Rock for over three decades. The vibrant and iconic city of White Rock is known for its beautiful beachfront; the famous White Rock Pier, the longest wooden pier in the country; and its cultural significance to indigenous peoples. South Surrey is the largest town centre in Surrey by land area, offering agricultural richness, industrial and urban residential neighbourhoods and historical sites.

My riding is home to young families, newcomers and retirees, which reflects our strength as a community. To protect our neighbourhoods and ensure the safety of residents, our government will hire more RCMP officers and toughen the Criminal Code to make bail harder and to get tougher laws for repeat offenders charged with crimes, along with human trafficking and drug smuggling.

As our Prime Minister said in his opening address, "I will make mistakes." It is an admirable admission and, to me, the mark of a true leader, one who can recognize when the ship is off course and has the resolve to steer it back.

I say to this House, my constituents and my colleagues that I pledge to serve with integrity, dedication and unwavering commitment to my constituents and all Canadians.

Today, I would like to recognize one of Canada's strengths, which is inclusivity for all. As it is the beginning of Pride Month, I wish everyone a happy Pride.

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the new member for South Surrey—White Rock and want to thank his predecessor, Kerry-Lynne Findlay, who, for many years, represented the riding in a dedicated and excellent fashion.

The member talked about solutions. One solution that would be very much appreciated by Canadians would be the removal of the GST or the carbon tax for small businesses and industries, because they are, essentially, self-imposed tariffs on ourselves, which brings much less competition with the States.

I wonder if the member would comment on this, as we are actually harming ourselves by maintaining the carbon tax on our businesses.

● (1230)

Ernie Klassen: Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his election as well. I look forward to serving with all members of the House of Commons and to working collaboratively with everyone, especially when there are solutions being brought forward that we can deliver on for all Canadians for the betterment of our society and for the betterment of everyone's well-being in our country.

As I said during my campaign many times, I believe that policies within the government are to be reviewed. I would suggest that we wait until our budget is brought forward, and it will be brought forward by very responsible and well-informed people, and that we take a look at all of the policies there to work toward improving the economic stability of our country, especially as it deals with small businesses.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I would also like to congratulate my neighbour in the House, a fellow British Columbian, the new member for South Surrey—White Rock. I want to ask him about an issue that was almost solved with a bill that died on the Order Paper on January 6. It was Bill C-33, and it dealt with an issue.

There is another member of the House who happens to be here, the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, and we worked hard to amend Bill C-33 to have it accomplish the end of shipments of thermal coal and exports out of the port of Vancouver. These come from the U.S. They come on coal trains through his riding.

I wonder if the member has any comments on whether we should bring that bill back.

Ernie Klassen: Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to be sitting near my colleague. I have admired her stance on all of the environmental issues she has brought to the table over many years. I look forward to working together with her on many of the issues.

The issue of thermal coal has been brought to my attention, especially during the campaign. It has been an issue that many others who have occupied the seat before me have dealt with. At this point, we are not yet at a place where many people in my riding would like to see, which is to reroute the coal trains, if possible. Perhaps with the new tariffs the U.S. has put into place, we can look at putting tariffs on the U.S. for coal.

Aslam Rana (Hamilton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question is regarding affordable housing. All over the country, it is a big issue, including in my riding, Hamilton Centre. There is a bigger project called the Jamesville project. The housing project is still there. I will ask my hon. colleague and member of Parliament how serious the government is about housing.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a real pleasure to rise today to deliver my first speech in the House of Commons. I was reflecting while debate was going on earlier, and it is such an incredible honour to be in this place on behalf of the great people of Brandon and Westman.

Members do not get here alone. I would be remiss if I did not start by thanking, of course, my partner Ashley, who has agreed to come along on this wild political journey. She has been a trooper in making the leap into federal politics with me, so I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

I thank my parents, Darryl and Cheryl. As an only child, I am sure it is a bit of a strange phenomenon for them to see their only child carted off to Ottawa to represent the rural areas of south-western Manitoba. They have been supportive of me through this political journey, so I thank them for being there through thick and thin. I have not always made it easy. I am sure they would reaffirm that, but they have been there with me through it all, so I thank them for that. I thank my in-laws as well, who have allowed a political junkie into their family with open arms. I thank them for their support.

Members get here with a team, so I would be remiss if I did not also thank the members of my campaign team. They came together very quickly after my predecessor announced a sudden departure from politics. We garnered very good results. There is no doubt about that. We broadened our voter coalition. We increased the number of Conservative votes that were received in our constituency. I thank them for their hard work, which was done in very quick fashion to get organized to get up and running.

I also must thank my predecessor, Larry Maguire. He is a stand-up individual. He has been a great advocate for rural Manitoba, for all of Manitoba and for western Canadian agriculture over his many years in politics. He has been a great friend and mentor to me personally. I thank him for his friendship and mentorship, and I wish him well in his retirement, although I am sure we have not seen the last of him in his involvement in politics across Manitoba and the country.

I want to thank the Conservative Party, my Conservative colleagues and our leader, Pierre Poilievre, for supporting me and putting their faith in me in my stepping into Larry's shoes and ful-

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filling the responsibilities of this role. I do not take that faith lightly, and I plan to work hard on behalf of this team every day.

Most importantly, I want to thank the people of Brandon—Souris. It is such a humbling experience to be a member of Parliament and to be their voice here in Ottawa. I am so privileged to be that voice, and I am going to work hard every day to ensure that their issues, their challenges and their experiences are raised here in the House of Commons.

When I think about Brandon—Souris or Westman, the first word that comes to mind is “home”. Like any home, sometimes the house needs a bit of work, and that is certainly what we heard at the doors during this campaign. We heard that Westman industries are struggling. Young families are having a hard time paying the bills and buying affordable homes. Crime is up, both in our urban cities and on farmyards. This is not an acceptable state of affairs, and unfortunately, it gets worse. With Chinese tariffs on Canadian canola, and our oil and gas sector being suppressed by failed Liberal government policies, people are being left feeling like there is less hope than there has been in many years.

Why are we here? The Liberal government seems focused, or have been focused, on offshore challenges. It is funding farming initiatives in Africa, but there is no support for Canadian agriculture. It is investing in the Asian Infrastructure Bank, building pipelines in Asia, but there has been zero major infrastructure, nation-building projects conducted here on Canadian soil in the last nine and a half years of the Liberals.

That is a shame, and Westman residents have had enough. They made it clear with a decisive mandate vote for change in Ottawa. Part of this larger vote coalition was young people, people who have never voted Conservative or who have never voted at all, and they voted Conservative for the first time. They voted in favour of a Conservative plan that offers a very proud and important path forward for this country.

● (1235)

Young people in Canada want very simple things. They want to be treated with respect and to be able to get a good job that earns them a good wage that allows them to buy an affordable home and start a family in a safe neighbourhood. These are not complicated requests. However, if anything, the Liberal government of the last nine and a half years has shown us that the Liberal Party's secret party trick is to complicate even the simplest of government tasks. We need to look no further than the Phoenix pay system debacle, where the Liberals could not even figure out how to pay their own civil servants, or the arrive scam issue, which complicated crossing the border with a Canadian passport as a Canadian citizen. These are just some of the smallest examples. I am not even getting into infrastructure, procurement and the other debacles of the last nine and a half years.

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Young people in this country voted for a common-sense plan, but even more than that, they voted for a plan full of hope. More young people in Canada under 40 voted Conservative than ever before because our plan inspired them with a path forward to a more hopeful future for this country. That is a credit to Pierre Poilievre and those in our leadership team, who have made this Conservative Party younger with a broader vote coalition. That bodes very well for the future of the Conservative Party of Canada. It is a plan to make life more affordable by reducing taxes; reducing government spending; cutting waste; building safer communities; targeting investments in nation-building projects, such as national energy corridors and pipelines; and having a jail, not bail, plan, which would put criminals behind bars and ensure that they remain behind bars to serve time for the crimes they committed to destroy our communities and destroy our families. This is the Conservative plan that young people across the country supported and will support again.

To those people who bought into this vision, this path and this campaign of hope, I say this: Do not lose that hope now. We did not get across the finish line, but the team surrounding me is fighting for them. Day in and day out, we are working to implement that agenda from the opposition benches, and we will get some results. Look no further than last night, when the Liberals lost their first vote on their own throne speech, when we amended it to include the adamant statement that there be a financial update this spring, before the House rises, to ensure that there is a fiscal plan to support the challenges that are impacting them and their families.

I know things are not good right now, but they can be better. We know they can be. With a lot of hard work, patience, persistence and determination, we can make them better. We can do big things in this country. We can make positive change so that those who come after us have a better country and more opportunity than we had when we were growing up. Without a doubt, this Conservative team, under the leadership of Pierre Poilievre, is the team to get that done. I am ready to get to work, so let us get to it.

• (1240)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we just came through a national election where the Liberal government received over 8.5 million votes. That is the largest number of votes ever before in a national election. I believe they came to that conclusion because they were able to compare Pierre Poilievre and the Conservative agenda to that of the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party's platform. They made a judgment on that issue. The hope is there because of the campaign making it very clear that we need to start working with premiers, indigenous leaders, territories and political parties to build a strong team Canada so that we can deliver on issues, such as the Trump tariffs and trade.

Does the member feel any obligation whatsoever to work with the government on important projects?

Grant Jackson: Madam Speaker, we will certainly support the government if it actually provides a plan to build national energy projects in this country, including oil and gas pipelines. We have seen nothing from the government members about that, and we look forward to seeing that plan come forward. If it does, then we will consider it at that time.

However, the member is certainly wrong. There were more Conservative votes in my constituency this time than in many years past. People supported the Conservative Party platform in my constituency. They voted for change in Ottawa, and we are going to work hard every day to make that change happen.

• (1245)

[Translation]

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague just gave a very interesting answer.

He has probably noted, as I have, the government's desire to table legislation defining projects of national significance. Those projects might not be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

Does my colleague agree with that approach? Does my colleague believe that an environmental impact assessment is not required when it comes to oil and gas projects? Will that be the Conservative Party's position?

[English]

Grant Jackson: Madam Speaker, it is certainly not. Our position is that the bureaucracy has become so bloated that we cannot get anything built in this country in a timely fashion. It is taking years upon years to get these permits approved and get construction actually happening, so while we believe that the environment is very important, and that protecting our environment and our natural spaces is very important, we also need to get permitting timelines down to a modicum of a reasonable time frame so that companies and investors have the assurance that these projects are actually going to get done sometime in our lifetime. The Conservative Party's platform is to reduce the amount of time it takes to get these permits done and actually get this country built for a change.

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on his election.

During the debate on the throne speech, we have heard from our friends on the other side that our middle-class tax cut is not big enough, but as I am sure the member knows, the Conservatives ran on a tax cut that would not have helped anyone for three years.

Would the hon. member agree that money in the pocket of Canadians next month is better than a tax cut that would not help them for the next three years?

Grant Jackson: Madam Speaker, I want to make it clear that our Conservative Party, while supporting tax cuts, does believe that the proposal from the Prime Minister's government does not go far enough. We think Canadians deserve more relief from the massive increases in higher taxes that they have received after the last nine and a half years of the Liberal government. The government needs to go further. That is why we are calling for a spring budget to deliver more relief for Manitobans, Westman residents and Canadian families who are struggling to put food on the table.

Jeff Kibble (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I stand before this chamber for the first time, and I am humbled to represent the people of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, located on beautiful Vancouver Island, from Chemainus to Langford and from Port Renfrew to Duncan, including Thetis Island and Penelakut Island. I thank them for putting their trust in me and for supporting positive change and hope for our riding.

To my wife, Angel, and to our children, I say thanks for their unwavering support, love and enthusiasm as I tackle this new mission in life to represent our communities.

I would also like to pass along my utmost gratitude and appreciation to my amazing campaign team and the committed volunteers who worked tirelessly to connect with as many constituents as possible. They include Janet and Fred, our senior-citizen, door-knocking dynamic duo. We all came together, working endlessly, and they put their trust in me. I thank them.

I say a special thanks to the many young people who volunteered and turned out in record numbers to vote for positive change and Conservative values, many for the first time. I truly believe that the work we are all doing here is for the youth and future generations of our nation, and that is the reason I am here. Their dreams of Canada, where hard work is rewarded with a good paycheque, where families can live in a safe neighbourhood and where they can one day afford a home, are the dreams I will continue to fight for.

Our riding is as diverse as our landscape, from the fast-growing city of Langford, with bustling urban life and a vibrant sports community, to the remote, rugged fishing town of Port Renfrew on the Pacific Ocean. There are farmlands, mills, small ports, logging, mountain ranges and remote communities spread across some 4,800 square kilometres. We have an active outdoor community and endless opportunities for recreation and tourism. We have numerous rivers and many fish hatcheries. It is a truly beautiful, stunning and vibrant place, where I have lived most of my adult life, and I am proud to call it home.

There are seven first nations that make up almost 10% of our population. I continue to learn from them while respecting their culture and traditions. There are seniors, young families, farmers, trade workers, retirees, anglers, hunters and business leaders. As well, there is a strong veteran community and many serving military members across our riding.

However, for all of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford's beauty, resources and opportunities, I am saddened to report that, as in much of Canada, our people are struggling. During my campaign, I spoke with thousands of people across our riding, and the message was clear: This is not the nation we all once knew. People are struggling

to make ends meet, pay for groceries, heat their homes, pay their bills and provide for their families.

I met many who are losing their homes or who are now living in shelters or on the street. This needs to change. Many people live without a doctor or basic medical care, with wait-lists of many years. Some of our communities, including Port Renfrew and Lake Cowichan, have no doctors anymore. The seniors who built this country are struggling to make ends meet while feeling unsafe to go shopping in their once-safe communities. These are all signs of a failing economy, and this needs to change.

People are worried about rapidly increasing crime, disorder, open drug use, addictions, homelessness and poverty. This should not be the norm in our communities. The so-called safe supply experiment has failed. The overdose crisis continues to ravage communities, claiming thousands of lives in British Columbia alone.

Families are left helpless as loved ones succumb to addiction. This is exacerbated by government policies that prioritize the distribution of dangerous drugs without providing adequate rehabilitation and support systems. These are not just statistics that we hear in the news. They are our daughters, sons, mothers, fathers and loved ones. The trauma of losing family members to addiction leaves lasting scars. The absence of effective action to address this crisis continues the cycle of dysfunction and despair.

In Duncan, the crime rate is 237% above the national average, and the violent crime rate is 153% above the national average. A few months ago, I met Norm, a retired minister whose 80-year-old sister was mugged and pushed to the ground, breaking her hip.

In Langford, police are finding drug labs hidden in homes and pulling over cars to find fentanyl and illegal firearms. This needs to change. Crime is not just a story in the news; it is something that now touches everyone's life, my own family included. Two years ago, my daughter watched as her boyfriend, Jonny, was murdered by a stranger in downtown Victoria. He was stabbed to death by a repeat violent offender who was let out on bail for attempted murder not three weeks earlier and had a history of no fewer than five violent charges against him.

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● (1250)

The Liberals' soft-on-crime bills have allowed dangerous criminals to remain free, which risks public safety. Violent criminals must be held to account to prevent further tragedies and restore faith in our justice system.

What of our veterans, the brave men and women who once stood defending our sovereignty and freedom? These heroes now face bureaucratic hurdles that strip them of the respect and the care they deserve. Too many veterans despair, hearing from their government that "they're asking for more than we are able to give right now". We lose them not just to old age but to the despair that follows when a nation forgets its promises. This is unacceptable and must change.

Furthermore, serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces have been devastated by years of neglect. They face challenges that no military personnel should endure, from inadequate resources to outdated equipment and the inability to afford housing where they are stationed. To be a strong fighting force, they need modern equipment and solid recruitment, and we need to restore their customs and traditions. We must ensure they have the tools, training and resources required to do their job effectively.

We need to incentivize municipalities and reduce red tape and bureaucracy while unleashing our home builders so that hard-working tradespeople can build homes. They are the experts. We do not need another government agency that will fail to deliver homes.

We need to repeal Bill C-75 and Bill C-5 to keep repeat violent offenders behind bars so that people like Jonny could still be with us. We need to repeal Bill C-21 and protect the rights of our law-abiding, licensed hunters and sport shooters while protecting our borders and keeping illegal guns from entering Canada and illegal guns off our streets.

We need real tax cuts that will stimulate our economy and relieve pressure on so many.

We need to unleash our industry and natural resources to build our economy. For example, we need to take immediate steps to support B.C.'s recreational fishing industry, which is nearing collapse. A simple fix of marking all hatchery salmon would allow our recreational fishing industry to return from the brink of extinction. We have renewable resources, whether forests, fish, farming or even mining. Now is the time to use them responsibly and build wealth and rebuild our economy.

We need to spend on responsible infrastructure, such as by bringing in rapid transit and an alternative route for the dangerous Malahat Highway. Rapid transit would connect our island, bring economic prosperity, improve safety and benefit the environment.

Unfortunately, the throne speech was light on details. Promises of change and prosperity are not matched by actions or supported with plans. Where is the Prime Minister's plan? Where is the Prime Minister's budget? We were all elected to represent our ridings and bring positive change. Parliament should be sitting through the summer, with committees working tirelessly to address these changes. Actions are not matching the promises.

The people of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford have entrusted me with the immense responsibility of representing them in Ottawa, and I do not take this lightly. We are the government in waiting. Hope is what the House must rekindle in the heart of every Canadian. It is hope that drives parents; they work tirelessly so that their children can have a better life. We must ensure that our children inherit a Canada that embodies the values we hold dear, a Canada where hard work pays off, where families thrive and where every generation inherits a better future.

While I may be new to this chamber, I am not new to working for the federal government. I served Canada for 28 years in the Royal Canadian Navy, defending our great nation's sovereignty, democracy and freedom. Through the skills, leadership and experience gained at sea during operational deployments and command positions, I will continue my mission to serve Canada, but now from this chamber.

Let us rise together and restore the dignity of our seniors, respect our first nations, honour the sacrifices of our veterans, support our serving military and build a country so that our youth can once again have hope. Canada is worth it; our children are worth it, and the future we fight for begins today.

● (1255)

Pauline Rochefort (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like my esteemed colleague, I am also new to the House of Commons. For me and our community as well, the armed forces are very present. I appreciated the comments that were made by my esteemed colleague.

Could he give his views on what is included in the throne speech, as well as the "Canada Strong" plan, related to rebuilding, rearming and reinvesting in our Canadian Armed Forces?

Jeff Kibble: Madam Speaker, I congratulate my esteemed colleague on her first time in the chamber.

Our armed forces need significant rebuilding and re-funding, and the delays have been going on for 10 years. I appreciate the government's new statements that it is planning to support our military, and I appreciate that it has stolen many of those policies from our own platform, which just indicates that our platform is going in the right direction. I will work to support any policies that will help rebuild our military, bring back pride in the work it does and support our members in the Canadian Armed Forces.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his election. I welcome him to the House.

As we all know, there are currently major forest fires burning in western Canada. We lived through forest fires in Quebec not so long ago. It was not easy. We also know that these forest fires release huge amounts of carbon. According to publicly available data, the forest fires we have experienced over the last few years have emitted even more CO₂ than human activities. That is quite serious.

In the face of this situation, we have a government that is abandoning the fight against climate change. Over the weekend, the Prime Minister chose to meet with gas companies first.

Is my colleague not concerned that we might accelerate these forest fires and make the situation worse if we continue to bury our heads in oil?

• (1300)

[English]

Jeff Kibble: Madam Speaker, my heart and my sympathy go out to the families and all those affected by the forest fires. I salute, congratulate and acknowledge the hard work of the first responders, the military and other services that are fighting the devastating fires.

As I said, I support, and our party supports, responsible use of our natural resources. We produce some of the cleanest energy in the world, and I will continue to support responsible use of our natural resources to rebuild our economy.

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

Welcome back to the chair, Madam Speaker. We are all very pleased to see you, given everything. I would also like to congratulate my colleague on his maiden speech.

As somebody who has seen a fair amount of crime and has spoken with witnesses, I was touched, as was everybody, by the member's story and first-hand knowledge through his daughter. I think that every member of the House wants to see fewer victims, but where I part company with my Liberal colleagues is that I believe Conservatives actually have a plan.

When it comes to these types of offences, and we are not being one step removed like my colleague is, can the member tell the chamber and Canadians what it is like to be so close, and to see such a vicious crime so close, and how that relates to our work and the importance of fighting crime, as Conservatives are committed to in the chamber?

Jeff Kibble: Madam Speaker, my esteemed colleague's question is challenging.

I share the story not just for sympathy but so people understand that these traumas affect not just me but so many people across our country. I am sharing to show I understand that we must change our laws, we must protect our victims and we must keep violent repeat offenders off our streets. I am passionate about it, but I know I am not alone, because there are so many people across our country who have faced the same trauma, the same challenges. I join with them and understand their challenges.

The Address

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Milton East—Halton Hills South.

It is a great honour to rise for the first time as the elected member of Parliament for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas. I am speaking today in support of our government's mandate as laid out by His Majesty King Charles III in the Speech from the Throne.

I stand here with deep gratitude. I thank my wife, Dawn; and our children, Sadie and Isaac, for their love, patience and support. I thank my parents, John and Dianne; and my in-laws, Mike and Bev, for the values and work ethic that brought me here. To the people on my incredible campaign team who worked tirelessly to connect with our community, I say that this is their victory as well. I would like to sincerely thank the Hon. Filomena Tassi for her many years of dedicated service to our community and country, and for her guidance and friendship.

I often say that I am not a politician; I am an engineer who finds himself in a political role. After nearly two terms on Hamilton city council, I am excited and deeply humbled to serve our community in this new capacity. Today I will address several important issues and opportunities in my riding of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas: economic development, protecting our national sovereignty, U.S. tariffs on steel, affordability and housing, public safety and the need for collaboration.

There is no question that we are at a difficult time in Canada's history. We face external pressures and internal challenges. The Trump administration threatens not only our economy but also the principles of collaboration and international partnership that Canadians value so deeply. Tariffs and protectionist threats create uncertainty in key sectors like steel and manufacturing, which matter profoundly to Hamilton.

Canadians are facing a real affordability crisis. The cost of housing, groceries and daily essentials has stretched household budgets past the breaking point. During the campaign, I heard these concerns again and again, but what struck me most was not just the worry; it was the determination. Homes across Hamilton are again proudly flying the Canadian flag. It is a powerful act of hope, a signal that we are proud of our shared values and that we will face these challenges together. Canadians are tired of politicians who foster division instead of delivering solutions. Now more than ever, we need leadership that is capable, collaborative and constructive.

The Address

A strong economy is the foundation of everything we do. It is how we fund health care and housing and defend our sovereignty. It is how we give our children a future. I have two teenagers at home, Sadie and Isaac, and I want to make sure their generation has access to meaningful jobs, affordable homes and the promise that all Canadians who work hard can achieve the lifestyle they deserve. That is why our government is committed to building the strongest economy in the G7 by leveraging Canadian resources such as timber, minerals, and research and innovation, and by investing in the skilled trades.

Hamilton is already poised to lead in economic growth. At McMaster University, where I studied engineering, the McMaster Automotive Resource Centre is developing EV technologies that do not use rare earth metals. Hamilton is also a growing hub for pharmaceutical research, biotech and life sciences, and our government is investing hundreds of millions of dollars to modernize steelmaking and drastically reduce emissions. We are also prioritizing Canadian steel, aluminum and timber in major new infrastructure projects.

Of course, everyone in Hamilton knows someone who works in the steel industry. Hamilton's steel industry directly employs over 10,000 workers and another in 40,000 indirect jobs. Uncertainty over U.S. tariffs on steel are causing immense stress and anxiety for Hamilton families. These tariffs are unjustified, unlawful and deeply damaging. They threaten Canadian workers, disrupt communities and undermine cross-border supply chains that have taken generations to establish.

I have been in direct contact with the Minister of Industry and local partners in the steel industry, and I want to assure steelworkers in Hamilton that our government is fighting back with strong retaliatory measures and targeted domestic support to defend our industries and protect the thousands of Canadian jobs at stake. Our government will fight for every worker, every job and every business.

Tariffs on steel harm workers and businesses on both sides of the border. We have an opportunity to work with the American steel industry to achieve a common goal: to grow the entire North American steel industry and protect against low-cost steel imports from overseas.

Even with economic progress, Canadians cannot prosper if they cannot afford to live. Hamilton's housing market is out of reach for far too many. Our government is taking immediate action. We cancelled the consumer carbon tax, reducing the cost of gas by 18¢ per litre. The new middle-class tax cut will help over 22 million Canadians save up to \$840 per year. We removed the GST on new homes under \$1 million for first-time homebuyers.

• (1305)

We introduced affordable child care, now \$10 a day, saving Canadian families thousands of dollars. On housing, our government is working collaboratively with all levels of government and our industry partners to invest billions of dollars to double the rate of homebuilding in Canada for new homes for Canadians, homes that will use Canadian lumber, Canadian steel and Canadian skilled workers.

I was recently at the groundbreaking ceremony for a major new affordable home project in Hamilton. This project would not have been possible without the support of the federal government in collaboration with the City of Hamilton and local affordable homebuilders. Hamilton's community housing providers, including Indwell, Victoria Park, Kiwanis, Good Shepherd, Habitat for Humanity and CityHousing Hamilton are setting a national example of best practices. They are doing more than just building homes; they are redefining what sustainable, affordable housing looks like in Canada.

These organizations are committed to high-performance building standards such as Passive House and LEED platinum to build net-zero carbon housing at scale. They are not just planning on doing this; they are doing this right now in Hamilton. By investing slightly more during construction, they are able to deliver homes where low-income tenants never have to worry about paying utility bills. They are easing the financial burden while contributing to environmental sustainability.

Equally important, these new developments include wraparound supports like on-site health care and mental health and addiction services. This integrated approach ensures that people have not only a roof over their head but also the resources they need to stay housed, healthy and supported. The housing affordability crisis was created over decades through successive governments. Record-low interest rates, the ongoing financialization of housing, provincial rent deregulation and an unprecedented increase in material prices during the pandemic all contributed.

In recent years, municipalities like Hamilton have been working hard to eliminate barriers to construction of market housing and reduce costs. Right now, there is 10 years of housing supply already approved and ready to be built within the city of Hamilton, but market housing builders are not building.

There are tens of thousands of housing projects across Canada on hold due to economic uncertainty in the housing market. Our government is working collaboratively with provincial and municipal governments while investing billions of dollars across the country to get Canadian homebuilders building again. We are implementing real solutions to housing affordability so that every Canadian who works hard can afford a safe and affordable place to call home.

Of course, none of this matters if Canadians are not safe in their own home. Gun violence, auto theft, organized crime and drug trafficking are on the rise across Canada. In fact, my own car was stolen right from my driveway while my family and I were home asleep. Our government is responding with a serious plan: bail reform to keep violent offenders in jail, tougher sentencing for drug trafficking and gun crime, cracking down on illegal firearms and fentanyl imported from the United States, and strengthening the criminal justice system.

We also know that homelessness and addiction are public safety and public health challenges. Homeless tent encampments in city parks are not a compassionate solution. The federal government is responsible for over \$200 billion a year in transfer payments to the provinces for health care. We need to hold provincial governments accountable for their investments in health care, because addictions and mental health are health care issues, and we need real action from our provincial partners to get people the help they need.

I firmly believe that every member of the House is here to advocate for Canada and Canadians. Canadian voters have spoken; they have elected a government that is capable, collaborative and constructive. Since arriving in the House, I have noticed something: Despite our differences, we agree on much more than we disagree on. We agree that Canadians need opportunity, that they deserve safety and that they need homes, jobs and opportunities for a better future.

The people of Canada have shown us the way in their optimism, their resolve and their determination to come together, so let us follow their example. Let us rise above division and let us work together across the aisle for the good of all Canadians. I am honoured to stand for a strong and prosperous Canada, and I invite every member of the House to stand with me to work together to keep the true north strong and free.

• (1310)

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is nice to see you again.

In his speech, my colleague talked about the steel industry and described his riding's economy. In Quebec, we could talk about aerospace, forestry and aluminum. Quebec's economy is unique. I am not the only one saying this. There is even a motion from the Quebec National Assembly that denounces the vision of one economy, which discounts all the distinct characteristics that different regions may have. In Quebec, our economy is based on SMEs, which is a different economic model.

In light of the motion adopted by the Quebec National Assembly, how does my colleague view this idea of one economy that does not represent the will of Quebec?

John-Paul Danko: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question. I apologize for the quality of my French. It is not very good, but I am learning.

[English]

So far in this chamber, I have been very impressed with the Bloc's position on a number of issues: the environment, energy, de-

velopment, health care and education. I think that, except for the whole leaving-the-country thing, we actually have quite a bit in common. It makes sense, because Ontario is quite similar to Quebec in many ways. The member talked about timber resources, aerospace and lumber. We also have many of the largest and strongest vibrant municipalities in Canada.

We share common interests, so there are three things that come to mind that Ontario and Quebec could work together on. The first is expanding the definition of the energy sector. Conservatives are fixated on legacy fossil fuels, and I think Ontario and Quebec are more interested in clean next-generation electricity, mass timber construction and climate mitigation.

• (1315)

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, congratulations to my hon. colleague on his maiden speech.

I think the member may be the only one who has mentioned the opioid and addictions crisis that has gripped our country. The Speech from the Throne was 2,500 words long, and there was not one mention of the opioid crisis and the fentanyl crisis that have gripped our nation.

How does the member feel about that lack of acknowledgement from his side of the House, the government and Prime Minister, that we have this absolute crisis, in terms of overdoses and opioids?

John-Paul Danko: Madam Speaker, there is no question that there is an opioid crisis in this country. In my time on Hamilton city council, we did declare an opioid crisis. We were looking at taking positive steps to address it.

I have had many discussions with Hamilton police on the impacts of opioids on the streets, along with crime in general. It is something that residents contact our office about daily, when they see people with addictions issues on the street openly using drugs. It is a huge problem throughout Canada. I think there is a way forward that is compassionate and would address the actual root cause of the opioid crisis, which would be to focus more on addiction supports.

At the end of the day, we cannot arrest ourselves out of an addictions and health care crisis. We need to work collaboratively with the provinces and municipalities to get people the help they need.

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, congratulations to the member on his election.

The throne speech unilaterally announced that the government would cut development cost levies by 50%, which would impact local governments. Local governments often rely on that money to build the community infrastructure to support new development, yet the throne speech did not offer any infrastructure dollars to local governments. There was zero mention of it.

The Address

How will local governments ensure that the necessary infrastructure is built to support the community when the government cuts that access to development cost levies?

John-Paul Danko: Madam Speaker, this is definitely a significant concern for municipalities, especially in Ontario, where they are required to cover development charges in the annual levy budget. The federal government is committed to working with municipalities collaboratively to invest directly in infrastructure as required to reduce development charges.

Kristina Tesser Derksen (Milton East—Halton Hills South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you and all of my colleagues in this House. I also want to thank the clerks, pages, interpreters and security who keep things running so smoothly here.

If the House will indulge me, I will take the opportunity to recognize some very important people without whom I would not be here. First, of course, there are the wonderful people of Milton East—Halton Hills South, who found themselves not only in a brand new riding but also enduring a two-week-long judicial recount as they waited to learn who would represent them here in their House. It truly showed, in action, the adage that every vote counts, in some ridings even more than mine. We were in good company.

I thank the good people of Georgetown and east Milton for their patience and for their confidence as that fascinating and mildly stressful process played out. No one saw that stress manifest more than those closest to me, my family: my four children, Thomas, Ashby, William and Andrew; my parents, Mario and Lynda; my siblings and many extended family members who sent support and kind words; but none more than my long-suffering husband of 28 years, Chris. In his typical, unwaveringly supportive style, he always reminds me that I am stronger than I think.

I came in late to the election race and had mere weeks to organize, coordinate, recruit, fundraise and get my name out to voters before election day. In hindsight, it was a gargantuan effort, and I am under no illusions; it would not have been possible without an absolutely spectacular team of campaign managers, staff and hundreds of volunteers and supporters, all of whom came forward with their time, support, energy and great faith, and over half of whom had never been involved in a political campaign before. These volunteers have continued to engage politically and are organizing to explore ways to make their community a better place. I am so proud of them.

I humbly rise with gratitude for my place in this Parliament and for the gift of responsibility that I have been granted and that we all share as colleagues in this House. How fortunate to have been reminded of this responsibility in person by His Majesty, when he closed the throne speech by stating, “Members of the House of Commons...May you honour the profound trust bestowed upon you by Canadians, and may God bless and guide you in all your duties.”

Regardless of how members feel about monarchies, it is a sobering reminder, provided by His Majesty, of the tremendous responsibility we carry. How fortunate we are to be here to fulfill that work together.

In fact, all Canadians are fortunate to be here, in this country, the best on the planet, working together to make each other's lives better and standing as an example to the entire world of the artistry that emerges from a true mosaic of cultures, beliefs and stories. With the exception of our indigenous brothers and sisters, we all come from somewhere else. I am one of those who comes from somewhere else.

My mother's family has been in Canada for many generations, originally coming to Ontario from the New England colonies and settling in lovely Parry Sound, where my grandfather worked for Imperial Oil. He and my grandmother raised eight children. My mother attended bible college, sang in a gospel trio, was crowned Miss MacTier in 1967 and became a nurse. In stark contrast, my father was a child refugee from the Second World War. He came from Italy with his parents and brother. As an adult, he found work as a truck driver. His father, my nono, worked as a bricklayer and mason, helping construct the very town that his granddaughter would one day represent as a member of Parliament.

Their story is similar to that of many Canadians, and many in this House, who owe their existence to Canada's history as a welcoming nation for immigrants, a point also noted by His Majesty when he referred to Canada's immigration system as a source of pride and dynamism. My parents' families left their ancestral homes and came to this country because they had faith in Canada and its promise. I am a humble and grateful beneficiary of that faith and that promise.

I will submit, however, that this promise is not as vibrant now as it once was. For newcomers to have an opportunity to contribute to their new communities and country, they need support to get started. Right now, that support is simply not robust enough to provide what newcomers need. Many who are already here, whether indigenous peoples, long-settled Canadians or newer Canadians, are struggling and facing challenges of scarcity and unaffordability.

This is why our government has committed to several measures to alleviate the strain. As His Majesty noted, we will cap the total number of temporary foreign workers and international students to less than 5% of our population over the next 18 months. This approach will align immigration levels to infrastructure capacity. Newcomers need to be able to integrate successfully without overwhelming public resources. Our government recognizes that it is counterproductive to invite people into a house that is not properly able to receive them.

● (1320)

Our government has also made a significant commitment to francophone communities outside Quebec by increasing the target for francophone immigration. This policy will support the cultural and economic contributions of francophone communities in places like New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba.

As an aside, I make a personal commitment today to my own French-language learning.

[Translation]

I promise.

[English]

We will return overall immigration to sustainable levels, ensuring that the best and brightest are drawn to Canada and will work with us in building the strongest economy in the G7.

These actions also prop up our government's work to address affordability and housing. As a former municipal councillor, I know first-hand that housing and residential development are matters of great focus and great anxiety, particularly when provincial and federal partners amend the conventional use of tools, such as development charges, and particularly in Ontario. I understand the burden that falls to municipalities when other orders of government, however well meaning, download responsibilities to them without considering the financial impacts.

Municipalities have very limited ways to raise revenue and cannot legally run budget deficits. We must ensure that municipalities are made whole when their methods of raising revenue are altered. I was heartened to hear the Prime Minister acknowledge this to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference delegates in Ottawa this past weekend.

This responsible course correction on immigration will take some time, but we will restore balance and rebuild trust in our immigration system, a system that has contributed to nation building since Confederation and before, and will continue to do so if responsibly managed, as this government commits to do. At a time of critical consequence for the economic covalence of our country, we must support immigration that strengthens our economy while reducing stress on housing and infrastructure. In order to put action behind that commitment, our policies will prioritize those already in Canada over new entrants.

My four children, mentioned earlier, are young adults. They are striving to launch their own lives and become settled in their own homes, but that has simply been out of reach for them so far. One reason I am so pleased to be elected as a representative in this government is the ambitious homebuilding plan we have designed. Big results require big ambitions. Yes, our plan to get the government back into the business of building homes, and to double rates of homebuilding, is ambitious, but definitely results-driven. "Build Canada homes" will deliver affordable and deeply affordable housing for people just like my kids. There is no trepidation in executing this plan.

We all know Canada is a country of prosperity, but many Canadians do not feel prosperous right now. This problem has been stewing for decades, but now it will be dealt with. Productivity needs to grow so Canadian paycheques can grow. We will boost the revenues our country relies on to support vital services that improve Canadians' quality of life while focusing investment on capital government assets. Now is a time of opportunity. We are poised on the edge of a new era of prosperity and nation building not seen since the postwar period.

The Address

The dark cloud blowing in from the south has stirred us to action. Amid a groundswell of patriotism, we will build a shelter and a safe haven for our country and use this opportunity not only to weather the storm but to flourish when the clouds part. This is the promise being made to Canadians now and Canadians yet to come. May God bless us all in these duties.

• (1325)

Fred Davies (Niagara South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was interested in the comments of the member as I too sat on a regional council. The question of cutting development charges in half has been talked about by a lot of parties, but I would like to know this specifically.

In older municipalities, development pays for development and taxes pay for services. How exactly does the government expect to force municipalities to cut their development charges in half, and how does it make them whole after that happens?

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Madam Speaker, I sat as a municipal councillor, and this was a source of great discussion around the council table. Incidentally, I was on a plane this morning with someone from the development community, and we had a discussion about development charges. It is going to be an ongoing conversation of great importance between federal, provincial and municipal partners.

It is also important to keep an eye on the long-term future, because if we can increase housing supply through the incentivization of decreasing development charges, there are going to be more homes to collect property taxes from for our municipalities.

[Translation]

Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Milton East—Halton Hills South for her speech, and I congratulate her on her election. She did a good job explaining the recount she went through and the stress it caused. I congratulate her. In her case, it seems to have ended well. This is a matter of democracy. She said that every vote counts.

What does she think about the problems in other ridings, such as Nunavik? They say that every vote counts, but offices are closing before the usual time set by Elections Canada. That is what happened in Nunavik, for example. What does she think about the case of Terrebonne? Elections Canada made a mistake with the return envelope. The election depended on one vote. It is all well and good to say that every vote counts, but everyone must get a vote.

What does she think about this democratic issue that happened in some ridings?

The Address

● (1330)

[English]

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Madam Speaker, it is a question that I had posed to me many times during the recount from folks of all political alignments. I have full faith in the work of Elections Canada. There were elections workers who started very early in the morning and were counting very late at night. Ultimately, it is a human process with many checks and balances. I acknowledge that there were concerns with particular ridings. However, at some point, the work of government needs to proceed. People need to have faith in the electoral process, and their elected representatives need to get to work.

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all of the riding names have changed. I want to congratulate the member from Milton on her maiden speech, and I will get her riding name correct next time.

I want to pick up on her comments specifically about immigration. She indicated that one of her parents immigrated from Italy, as my mother did back in the 1950s. I too am a first generation Canadian. My question to her is regarding the role that immigrants have played throughout the Canadian story in terms of building our infrastructure and building our country into what it is. My grandfather, my *nonno*, was a mason until the age of 76. When we think about it, immigrants in particular are the exact type of people who build our communities and turn them into what they are.

Can the member speak a bit to the importance of immigration throughout Canadian history and into the future?

Kristina Tesser Derksen: Madam Speaker, it is interesting. The more we speak to our colleagues, the more we find that we have similar histories and stories to share.

The contribution of immigrants to this country cannot be underestimated or minimized. Canada, in many ways, is a country of immigrants. In speaking to folks at the doors, sharing these stories and finding other affinities and similarities in our histories, it has really been an eye-opening and enlightening process.

It is pivotal to remember that when we are looking at statistics with respect to immigration numbers, these are not just numbers; these are people. These are lives. These are stories being told. These are communities being built, with country building happening before our eyes. It is important that as a federal government, we continue to support immigrants who come here and continue to contribute.

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, as this is my first time rising to speak in the 45th Parliament, I want to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to the constituents of the newly redistributed riding of Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake. I thank them for placing their trust in me to be their voice in this chamber.

It is truly an honour and a privilege to stand in this place, and I do so with a sense of deep responsibility, one that I do not take lightly. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of my family, volunteers and the many dedicated individuals who believe in our vision for a stronger Canada. I want to take a moment to thank them for standing with me. I want to espe-

cially thank my husband Adam and my children, Annabelle, William, Victoria and Eloise, for their unconditional love and their unconditional support. I also want to express my steadfast commitment to fighting for the change and hope needed to address the immediate challenges facing our country and to strengthen it for the next generation.

During the recent election, as I spoke with constituents, I heard the same concerns time and time again. The rising cost of living is making it harder for families to make ends meet, and many no longer feel safe in their own communities. While the issue of protecting our sovereignty was at the forefront of political discourse, the overwhelming concern I heard from constituents was about protecting the livelihoods and values that define our communities.

For a decade, the Liberal government has attacked the industries that form the backbone of our economy. The government has also threatened the values and way of life in Saskatchewan. My constituents want to know how we can chart a path forward that ensures our province has every opportunity to succeed. To unite our country and create an environment where every Canadian, regardless of where they live, can work hard and succeed requires a plan. Unfortunately, the only thing that the Liberal government's throne speech makes clear is that it does not have a plan.

While there are some lofty ideas in this speech, there are no details on how the Liberals will accomplish these goals and no specifics to give Canadians the confidence they need in the government's direction. A budget would provide that direction, but right out of the gate, the finance minister announced that the government would not be presenting a budget this year. Rightly, that declaration was met with immense blowback and criticism, not just from Conservatives, but from Canadians, political pundits and people from all sides of the political spectrum. After all that backlash, the government has backtracked just a little, promising a fall budget. However, a fall budget is simply not good enough. Serious leadership requires a plan and a plan that should be presented this spring.

The Prime Minister himself repeatedly said throughout the election that a "plan beats no plan", yet here we are left wondering where that supposed plan is today. The throne speech offers nothing but vague rhetoric and lofty promises. It talks about wanting to bring down housing costs, which is a very important priority for many Canadians, especially young Canadians who have lost the dream of home ownership. However, instead of presenting a plan to cut the red tape that is driving up the cost of homes, the Liberal throne speech proposes a brand new bureaucracy. We need solutions that make housing more affordable, not more layers of red tape.

This lack of direction might stem from the very fact that the Prime Minister appointed a housing minister who has already publicly stated that, no, housing prices do not need to come down. How can Canadians trust the government to address the housing crisis when even its own minister does not believe in bringing prices down?

The Prime Minister also says that he wants to get big projects built, but his own ministers do not seem to agree. He has appointed many former Trudeau ministers who have actively worked to put up barriers and red tape, making it impossible to get big nation-building projects off the ground.

• (1335)

The lack of sincerity in wanting to get projects built is further evidenced by the Prime Minister's refusal to repeal the very laws that are stopping these projects, laws like Bill C-69, Bill C-48, the energy cap and the industrial carbon tax. These policies are suffocating our economy and job creation.

In fact, there is no direct mention of Canada's oil and gas sector in the throne speech, one of Canada's most important industries and the lifeblood of entire provinces. There is no mention of how we can get our energy to new markets and there is certainly no mention of how Canadian energy can displace our dependency on foreign oil from countries with lower environmental and human rights standards. There is no mention of how Canadian energy can help reduce our global energy dependence on those same countries.

This glaring omission in the throne speech speaks volumes about the government's priorities. It is not the bold leadership needed when our sovereignty and our economy are under attack. When outside forces are threatening our industries, we need a federal government that strengthens and protects them, not one that weakens and continues to undermine them.

Despite the talk of spending restraint, the throne speech offers no real numbers, no specific targets and certainly no credibility, especially after a decade of inflationary waste and economic decline. The tabling of the main estimates last week paints a distinctly different picture from the promise of spending restraint that was made in the throne speech. The Liberal government has tabled \$486 billion in spending, and yet again, it has done this without the presentation of a budget. This is the first time in decades that this has been done, outside of the pandemic. This is not the change that Canadians wanted. This is a troubling continuation of the pattern we saw under Justin Trudeau: escalating spending with no clear plan on how the money will be spent efficiently or effectively.

The proposal would increase government spending by 8%, with much of that increase funnelled into bureaucracy, consultants and contractors, none of which will directly benefit Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet. The bureaucracy is set to grow by 6%, which is more than double the combined rate of inflation and population growth. What is worse is that spending on consultants is set to increase by 37%, reaching an astonishing \$26 billion annually. This means that the average Canadian family will now be paying an extra \$1,400 a year just to fund these consultants. In just this short time, the Prime Minister is proving to be even more expensive than Justin Trudeau, whom he advised.

The Address

At a time when Canadians are already faced with the highest inflation in decades, this reckless spending will only make life harder for everyday Canadians. The Liberals must stop burdening Canadians with debt and start implementing policies that make life more affordable. With no budget in sight and no clarity in the throne speech on how the government intends to tackle the challenges facing Canadians, it is clear that the repackaged Liberal government is not showing the leadership our country so desperately needs.

While the throne speech fails to offer the leadership Canadians need, Conservatives remain committed to holding the government to account and bringing about changes that will make this country more affordable, safer and self-reliant. We must work together to deliver the hope that Canadians are so desperate for. The Conservatives are committed to fighting for those priorities so that together, we can build a stronger Canada where all Canadians can get ahead and contribute to the success of our great country.

• (1340)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think we need to take a holistic approach in dealing with the throne speech. It sets out a very straightforward agenda so that Canadians and parliamentarians can be very focused on what was taking place in the last federal election. People were genuinely concerned about Trump, tariffs and trade. They were issues that people wanted us to deal with. The Prime Minister received more electoral votes than any other political party in the history of Canada. We need to work as team Canada to ensure that we are able to overcome issues and build a stronger Canada, the strongest country in the G7. That is what we are hoping to achieve.

Does the member agree that there is a time to put partisan politics to the side in order to put Canadians first? To deal with trade, tariffs and President Trump, we need to do that now.

Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, I am in no way being partisan. As this is my first speech in the House of Commons in the 45th Parliament, I am simply relaying the information and the concerns of my constituents in Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake.

To address this holistic agenda, there was no plan and no details. There were many subjects missing and omitted from the throne speech. I talked about the energy sector and oil and gas, and a colleague of mine rose in this place earlier and asked about the opioid fentanyl crisis, which is missing.

The member should take a good long look in the mirror and commit to himself to be non-partisan this session.

The Address

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, we hear from the other side that the Liberals were elected on a strong mandate, that Canadians gave them a strong mandate.

We are sitting on the eve of more tariffs being levied against our steel industry. The Prime Minister was elected because he was apparently the man with the plan, yet we are seeing he has no plan. Does my colleague think Canadians were sold a bill of goods and that, in fact, the government was elected on a lie?

• (1345)

Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, my colleague brings up a very good point. Throughout the campaign, we did not hear that the candidate who is now the Prime Minister quietly ended the retaliatory tariffs that he campaigned on, saying that the government would give the revenue to the affected businesses. We know we did not hear that.

Also, if the Liberals are certain about supporting businesses, they would remove the industrial carbon tax. We look at our steel and aluminum manufacturers and what is coming from south of the border, the threat of doubling those tariffs. One would think that common sense would tell us that maybe we should try to remove the red tape and the extra expense of doing business, which is doing nothing for the environment, by the way, and make it easier for those producers.

[Translation]

Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her election and on her speech. Although I do not agree with everything she said, the fact remains that she is here to represent her constituents. I assume that what she says is also representative of her constituents' views.

Since we are talking about representing the voices and views of our constituents, the Prime Minister of Canada decided, when it came time to read the Speech from the Throne, to bring in King Charles III, a person to whom nine out of 10 Quebecers feel no attachment whatsoever. We know that 87% of Quebecers feel no attachment to the British monarchy.

Given that nine out of 10 Quebecers reject the monarchy, does my colleague think that the government's decision helped promote the Canadian unity we hear so much about?

[English]

Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, I want to go a little further. Just because we do not see eye to eye, that does not mean we cannot work together. It is important that we can have conversations and debate. Iron sharpens iron, and this is something that should be honoured in this place.

As for how the government wanted to read the throne speech, it is baffling to me that the Governor General could not have read it on the government's behalf, as opposed to His Majesty.

Michael Ma (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured and humbled to be representing the people of Markham—Unionville. They have entrusted me to be their representative and to speak up for issues that are important to them. I have promised to listen, understand, consult and advocate for them

in the House of Commons. I sincerely appreciate and respect their support for me to be their representative.

I would like to thank my community, my campaign team and especially my family: my wife Anna, my son Aaron and his wife Tiffany, and my daughters Samantha and Andrea. It was their love and support that gave me the energy and strength to succeed in my campaign. My family, together with my campaign team, have worked tirelessly to knock on doors in sunny, rainy, snowy and windy conditions. I deeply appreciate all their dedication and support.

As the voice of Markham—Unionville, let me paint a brief picture of my community based on an event I attended just this past weekend in my riding. I gave the closing speech for the 2025 National AccessAbility Week hosted by the NorthStar Special Needs Society. The initiative was designed both to reduce stigma and to raise awareness about disability within Asian Canadian communities. At its root, the event was about creating new narratives for Asian Canadians in the face of long-standing cultural norms, especially around disability. I was the chair of a mental health foundation, and I know that stigma in all societies in general is still very strong, especially in Asian Canadian communities.

What we see in Markham—Unionville is an immigrant community that is forging a new identity in our vibrant Canadian mosaic. Moreover, Markham—Unionville embodies the upwardly mobile middle-class Canadian dream that all immigrant communities aspire toward. It is a riding that has maintained a balance between industry, farmland and urban life. We have industry in the form of both locally grown talent like Novo Plastics and internationally recognized giants like Honda Canada. In the north, Markham—Unionville is filled with serene farmlands, while in the south is a bustling urban environment. Our commercial districts are filled with multi-generational small businesses like Lucullus Bakery and Congee Queen. Altogether, Markham—Unionville is the postcard city for the Canadian dream, with an enviable quality of life.

Let me take a quick moment to define what the Canadian dream is. It is as simple as owning a house on a safe street, where children can play at ease, where seniors can go for a carefree walk and where cars do not go missing in the night. It is shocking to hear about all the car thefts emerging in my community. This is a canary in the coal mine. The Canadian dream is faltering and has been for quite some time. The fabric of our mosaic is coming undone at the seams.

As members of the official opposition, it is not merely our duty to hold the government to account for the agenda that it outlined last week. We are not merely here as policy critics, but as a fellow pillar of governance. We provide hope to Canadians that things can and will get better. The Conservative priority for this session of Parliament is a Canada that is affordable, safe, self-reliant and united.

When I campaigned to my community in Markham—Unionville, I repeated two core promises: One, we will restore safety on our streets by repealing Liberal laws and locking up repeat offenders. Two, we will bring down the cost of living with a budget that cuts spending, taxes and inflation.

I had the pleasure of reading the Prime Minister's mandate letter before hearing the throne speech last week. If I did not know they were put together by the Liberals, I would have mistaken them for something produced by a centre-right party of the last few decades. Thus, one fact is clear to me for this session of Parliament: We are focused on priorities that have been universally championed by Conservatives for decades upon decades. Safe communities with an affordable quality of life are a singular battle cry for Conservatives everywhere.

● (1350)

The Liberals are uniquely ill-equipped to truly deliver on the community safety file, not because of ability, but because of contradictions inherent in the coalition that forms their support base. A safe community requires that we solve both the crime and the drug issues while simultaneously dealing with overwhelmed health care, housing, job markets and immigration levels. Crime, drugs and an overwhelmed social infrastructure are all intertwined in fostering unsafe communities. In juggling all these competing priorities, some will fall by the wayside, explicitly because the coalition that forms the Liberal support base will not allow the Liberals to turn 180° on all their prior commitments.

The prior Liberal commitment on crime is expressed in Bill C-75, the catch-and-release bill. It allows repeat offenders to be released on bail within hours of arrest, and they then often go and promptly reoffend. Only repealing these Liberal commitments can give judges the freedom to allow minimum sentencing.

I was discussing this issue with the deputy chief of police of our great York Regional Police. We have discussed that the police force is discouraged because criminals are released before the paperwork is done. Our frontline police force and their families are fearful every day with these repeat dangerous criminals free on the streets. The throne speech commitment to increasing the RCMP force neither goes far enough, nor should be the only focus.

The prior Liberal commitment on drugs is expressed in Bill C-5, which eliminated mandatory jail time for the production and trafficking of hard drugs like fentanyl. Is it not odd that the Liberal throne speech decreed a desire to block the flow of fentanyl, yet their previous legislation allows fentanyl traffickers to avoid jail term? Bill C-5 allows house arrest for these criminals. This means they can just walk out their own front doors and be on the street immediately, pushing hard drugs in our neighbourhoods.

The Address

Moreover, the drug issues require not merely that we stop the drug kingpins and their drug trade, but further, that we have a robust program of treatment in place. The throne speech did not go far enough on the drug file, as it made no mention of addiction treatment programs. This is something that we Conservatives are committed to. Will the government repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75, which the Liberals put into place?

I want to remind this House once more what the Canadian dream has always been. Canadians want to own a house on a safe street where children can play at ease, where seniors can go for a carefree walk and where cars do not go missing in the night. The Liberals have presented an agenda that speaks about reducing fentanyl flows and increasing the RCMP force. However, their commitment toward Bill C-5 and Bill C-75 is a threat to Canadians from coast to coast.

My colleagues across the aisle have voted for a Canada where repeat offenders are to be released on bail within hours. They have legislated into being a world where the producers and traffickers of fentanyl get house arrest instead of jail time. I cannot in my right mind consider the Liberals to be a party ready to protect the communities of hard-working Canadians, no matter what promises they have provided in their throne speech agenda.

We Conservatives are a government in waiting. We are the hope of Canadians for a future that can and will be different from the status quo.

Last, I urge the Liberals to provide Canada with a spring budget. Canadians want an open and accountable government with a plan for how to keep our communities safe and our cost of living under control.

● (1355)

The Speaker: We will proceed to questions and comments in relation to the hon. member's speech after question period.

Before we proceed to members' statements, I would just like to caution members, in relation to those statements that we are going to hear shortly, to be careful not to walk in the field of vision of the camera and not to walk into the camera frame of the member who is delivering their statement. I know many members know this and new members perhaps not. Everyone probably needs a reminder.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday we will solemnly mark the fourth anniversary of the horrific terrorist attack in London, Ontario, where a hateful act claimed the lives of four members of the Afzaal family and left a young boy forever changed.

As a Canadian and as a mother, I stand with our community in grief and resolve, honouring the memory of Salman, Madiha, Yumna and Talat Afzaal. The tragedy, rooted in Islamophobia, reminds us of the urgent need to confront hate in all its forms.

Let us renew our commitment to building a Canada where every individual, regardless of faith or background, feels safe and valued. In Canada, no one should be made to feel unsafe walking down the street. Let us renew our pledge to foster inclusion, reject division and ensure that such a tragedy never happens again. Together, we will build a stronger, more united Canada.

* * *

● (1400)

RED DEER

Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a deep sense of gratitude, humility and duty as the member of Parliament for Red Deer. As I take my seat in the hallowed House of Commons, I recognize that the seat belongs to the people of Red Deer. I will always take the responsibility of representing my community with the dignity and integrity that this seat commands.

Elections are not won by one person alone. Without the strength and support of my family, I would not be here today. I thank my wife, Kirsten, who has stood by my side throughout this journey we call life. My children's love continues to motivate me to be the best father I can be. I thank the people on my campaign team for their tireless hours of late nights and early mornings, and for believing in me and pledging their service to our community. I thank the people of Red Deer for placing their trust in me. I vow to represent them honourably, upholding the values that define Alberta's history and mould the bright minds of tomorrow.

* * *

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT IN ETOBICOKE

Hon. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour and remember three incredible kids whose lives have been cut short in an unimaginable tragedy: Ramone, Jace and Mya Laviña-Galve. They are victims of a drunk driver, such an inexplicably reckless and awful crime that we should do more to prevent. They will be remembered for the wonderful kids they were, all of them with such a bright future.

Ramone, an athletic 15-year-old, loved basketball. Classmates called him kind, genuine, thoughtful, a great listener and a friend to everybody, the leader of the pack.

Jace, 13 years old, loved basketball, too. No matter his team, he cheered for everyone on the court. The only grade 7 pupil on stu-

dent council, he was a future leader who was genuinely loved by all.

Mya, only six years old, loved purses and fashion, and she wanted to be a cheerleader. She was always smiling and dancing. She believed in everybody, lifted people up and lit up every room.

Our community and Parliament grieve with the Laviña-Galve family, especially their mom, Jade, and remaining sibling, who are both in recovery, and we will remember Ramone, Jace and Mya.

* * *

NIAGARA FALLS—NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour for me to rise in the House of Commons today to give my opening remarks in the 45th Parliament as the elected representative for the beautiful and iconic riding of Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake.

I want to sincerely thank the residents of Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake for once again placing their trust and confidence in me to represent them and their local federal issues in Ottawa. I also want to thank the dedicated volunteers who supported my local campaign. What we achieved on election night was made possible only because of the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. I also want to thank my entire family, including my beautiful wife, Carol, and my son, Daniel. I would not be standing here today if not for their continued love and support.

Last, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Speaker on his recent election. I look forward to working with him and all my parliamentary colleagues in both chambers as we work to resolve the many pressing issues facing Canadians in our country today.

* * *

*[Translation]***LONGUEUIL—CHARLES-LEMOYNE**

Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to sincerely thank the people of the Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne riding. Thanks to their renewed trust, our collective voice will continue to be heard in Ottawa.

This election was not about me. It was about their hopes, priorities and commitment to building a better future for our community. For the past 10 years, their constant support has made our progress possible. Every bit of progress we made, we made together.

[English]

There is still much work to be done, and it is my constituents' voices that will continue to guide that work. I will always be here to listen, to act and to deliver on the issues that matter most to them.

I want to thank my family, the incredible volunteers and the campaign team, who gave their time and energy with so much heart and dedication. This was their victory too, and I thank them again for their trust.

Let us keep moving forward together and continue building a stronger Canada for everyone.

* * *

BROOKS BANDITS

David Bexte (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and extend my congratulations to the Brooks Bandits on being crowned the 2025 BCHL champions.

This remarkable achievement is a true testament to the hard work, discipline and dedication that each player, coach and staff member has poured into this season. By winning the Fred Page Cup, they have not only earned a championship but have also inspired a community and raised the bar of excellence for Junior A hockey. The Bandits once again have shown what it means to lead with heart, play with pride and represent their community with excellence both on and off the ice.

Congratulations to the Bandits. They have earned every moment of this victory. Go, Bandits.

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● (1405)

ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Vince Gasparro (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, June marks Italian Heritage Month in Canada. Today we also recognize *Festa della Repubblica*, Italian Republic Day, a time to celebrate the rich culture, history and enduring spirit of Italy and its people.

Almost 1.6 million Italian Canadians proudly call this country home. Many came to Canada with nothing, yet through grit and hard work helped build our cities, infrastructure and our communities. In my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence, we are proud to be home to a large Italian Canadian community, with the Columbus Centre and Villa Charities at Dufferin and Lawrence standing as the cultural and social heart of the community. Italian Canadians have not only contributed to our past but also continue to shape our future through younger generations who serve Canada with dedication and passion.

To all those celebrating, I say *buona Festa della Repubblica* and happy Italian Heritage Month.

* * *

CANADIAN ENERGY SECTOR

Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to talk out of both sides of his mouth when it comes to Canadian energy. He says he wants Canada to be an energy superpower, but then says it can only be done with national consensus. He says he wants to green-light projects, but then presents an approval process of a minimum of two years. He says he wants provinces to present a list of ready-to-go projects, but then he came out of yesterday's meeting with no list. How sad is it that

Statements by Members

the premiers were just happy to meet with an adult after 10 years of the last guy, but he is no more serious when it comes to taking the necessary steps to unleash our energy sector?

If the Prime Minister is really committed to national unity and wants to make us the economic engine of the G7, he should start with repealing a decade of anti-energy laws Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, the production cap and the industrial carbon tax. He needs to get rid of them.

* * *

[Translation]

JACQUES PARIZEAU

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, “Don't be afraid”. In my mind I can still hear the voice of my former boss, my very first real boss, say those words. My first foray into politics happened back in early November 1987, the day after René Lévesque's death, when I naively called for Jacques Parizeau's return in a letter published in *Le Devoir*. A few months later, I was put in charge of the Parti Québécois's youth wing. I lived through experiences at the time whose full historical impact on the very fabric of the nation only became clear much later on.

Jacques Parizeau's life fills entire pages of Quebec's history. He was the architect of a great economy, of a great nation that finally took control of its economy barely half a century later. Following an election campaign that exploited Quebecers' fears, “don't be afraid” takes on a meaning that not even he had anticipated.

On the day after the 10th anniversary of his passing, I wish to express my deep admiration and gratitude for the man we knew as “Monsieur”.

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[English]

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, four years ago, in London, Ontario, the Afzaal family was targeted and killed in a horrific act of Islamophobic violence. It was not only an attack on a Muslim family; it was also an attack on the very foundation of our shared democracy and our right to live, to walk and to belong without fear. In the wake of the tragedy, Londoners responded with unity. Canadians across our country demanded not just remembrance but resolve.

Building a resilient society means embedding safety, equity and trust in our institutions. It means we ensure that public spaces are truly public and that no child ever fears walking on a sidewalk because of how they pray, how they look and how they live. Our job now is to strengthen our systems that protect our democracy through education, policy and action grounded in evidence and justice.

Statements by Members

Now, in the House, we have to honour the Afzaal family by building a Canada where everyone feels safe because everyone belongs. That is not just compassion; it is our national strength.

* * *

● (1410)

OPIOIDS

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2016, over 50,000 Canadians have died from the Liberal-sponsored opioid crisis. Over 80% of accidental opioid deaths involve fentanyl, and it takes just two milligrams of fentanyl to kill someone. The Liberals legalized possession of 2,500 milligrams of fentanyl. That means possessing 1,200 lethal doses is permitted.

This is not the public health solution the Liberals make it out to be. It is a public safety threat that is ripping up communities all across Canada. What is the Liberal response? Recently, the Prime Minister said that the fentanyl crisis is not a crisis at all and downplayed it as a mere “challenge”.

Conservatives are calling for mandatory life imprisonment for anyone involved in the trafficking, production and distribution of over 40 milligrams of fentanyl. Let us make no mistake; mass fentanyl production is mass murder. The fentanyl kingpins should be locked up and treated as the mass murderers that they are. It is time to invest in treatment and recovery, and to bring our loved ones home drug-free.

* * *

LONDON KNIGHTS HOCKEY FRANCHISE

Peter Fragiskatos (London Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the long and storied history of the London Knights franchise, a new chapter was written just a few days ago: Memorial Cup champions. They are also champions of the Ontario Hockey League.

This is an incredible franchise. Alumni include Darryl Sittler, Patrick Kane, one of my favourites and little talked about Kelly Cain, Chris Taylor, Mitch Marner, Matthew Tkachuk, Brendan Shanahan, Dino Ciccarelli and many more. This year's team stands on the shoulders of those giants and many more. It is a testament to their hard work and dedication, as well as their families' commitments, that they put the effort in and have the success they now enjoy.

In London, we really hold up high the example of the Hunter brothers, Dale and Mark Hunter, owners of the team who took it over about 20 years ago in a very difficult time. What we have now is an incredible franchise, due in no small part to them.

* * *

HOUSING

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland and Labrador, we take care of each other; that is who we are.

Today, too many of our neighbours are being left behind. As of January, 360 people, men, women and even children, are experiencing homelessness in my province, and it gets worse. There are nearly 200 youth waiting on a list with nowhere to go, while the only

emergency shelter in our capital is full every single night. They have even fewer resources in rural areas.

That is our future, stuck in the dark. In just one year, housing prices have jumped nearly \$23,500. That might not sound like a lot to a Bay Street banker, but to a young couple in Marystown, that is the difference between hope and despair. We already have the highest unemployment rate in the country, and now we have a housing crisis to match. Many people are starting to ask, when will the tents be on sale?

* * *

[Translation]

FESTA DELLA REPUBBLICA

Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, celebrated on June 2, *Festa della Repubblica* represents the courage, strength and hope of a people who chose freedom and democracy.

The birth of the Italian Republic 79 years ago marked the beginning of a new era between Canada and Italy, which have forged deep ties based on respect and co-operation. The Italian flag was raised this morning on Parliament Hill to mark this national holiday and as a powerful symbol of our shared history.

I myself am of Italian descent, which I share with nearly 20% of my constituents. This holiday symbolizes a cherished cultural heritage and pays tribute to Canada's Italian community, whose commitment, perseverance and family values continue to strengthen our society. We are united in celebration. *Viva l'Italia. Viva la libertà.*

* * *

[English]

FINANCE

Sandra Cobena (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Prime Minister introduced his first spending bill for the coming fiscal year, called the main estimates.

He promised to spend less. Instead, he is spending more, a lot more. In fact, this bill proposes 8% more spending than in Justin Trudeau's final year in office. That means that overall government spending is set to grow nearly three times faster than inflation and population combined. Seniors, moms and small businesses all have to budget before they spend. Why can this Prime Minister not do the same?

This is record-breaking waste. Consultant spending has ballooned to \$26 billion, that is a 36% increase in one year, or \$1,400 in taxes per household just for consultants. Worst of all, hours after the Prime Minister stood up in the House and promised to cap spending growth at 2%, the Liberals introduced a bill that grows it by 8%.

Canadians deserve better than broken promises and blank cheques.

* * *

• (1415)

WILDFIRES

Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the devastating wildfire crisis unfolding across Manitoba and western Canada. Over 100 fires are burning, many of them out of control. Communities like Flin Flon, Lynn Lake and Pimicikamak Cree Nation are under mandatory evacuation orders that are displacing an estimated 17,000 Manitobans.

The scale of these fires is immense, destroying homes and infrastructure, as well as disrupting every aspect of community life.

Let us extend our deepest gratitude to the firefighters, emergency responders and volunteers working tirelessly on the front lines to battle the flames that surround many of our northern communities. Their courage and commitment are nothing short of heroic. Finally, let us also ensure that all orders of government are working together to provide seamless support for evacuees as they wait for a safe return home when the danger has passed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament is demanding a budget from the Liberal government. Last night, a Conservative motion passed calling on the Prime Minister to table a budget this spring. The Liberals are asking Parliament to approve half a trillion dollars in Liberal spending with no budget. Despite promising to spend less and cap government spending at 2%, they have increased it by 8%. Single moms, seniors and small business owners must budget before they spend. Parliament wants the Liberals to do the same.

Will the minority Liberal government listen to the majority in this House and table a budget immediately?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week was a great week for the London Knights. It was a greater week for the country of Canada. Every first minister in Canada, from Quebec, from the provinces, from the territories and from the Government of Canada agreed on a plan to build Canada strong, one Canadian economy out of 13. That is what will drive our country forward.

Dan Albas (Okanagan Lake West—South Kelowna, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister for the update, but what about a budget? Canadians deserve real fiscal management, not excuses or fact-free talking points.

Here are some of the facts.

Liberal consultant spending is expected to rise 35% to \$26 billion, breaking the government's promise to cut down on consultants, fact.

Oral Questions

Liberals promised \$20 billion in elbows-up U.S. tariffs, but later dropped them with no regard to affected Canadian workers or fiscal impacts, fact.

The majority of the chamber voted last night for a spring budget, fact.

On what date will the Liberals face the facts and table a budget for their half a trillion dollars in new spending?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first ministers agreed on a plan to build this great country and stand up to Donald Trump, fact.

The Government of Canada is imposing tariffs that cause maximum impact on the United States and minimum impact on Canada, fact, on over \$60 billion of U.S. exports to Canada, fact, which has raised over \$1.7 billion already, fact.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with \$73 billion spent while Parliament was shut down by the government and a spending package of half a trillion dollars, with a record \$26 billion for Liberal-friendly consultants like McKinsey and no oversight or scrutiny from Parliament, this House has had enough.

Last night, the House passed our Conservative motion calling on the Prime Minister to table a spring budget. Will he respect the will of Parliament and table a budget immediately so Canadians and this Parliament can have the transparency we deserve?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take note of last night's motion, but what Canadians deserve and Canadian provinces deserve is a health care transfer, a transfer for child care, a transfer for dental care and a transfer to support affordability. That is what is in the main estimates, and we expect the support of the members opposite.

Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I realize the Prime Minister is new here, but all those things would be in a budget if he would table one.

This year alone, the government is going to spend a staggering \$26 billion on high-priced Liberal-friendly consultants, an eye-watering \$1,400 for every Canadian family. It will present no budget, no departmental plans and zero transparency. It will not even stand in this House and tell Canadians what the deficit will be this year.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals come clean and table a spring budget as this House has demanded?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite, I know the difference between main estimates and a budget. Unlike the member opposite, I know how to grow this economy—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, whenever things get to the point that I cannot hear, I stand up and halt the time.

Would the right hon. Prime Minister like to back up a bit and take another run at it?

Right Hon. Mark Carney: Mr. Speaker, I will speak softly.

Unlike the member opposite, I know the difference between main estimates and a budget. Unlike the members opposite, we know how to grow the economy without spending money. This is why we are proposing a bill to build one Canadian economy out of 13, and all the provinces and Quebec agree.

[Translation]

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our motion calling on the government to table a budget this spring was adopted yesterday. The Liberals must respect this Parliament and table a budget this spring. The Liberals want a blank cheque and they want us to approve more than half a billion dollars in spending without being presented the financial situation.

During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to spend 2%. Spending has gone up by more than 8%. This government is already proving that it misled Canadians.

Will the minority Liberals listen to the majority in Parliament and table a budget this spring?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Parliament's motion is duly noted.

Yesterday, I was with the Premier of Quebec and we agreed that the best way to increase growth in our country is to have one Canadian economy, not 13.

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister likely did not understand my question. Parliament has spoken. It has asked this Liberal government to table a budget this spring. There are 18 days left.

A good, responsible manager uses a budget to determine how much they can spend. If our families, seniors and SMEs acted like this government, they would go bankrupt. The Liberals said that they want to reduce spending, but they are increasing consulting contracts from \$20 billion to \$26 billion.

The Liberals must listen to Parliament. When will they table a budget to justify their over half a trillion dollars in spending?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there will be a budget that increases support for seniors, children, child care centres and all of Canada.

For now, we will increase our country's growth with a bill for a strong economy.

• (1425)

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am curious about something. There was basically a love-in yesterday in Saskatoon. However, there are stages to a love-in. I wonder what happens next.

During that love-in, there was an interesting proposal to build a pipeline that would carry oil from Alberta, not to Saint John, New Brunswick, via Quebec, but directly to Hudson Bay.

I wonder what the Prime Minister thinks of this odd project.

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we discussed many projects in Saskatoon yesterday.

Yes, it was a big love-in, because all the premiers want to keep going, want to work hard for our country and for our economy, and that includes major projects in Quebec in the critical minerals and green energy sectors.

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the last big love-in like this took place in Quebec with a lot of people, and then we got shafted. We remember that.

At the extremes of ideology, I never thought I would see Mr. Trudeau and Ms. Smith meet in the land of unicorns. Have we considered the cost of the icebreakers and the transport needed to go the long way around via Ungava Bay and of finding a market in Europe?

Are there any refineries in Europe capable of refining crude oil from western Canada?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have not yet made any decisions involving projects of national significance. Yes, it is true that we had a big conversation. There have to be environmental standards and there has to be a major impact on our economic growth.

* * *

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, very little was actually said, but I believe I heard about one demand that I would support.

Will the Prime Minister make a formal commitment to respect the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement du Québec's jurisdiction if the Hudson Bay project does not work out and to respect the BAPE's timelines?

Right Hon. Mark Carney (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke with the Premier of Quebec and the other premiers about the need for commitments and co-operation agreements regarding environmental standards. We will enter into such agreements in the coming months.

[English]

FINANCE

Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, this House delivered a clear verdict: The Liberal government must table a budget.

The Prime Minister is asking Canadians to blindly approve over half a trillion dollars in spending with no plan, no transparency and no accountability. The Prime Minister promised to cap spending at 2% and then shattered that promise and jacked it up to 8%. What do Canadians get in return? They get soaring debt, higher inflation and zero economic leadership.

Will the government stop the reckless spending, respect the will of this House and table a budget?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a vote yesterday, but there is another vote coming in the coming days. That is a vote where we will see the true colours of the Conservatives, because it is on the motion through which we would cut taxes for 22 million Canadians. Canadians who live in the member's riding will be watching at home to see whether the Conservatives will have the backs of Canadians.

I can tell the member that we will be watching from this side and Canadians will be watching at home, and we all expect this House to say together that, yes, we have the backs of Canadians and will give them a tax break.

• (1430)

Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night, our Conservative motion passed demanding a budget from the Prime Minister this spring. After a decade of Liberal delay and decline in Northwest Territories, its economy is in trouble. Since 2015, mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction are down 16%, construction is down 43% and the energy sector is down 54%. Economist Graeme Clinton said that as the mines close over the next three to eight years and nothing replaces them, “we can expect a much smaller economy than we have today.”

The Northwest Territories cannot afford any more of the Prime Minister's empty promises. What is his plan?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we understand Canada's strength when it comes to the economy of the future. We are attracting talent. We have very large industries. This is the country that builds cars and builds planes. This is the country that has critical minerals. This is the country that has renewable energy and conventional energy. This is the only country of the G7 that has a free trade agreement with all other G7 nations.

We have what the world needs, and we will be there to build a superpower economically for this country and Canadians for generations to come.

Gaétan Malette (Kapuskasing—Timmins—Mushkegowuk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament is demanding a budget from the Liberal government, which sought, for example, to cap spending at 2%, but the Liberals increased it by 8%. Rather than cut spending

Oral Questions

on consultants, they increased it by 35% to a record-smashing \$26 billion.

Last night, a Conservative motion was passed calling on the Prime Minister to issue a budget this spring. The Liberals are asking Parliament to approve half a billion dollars in Liberal spending without a budget. Will the minority Liberal government listen to the majority of Parliament and issue the budget immediately?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister said, we took note of the vote yesterday.

What I can say to the member, whom I welcome to the House, is this: Let us focus on what the main estimates are doing for Canadians. They are supporting child care in this country. They are supporting pharmacare in this country. They are supporting dental care. What they are doing is supporting Canadians.

Canadians have asked this House to work for them. Canadians have asked us to be ambitious. Canadians have asked us to build Canada strong. This is what we are going to do with the Prime Minister.

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the House has spoken: Parliament is demanding a budget this spring. The Liberals have already broken their promise of a spending cap. A budget is more than a big book of spending. It tells us how much things are going to cost. How much are they going to raise taxes? How much are they going to borrow? The Liberals have no plan to manage the debt.

Will the Liberal minority government listen to the majority of Parliament and table a budget this spring?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Transport and Internal Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government does have a plan, and that plan is what we discussed yesterday in Saskatoon with premiers from across the country. I do have to agree with the leader of the Bloc: It was a love-in. It was a love-in because the premiers, Liberals, Conservatives and NDP, agree that now is the time to build Canada, to build one Canadian economy. It will add \$200 billion to our economy. All of us in this House should support that.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, our motion to have the government table a budget this spring was passed in this House. The Liberals wanted us to approve \$486 billion of spending with no plan, and \$20 billion in revenue was supposed to come from the elbows-up countertariffs. However, secretly, during the election, the Prime Minister and cabinet signed an order to cancel them while telling Canadians they were still going to fight with dollar-for-dollar tariffs.

Will the Prime Minister listen to Parliament, table a spring budget and explain where the extra \$20 billion is going to come from?

Oral Questions

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's meeting was a great show of national unity. It was a proud day for Canadians. In the words of Premier Ford, "When our country comes under attack from President Trump, we unite and we're a resilient country. And everyone realizes that if we don't move, we'll be left behind, and the consequences will be 10 times worse".

Canada's new government is acting to make Canada an energy superpower. It would be great if the Conservatives helped us in this.

• (1435)

Ned Kuruc (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have good news. Last night, the Conservatives passed a motion calling on the Prime Minister to issue a budget this spring. This is as Trump is threatening to double the tariffs on steel to 50%. That would put Hamilton steel and steelworkers out of business.

The Prime Minister promised he would collect \$20 billion in tariffs from the United States. There is no \$20 billion and there are no tariffs.

Will the Prime Minister listen to Parliament, table the budget and show us how he is going to make up that \$20 billion?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when we are in a trade war and know that our steel and aluminum workers are worried, we are standing up for them. We will continue to make sure that we fight by having strong countertariffs, that we protect our workers and that we build. We will build very strong, major national projects.

[Translation]

Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, President Trump will jeopardize thousands of aluminum jobs in Quebec with tariffs potentially reaching 50%, and meanwhile, the minority Liberal banker is refusing to hear the majority of the House calling for a budget this spring.

He has no plan. He is spending half a trillion dollars without a budget. He is quietly abandoning the \$20 billion in retaliatory tariffs while President Trump doubles down, and he is keeping Canadians in the dark.

Will the Liberal Prime Minister show some respect for Parliament and for the majority of Canadians who did not vote for him and table a budget this spring?

Yes or no?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: A majority of Canadians voted for us.

As well, my colleague needs to understand that we are here to support aluminum workers. The Prime Minister, cabinet and I are committed to talking to the aluminum industry. The same is true for the steel industry and the unions. Since the beginning of this tariff war, we have been there to ensure that the tariff response is in place, to fight, to protect workers, and to build.

We will build Canada.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, instead of talking about pipeline projects that belong in the last century, the Prime Minister would have been better off discussing aluminum with his counterparts.

Tomorrow, we will find out whether Donald Trump is going to follow through on his threat to double tariffs. However, support for our industry was not on the agenda at the first ministers' meeting. There was not a word about it in the estimates either. The aluminum sector has been hit with tariffs since March. Those tariffs are at risk of doubling tomorrow, and the Liberals have yet to offer any help.

We have the right to know what the plan is if tariffs go up to 50%.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday evening, I was at an aluminum summit in Montreal. We talked to people in the industry. I have also been in contact with Quebec's minister of the economy. Of course, what is happening in the aluminum sector is very concerning. We are here to help manufacturers, unions, and of course, workers.

We are going to use Canadian steel and aluminum in our major infrastructure projects, we are going to build a defence industry that will also help us create jobs in steel and aluminum, and we are going to diversify our international trade.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when Ontario's auto industry was threatened with tariffs, Ottawa rushed in with \$2 billion.

Quebec aluminum has been subject to tariffs for three months now. Still, not a single cent has been released. Ottawa should have already offered direct assistance to the industry and shared some of the proceeds from the retaliatory tariffs. In the next 24 hours, Donald Trump could double his tariffs. However, there is still nothing for Quebec aluminum.

The Liberals got elected on tariffs. Why are they not ready today?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what my colleague said, I was in Bécancour just two weeks ago to meet with Alcoa's executives and, of course, with the workers and the union. I was also in contact with Rio Tinto Alcan, because it is important in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

We are working around the clock to protect investments and jobs. There is also money available through the regional economic development agencies. Canada Economic Development, in Quebec and in my colleague's riding, is supporting jobs and businesses as we speak.

* * *

• (1440)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for a decade, the Liberal government's anti-energy agenda has driven away Canadian jobs and investment. The consequences are clear. Building energy projects will boost our economy, reduce reliance on the United States and create good-paying jobs for Canadians. The only thing still standing in the way is the Liberal government.

At a time when our economy needs strengthening, will the Liberals finally approve and build a pipeline?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Prime Minister and the premiers agreed to work together to accelerate major projects in order to build a strong, resilient and united Canada. A Conservative premier, Premier Ford, said, "This has been the best meeting...in 10 years." Canada's new government will fast-track projects of national interest and guarantee decisions within two years, while respecting indigenous rights and the duty to consult.

There is no question that this government will make Canada an energy superpower. I hope the member will get on board.

Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Liberal government's anti-energy policies that are blocking critical energy projects in this country. Bill C-69, the no new pipelines law; Bill C-48, the shipping ban; the job-killing oil and gas cap; and the industrial carbon tax are all driving away investment and killing Canadian energy development.

If the Prime Minister is serious about his so-called "build, baby, build", will the Liberal government repeal its anti-energy agenda to get vital energy projects built?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member was listening to the Premier of Alberta yesterday. She talked about a grand bargain to build our energy superpower in an environmentally responsible way and in consultation with first nations. We hope the member will get on board.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, can the minister help me square a circle here?

Canadians were told that the Liberal Party had changed. They heard that a new government under the current Prime Minister would bolster Canada's resource economy so that we can compete toe-to-toe with the Americans. Just one month later, Canadians see how empty those promises were. The no new pipelines law, the shipping ban, the job-killing oil and gas production cap, and the industrial carbon tax all remain in place.

Oral Questions

When will the Liberal government repeal its damaging anti-energy agenda so that private energy investment will reignite in Canada?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly Conservatives were not listening to the premiers yesterday. Premier Holt said that this is a critical time for unity, and I could not agree more.

We will work with the premiers and indigenous peoples, and we will fast-track projects and guarantee them done within two years. We will support new pipelines if there is a national consensus. We will work together, and we will make Canada an energy superpower.

[Translation]

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a growing number of people in Quebec are in favour of building pipelines. That is understandable. We have had pipelines in Quebec since 1942. In 2012, a pipeline was built between Lévis and Montreal that crosses 26 waterways, including the St. Lawrence River. It is so good and works so well that no one knows about it and no one talks about it.

However, we know that building energy projects bolsters Canada's energy and economy.

My question is for the Minister of Heritage. Will he say yes to pipeline projects in Quebec and Canada?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague should be proud because he is a proud Canadian.

Yesterday, we witnessed a great moment of Canadian unity. The Premier of Quebec was there with his colleagues. They talked about major energy corridors to make Canada an energy power, an energy superpower. Quebec has a lot to offer Canada.

Quebec has expertise in hydroelectricity. Quebec has expertise in wind energy. Quebec has expertise in the environment.

We are going to become an energy power responsibly and fairly. We are going to build Canada together.

Oral Questions

● (1445)

Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent—Akiawenhrahk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the heritage minister must know that Leduc No. 1 is a Parks Canada national historic site. That is the well where oil first gushed out of the ground in Canada and triggered the Canadian oil boom. The heritage minister should be proud of that.

Earlier, the Minister of Finance talked about a hydroelectric project. Is he aware that Bill C-69 gives the federal government veto power over hydroelectric projects?

How can Canada reach its full potential if the federal government does not mind its own business?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Finance and National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec does indeed have an important role to play. It will be able to develop its full potential.

When it comes to hydroelectricity, Quebec is a leader not only in North America, but in the world. Quebecers should be proud that we are following Quebec's example. We can develop our natural resources responsibly, fairly and efficiently.

Quebec has always been a leader when it comes to energy. We will continue to draw inspiration from it. We will build the Canada of tomorrow together.

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*[English]***BORDER SECURITY**

Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I rise today, I want to wish my wife, Lisa, a happy 25th wedding anniversary. We are celebrating today. My wife and I live in Sault Ste. Marie, a border town, a very busy border town. Just as business never stops, so too the threats from transnational organized groups.

I want to know if the House is ready to hear some really good news from the Minister of Public Safety about a new act, the strong borders act.

Can the minister update the House on how this bill would continue to make Canada strong?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma for his hard work. Of course, I too want to wish Lisa a happy anniversary.

The member knows that a strong border means increased security and prosperity. The strong borders act will combat organized crime, protect the integrity of our immigration system, equip law enforcement with the tools it needs and, yes, strengthen our border. Strong borders mean safer streets. Canada's new government is cracking down on fentanyl, auto theft, guns, money laundering, irregular migration and organized crime. We will always be there to protect Canadians.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister committed to more rhetoric, more

lofty words and no actual pipeline or energy infrastructure project. Alberta has heard all this before. We do not need headlines. We need results: Get our resources to market. Repeal the tanker ban. Repeal the pipeline ban. End the job-killing production cap.

Will every Liberal member of Parliament commit to doing this today?

Hon. Tim Hodgson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Conservatives were listening yesterday, they would know there is a grand bargain. There is a bargain that the Premier of Alberta has signed on to. We will build. We will do it responsibly, and we will do it in conjunction with indigenous partners. It would be really great if you guys wanted to do it the same way.

The Speaker: I will remind the hon. member to address his comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Calgary Heritage.

Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a choice: break from Justin Trudeau's legacy or double down. He can get rid of the pipeline ban today, the shipping ban today and the production cap today.

Let me ask again: Will the radical former environment minister, the Greenpeace activist who was once arrested in my riding and is now the Minister of Canadian Identity, stop attacking the very identity of Canada itself?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was an incredible day for the country. Yesterday was the day 13 provinces and territories, plus the Prime Minister, got together to talk about significant national projects so that we can build this country, so that we can build it with the great men and women in our skilled trades, so that we can build it with great Canadian steel and so that we can build it with great Canadian aluminum. Build we will do. It is time to build.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals invited millions of migrants into Canada, knowing full well they did not have the economic and social infrastructure to support them. Canada now has a massive housing crisis, endless health care wait times and countless Canadian youth without jobs. Newcomers themselves are not to blame. It is the Liberals who misled everybody about Canada's capacity to absorb millions, especially under their government's economy-killing policies.

Millions of people are now in Canada with expired or imminently expiring visas. How is the government going to ensure that they will leave?

• (1450)

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a great day in the country. We introduced a very important bill that is getting us to take steps to strengthen our immigration system and our integrity in the system, while also upholding our humanitarian commitments. As global migration patterns evolve due to conflicts and crisis, Canadians expect a resilient and responsive immigration system, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate, by the end of this year, nearly five million people will be in Canada with expired or expiring visas, and the government has no plan for how it is going to get them to leave. We have a housing crisis, a youth jobs crisis and a health care wait-time crisis. Knowing this, the Liberals have already issued nearly 177,000 new temporary foreign work permits this year, a 10% increase from the last quarter. That is the same amount of people as in Kelowna.

With a youth unemployment crisis, why did the government increase the number of temporary work permits this year?

Hon. Lena Metlege Diab (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take our immigration system very seriously on this side of the aisle, as I know all Canadians do. For that reason, we are strengthening the integrity of our system while maintaining the humanitarian ability that we have in this country. Make no mistake. Canada takes its obligations seriously, and we are strengthening our asylum system to make it more efficient and flexible. We will be doing exactly that.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning, La Presse reported that asylum claims at the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle border crossing increased by 330% between April 2024 and April 2025. With over 600,000 non-permanent residents currently residing in Quebec, the situation is putting more pressure on French-language integration services, schools, day cares and other public services across Quebec, especially in greater Montreal. It goes without saying that it is making the housing crisis throughout Quebec even worse.

Is that because there can be no plan for managing immigration until the government tables a budget?

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the strong borders act that I introduced this morning would ensure that our borders are stronger and that Canadians are safe. Strong borders mean safer streets. Canada's new government is cracking down on fentanyl, guns, auto theft, money laundering, irregular migration and organized crime. We will be there to protect Canadians.

[Translation]

Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I should note that the reason it needs to be managed is because of the Liberals' past mismanagement.

We learned just over six months ago that 4.9 million people in Canada—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I must interrupt the member because there is a problem with the interpretation.

It seems to be working now.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles may start over from the beginning.

Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, the minister should understand that right now we need to be fixing the problems of the past, the problems that the Liberals have created over the past 10 years.

We learned just six months ago that 4.9 million people in Canada are here on temporary visas. What we do not know is how many of them have left the country and how many of them did not leave the country when they were supposed to.

Can the minister tell us about the government's plan of action to ensure that these people leave Canada? I am talking about those who no longer have legal status because of their temporary visas.

• (1455)

[English]

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will just say at the outset that the numbers that are cited are completely out of whack. They are being miscited here. For the record, we introduced the safer borders act this morning. This is a very strong measure to ensure that our borders are safer. That was in order to combat organized crime, to protect the integrity of our immigration system, to equip law enforcement with the tools that they need and, yes, to strengthen our border. We will always be there to protect Canadians.

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HOUSING

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for first-time homebuyers, the dream of home ownership has become a nightmare of debt and default. New Liberal housing data shows that nearly one in five new homeowners has missed a mortgage payment, one in four is using debt to pay for debt and over 60% are concerned they will not be able to make any payments at all.

With no budget and no plan in sight, but over half a trillion in new proposed spending, can the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure tell first-time homebuyers how much their mortgage payments will increase because of the government's inflationary spending?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for giving me an opportunity to highlight the importance of our GST cut for first-time homebuyers. We will be moving forward with a GST cut of up to \$50,000 on homes worth up to \$1 million. This is a huge opportunity for new homebuyers, in addition to the income tax break that we are giving to 22 million Canadians. Those are affordability measures that will help first-time homebuyers.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, their own data paints a very different picture, of a Canada where first-time homebuyers cannot hope to buy a home unless their parents owned one before them. In fact, over 40% of new homebuyers relied on a gift or inheritance to make their first purchase, and the average amount of that gift was \$74,000. That is not a small boost. That is the only way into the market for people now.

Is the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure content with a system where, unless one is born rich, one will die renting?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite seems to be ignoring the fact that there is a GST break coming for new homebuyers of \$50,000. This is nothing that was introduced by the members opposite. There were no measures like this. When I was the mayor of Vancouver for seven years, there was no GST break from the then government. The inaction by members opposite has led us into this crisis. The current government will get us out of it.

Roman Baber (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my north Toronto constituents cannot afford a home. After 10 years of the Liberals, house prices doubled, down payments doubled, mortgage payments doubled and rents doubled. New home sales in Toronto are at a record low, lower than they were during the housing crash of the 1990s, but the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure is on record saying that he does not want to lower the price of housing.

Why does the minister think that young people should not be able to afford a home in the city of Toronto?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hearing this concern from across the floor gives me confidence that the members opposite will support a GST cut for first-time homebuyers. I hope that the same support will also extend from the members opposite to partnerships with cities, communities, indigenous communities, and provinces and territories. We will be good partners as a federal government and deliver affordability measures to make housing affordable in Canada.

[Translation]

DENTAL CARE

Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in these difficult economic times, the Canadian dental care plan provides real support to seniors and families in my riding. Since the end of May, this program has been available to all Canadians earning less than \$90,000 per year.

My question is for the Minister of Health. What is the status of the program's rollout for all Canadians, and what efforts are being made to make it accessible?

Hon. Marjorie Michel (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. The Canadian dental care plan is changing the lives of Canadians.

Since the Canadian dental care plan was implemented, more than two million Canadians have accessed services. As of May 29, 2025, all eligible Canadians between the ages of 18 and 64 can register to access these services.

* * *

● (1500)

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Matt Strauss (Kitchener South—Hespeler, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a news report today details how the residents of Chicopee Terrace, an apartment complex in Kitchener, are banding together to patrol their parking lot as the Liberal crime wave intensifies. Jason Sousa, the leader of the group, says that he and his neighbours have had the catalytic converters stolen out of their cars. Not only are car thefts up, but now thieves are stealing the parts out of the cars they do not take.

This is not the Kitchener I grew up in. I have a very simple question: Why not go back to how it was? Why does the Liberal justice minister not simply repeal his soft-on-crime bill, Bill C-75?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dangerous people who commit violent crimes should be treated with serious consequences. That is why we are putting new measures in place to strengthen the bail regime, including for auto theft, including for home invasions, including for human trafficking. We are also introducing stiffer penalties for serious repeat violent offenders.

We are going to work with facts and reason. I hope that when we advance these measures to help protect the communities, we garner the support of the Conservative Party.

*Oral Questions***DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, people at the doors told me they are fed up with crime. With violent crime up 50%, many folks are afraid to walk around in their own city. This year, Edmontonians were shocked when a 13-year-old boy was stabbed to death at a transit station. People know this chaos is a direct result of the Liberals' soft-on-crime laws.

When will the Prime Minister stop the crime and lock up the criminals by repealing Trudeau's Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, when we hear the details of such a horrific crime as the member has shared, we know that this is not a partisan issue. All members of the House care equally about the well-being and safety of Canadians and believe that Canadians should feel safe in their communities.

What is clear, though, is that the member has not even read the legislation that he criticizes in the House, for if he did, he would know that he is advocating to make it easier for people who commit intimate partner violence to get out on bail.

It is important we deal with details and facts in the House. I encourage the member to read the legislation, for once, before he forms an opinion.

Sukhman Gill (Abbotsford—South Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I rise for the first time in the House, I thank the good people of Abbotsford—South Langley for placing their trust in me.

Soft-on-crime Liberals have caused havoc in my community. The families and law enforcement I met during the election are frustrated with seeing offenders released quickly, only to reoffend. Last week in Vancouver, a man was charged with sexually assaulting a teenage girl while he was already on probation for sexual assault. Repeat violent offenders have it too easy from the Liberal government.

Will the Prime Minister stop the crime, lock up the criminals and repeal Trudeau's Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the member on rising in the House for the first time and on his recent election.

There is something that we agree on: Repeat violent offenders should have a harder time getting out on bail. However, what is interesting is that when he cites a very specific instance, where he is dealing with somebody who could potentially be released for committing intimate partner violence, he then criticizes the very law that makes it harder for that person to get bail.

We are going to move forward with new reforms that make a stricter bail regime for violent home invasion, for people who participate in auto theft and for people who are engaged in human trafficking. I hope the Conservatives will vote in favour of strengthening the bail regime.

Leslie Church (Toronto—St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is Pride Month. It is a time to celebrate the 2SLGBTQI+ community and recognize their many accomplishments. We also know that the rise in hate targeting this community has left many feeling unsafe.

Could the Minister of Women and Gender Equality share how the government plans to continue ensuring that everyone can live openly, safely and with dignity?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for taking her seat in this place. It is always a privilege to stand in this House. I would like to thank the constituents of Mississauga—Streetsville, my family and the volunteers for putting their trust in me.

Pride season celebrates the resilience and contributions of the 2SLGBTQI+ community across this country, yet too many people face hate and discrimination for being themselves. Our new government will provide security funding for their Pride celebrations this year to ensure everyone is safe. We all deserve to live openly, with dignity and without fear.

* * *

● (1505)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal government, violent crime is up 50%, gun crime is up 116%, gang homicides are up 78%, auto theft is up 46% and extortion is up 357%. The Liberal government insists on putting repeat violent offenders back into our communities, unleashing crime, chaos and disorder.

Will the Prime Minister stop the crime and lock up the criminals by repealing Trudeau's Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we introduced a new bill in order to ensure the safety and security of our borders. I invite my friend opposite, as well as the Conservative Party, to support the bill.

The bill would ensure the safety and security of Canadians on our streets. It would cut the flow of fentanyl and ensure that guns are off the streets, as well as making sure that money laundering is addressed in a very serious way. I invite the Conservative Party to support the bill and pass it expeditiously in order to keep our communities safe.

*The Address***HOUSING**

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, out of the left side of his mouth, said his first focus is on deeply affordable housing. Then, out of the right side, he said they will fundamentally rely on the private sector to build it. As a banker and former chair of Brookfield Asset Management, he should instinctively know that big developers' first priority is to maximize profit. Deeply affordable homes will not just magically materialize.

Will the Prime Minister commit to bringing back a national co-op and social housing program with deep core subsidies now?

Hon. Gregor Robertson (Minister of Housing and Infrastructure and Minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is very focused on affordable housing. We look forward to working with all members of this House to deliver, from the new Government of Canada, affordable housing for the affordable end of the spectrum, from supportive housing to social housing and co-op housing.

We need to focus where the need is greatest. That is where we will focus. We will work with the private sector to help deliver on market housing and rentals, but the stress has to be on the most affordable housing for those who need it.

* * *

LABOUR

Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, postal workers across the country continue to serve Canadians in every corner of our nation, through snowstorms, through uncertainty and even through a global pandemic.

However, Canada Post continues to undermine this essential service, pushing Canadians to privatize services, refusing to address working conditions and stripping postal workers of their right to free and collective bargaining. Why is the government allowing management to tear apart our postal system and delay negotiations with CUPW members, who are simply asking for a fair deal?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we do thank the postal workers who, every single day, service our communities.

I will say this: The best deal is the deal that the parties arrive at themselves. Federal mediators continue to work with the parties on a solution, and we know that Canadians are relying on them to get this right.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

● (1510)

[Translation]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion, as amended, for an address to His Majesty the King in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your new role.

[English]

I will be sharing my time with the member for Egmont.

It is with tremendous humility and gratitude that I rise to speak for the very first time in this chamber, thanks to the confidence afforded to me by the wonderful people of the city of Guelph. I first want to thank all my volunteers, especially Guelph's own, the legendary Pat Sorbara, who served as my campaign chair and co-manager with the very talented Sean Mitchell.

More than 240 people of all ages and backgrounds volunteered for the campaign and were literally with me every step of the way. There is only one name on the ballot, but there are hundreds of people behind that person. I think all members of the House will agree that a vibrant democracy is a beautiful thing, and it is worth protecting.

I want to thank my husband Mike and my kids Rebecca, the historian, and Elise, the environmentalist, who have been my number one supporters. I want to leave Canada and this planet better for them and for their children.

[Translation]

It is up to us to leave behind a prosperous and equitable country and a healthier planet.

[English]

My thanks to the residents of Guelph, who believed in me to be their voice in Ottawa, and to every person who took the time to speak with me at the door or in their driveway, especially those who do not agree with me, because we have to regain our ability to have conversations grounded in respect and civility. We have to regain our ability to find common ground for the greater good.

Just as the Speech from the Throne began with a land acknowledgement, and an ongoing commitment to reconciliation, I want to acknowledge that Guelph has served as traditional lands for many peoples over time, specifically the Attiawonderonk and the Haudenosaunee. The land is held as the treaty lands and territory with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation under the Between the Lakes Purchase Treaty No. 3, and it is home to many first nations, Inuit and Métis people today.

Guelph is also known as the Royal City. When it was founded by John Galt in 1827, he named it in honour of the British royal family, who were descended from the House of Welf, also known as the Guelphs.

It is fitting that my first speech as the new MP for Guelph, the Royal City, be an enthusiastic endorsement of and response to the Speech from the Throne. Last Tuesday, His Majesty King Charles III read these words: “While the world faces unprecedented challenges, generating uncertainties across the continents with regards to peace and stability, economics, and climate change, your communities have the skills and determination to bring a wealth of solutions.” I know that Guelph residents and businesses have the skills and determination to face these unprecedented challenges and to seize this opportunity, to think big and to act bigger, as we embark on the largest transformation of our economy since the Second World War.

We are facing unprecedented challenges. The Conference Board of Canada identified Guelph as the most vulnerable city in Canada to tariffs. In February, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce identified Guelph as the sixth most vulnerable city overall, with the fourth-highest exports to the U.S. per capita.

Over the course of this conversation in this chamber, members opposite have been implying that the Trump tariff threat was somehow conjured to scare voters during the election, unnecessarily, but it is a very real threat to the people in my community and all across Canada. Protecting jobs, supporting workers and building the strongest economy in the G7 is the single most important thing this new government can do to help the 16,500 people in Guelph who work directly in manufacturing. That is one in five homes directly employed in advanced manufacturing and thousands more who work in related fields.

Sometimes people we talk to during the campaign think we are not going to remember those conversations, but I am thinking right now of a single mom who talked to me in her driveway. She was wearing a hoodie embroidered with the name of a local food processor. She was terrified she might lose her job because of these senseless tariffs.

During a different round table discussion, another woman told me that people in her cultural community are worried not only that they could lose their jobs, but if that did happen, they are scared they would not be able to meet their financial commitments to family members they have sponsored through our immigration system. Already, the threat of tariffs has slowed employment and expansion.

I am thrilled that the Speech from the Throne meets this issue head-on for everyone in this House and for those people in my community. This throne speech prioritizes a new economic relationship with the United States, stronger relationships with reliable trading partners and allies around the world, and lower interprovincial trade barriers. We are already seeing those after six days in this House.

• (1515)

We are seeing national infrastructure projects and an industrial strategy that will make Canada more globally competitive while fighting climate change. This is possible. In January, the federal and provincial governments invested in Linamar to accelerate the development of green technologies in the auto sector. Linamar is expanding its portfolio of advanced electrified products that reduce

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overall emissions while staying flexible to the needs of the end market as technologies evolve. We can do both.

The Speech from the Throne also outlines the government's plan to catalyze new investment to create better jobs and higher income for Canadians, to build hundreds of thousands of good careers in the skilled trades and to build Canada into the world's leading hub of science and innovation. These last three points are particularly exciting opportunities, and they speak to Guelph's leadership in advanced manufacturing, agribusiness and clean technology.

Conestoga College has a campus in Guelph that stands ready to train young people in a variety of trades, and this new Liberal government has promised to support apprentices and people who are ready to make a mid-career move. Guelph is also home to the University of Guelph, one of Canada's top comprehensive and research-intensive universities. I am an alum myself. Whether people know it as Canada's food university or home of the Ontario Agricultural College or the Ontario Veterinary College, every day scholars at U of G are tackling significant global challenges, like protecting groundwater, creating drought-resistant plants, food safety and security, reducing plastics and so much more.

Protecting, attracting, growing, innovating and retaining business is job one. However, it is not just what we do but also how we build the strongest economy in the G7 that matters. We know that GDP alone does not reflect our well-being as a society. Right now, the cost of these devastating wildfires, the firefighters, the displacement and all the rebuilding that will have to come, all of those costs add to the GDP, but at what cost to the people and their communities? A clean and constructive transition to a strong and productive economy is what matters to Guelph and to Canada.

Guelph is the largest Canadian city to rely almost exclusively on groundwater for its drinking water, so we have strong natural heritage protections and robust monitoring of water quality, quantity and conservation. When the throne speech talks about reinforcing Canada's commitment to protect 30% of lands and 30% of waters by 2030, that is vitally important, and it reflects this government's commitment to climate. Also important is the commitment to conservation. It can never be either the economy or the environment. It must be both.

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Who benefits from that strong economy matters too, and we see that reflected in the throne speech's assertion that the economy is only truly strong when it serves everyone. It is boots and suits, scrubs and lab coats, waders and jeans and whatever people wear to work or in their community. It is young people, families, seniors and artists. It is everyone. Beyond jobs, opportunity and inclusion, we need affordability, and that looks like a middle-class income tax cut that will save two-income families up to \$840 a year. It looks like eliminating the GST on homes at or under \$1 million for first-time homebuyers.

It looks like tackling the supply side of the housing issue by doubling the rate of homebuilding using Canadian technology, Canadian skilled workers, Canadian products and prefab homes, including those manufactured by Pacd Homes in Guelph. Inspired by the auto industry, its system allows it to build cost-effective homes in just four to eight weeks. With six years on city council, I am acutely aware that housing supply and affordability are urgent issues that need all levels of government to work together, and I am proud that this new government has committed to the most ambitious homebuilding plan since World War I.

This government will protect all the programs that support Canadians, and I am confident the people of Guelph, the city, its small and large businesses and the—

• (1520)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I apologize for interrupting, but we need to move to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong.

Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton—Bkejwanong, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first let me say how delightful it is to see you in the chair, and I would like to congratulate the member for her maiden speech.

The throne speech had a lot of things in it that sound good. This has been the problem with the last decade of the Liberals, that they say one thing and do another, leading to some of the highest inflation we have ever seen, people in the longest lines at food banks, the homeless issue, encampments and all of these things.

I wonder how the member squares the words in the throne speech with a plan to spend another \$486 billion that will drive the same results as in the last decade.

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians understand that we are functioning within a global context and that most of the issues we are facing are much more complex than a simple slogan can address. If we look at the record of the previous Liberal government, it did a lot to support families, like through the Canada child tax benefit and by lifting hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty by bringing the eligibility age for OAS and GIS back to 65.

This government will continue to act and has set funds aside to support workers through this transition.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating the member for Guelph on her election.

What she said in her speech is very noble. She began by saying that she got into politics for her children, to whom she wanted to leave a cleaner, healthier world, a world where global warming might be below 1.5°C.

The International Energy Agency has been quite clear that if we want to prevent global warming from exceeding 1.5°C, then the world cannot start any new oil projects.

For the sake of her children, is my colleague prepared to sit down with the Prime Minister and tell him that she will oppose any major infrastructure project that will result in increasing the production of Canadian oil?

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, my daughter is studying environmental sciences. We are really excited about the promise of a green energy and conventional energy superpower.

We are in a transition period, which means several things. We will certainly promote clean energy and study the best options available in the current context for the provinces concerned.

[English]

Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Guelph on her maiden speech.

I cannot help but reflect on the question that came from our Conservative colleague a few moments ago. On the one hand, they are basically saying that folks are struggling, and they are identifying the realities of what is going on in our country. On the other hand, they are saying, how dare we spend money on actually trying to help people. I think that this is a key difference between Liberals and Conservatives. We see not just the responsibility, but also the opportunity to invest in people and provide them with the resources they need to be able to achieve that quality of life that they desire.

Can the member comment on that?

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the comment because it is a reflection I have had a number of times over the past few days. We want the federal government to do more to support people. We want to achieve \$10-a-day child care. We want to do more on climate action, and there is going to be an expense to that. The beauty, though, is when we invest in projects, we are going to generate new income and new jobs. That is the magic within this throne speech.

• (1525)

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the new member for Guelph.

Liberals were elected on a promise of building half a million new homes a year. It reminds me of a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat. It looks real, but it is a trick. TD released a report today stating that housing starts will actually be declining to 215,000 from 245,000 last year.

Does the member realize that Canadians do not want hyperbole and empty—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): The hon. member for Guelph.

Dominique O'Rourke: Mr. Speaker, I, my colleagues, this government, most provinces and every municipality are 100% committed to seeing more homebuilding so that we can address the housing crisis.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 52, later this day, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

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

It is agreed.

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

Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

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RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion, as amended, for an address to His Majesty the King in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this chamber for the fourth Parliament that I have been participating in as the member of Parliament for Egmont.

I want to congratulate all members who are sitting in this particular Parliament who ran successful elections. I also want to reflect momentarily on all of those who contested seats in the recent election and were not successful in arriving here. We all have colleagues who were not successful in their election and who are not returning. I was reminded of that a number of years ago. I was first elected in 1982, and when I commented to an individual that I enjoyed elections very much, they remarked to me, "It is easy for you; you have never been defeated." I think of that in each election, in each legislature I have sat in and each parliament in this House of Commons that I was successful on being re-elected to.

The Address

Our democratic system depends on men and women putting their names forward in a very public process. Elections are very public. I often advise people of different political stripes on whether they should run for office or not. I tell them that there is only one of two outcomes in an election: one either wins or one loses, but both are very public. If a person can accept either of those conclusions, then they should put their name forward and run for office.

I would ask everybody to reflect on the many candidates who put their names forward in this last election who were not successful. Only 343 people can be successful and earn the right to sit in this chamber. However, I enjoyed listening to the many speeches here over the past week, especially from new members of Parliament, new politicians, and the enthusiasm they bring forward, the dreams they have for the areas they represent and what they would like to accomplish.

None of us arrive here without an extensive team. Over the last week, I was sending notes of thanks to my many volunteers, and it dawned on me just how many participated in my election. Hundreds of people came forward to do the jobs that are important for candidates to win in elections and for those who participate. I want to reflect, which I often do, on the candidates who do not get to speak in this chamber following an election. Some of them were here before, some of them were new with ambitions to be here, but did not make it. It is important for us as parliamentarians, because we get the ultimate reward of representing the part of the country that chose us to be their representative. It is really a great honour, because we take forward the concerns and the ambitions of the people we represent.

My riding of Egmont in Prince Edward Island is similar to most rural areas across this wonderful country. There is always more to be done than we have the ability to do, but that is really what governing is all about. However, I have been so proud of our government's track record over the past number of years in the area of rural development. My colleague, who is sitting close to me today, is passionate about rural development and ensuring that rural parts of this country are treated equally with the many challenges that rural, small-town Canada faces. As parliamentarians, it is important for us to make sure we do not overlook that, and that we are constantly using every opportunity we have to advance the concerns and the issues brought forward by rural communities.

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My riding is actually half urban and half rural. Over the past number of years, infrastructure has been one of the significant investments by the government that I was part of. All across the riding, each community is significantly better off today than it was 10 years ago. I am extremely proud of the record of our government in developing infrastructure, but still more has to be done. There are always a lot of needs in this country, and it is always interesting to listen to debate.

• (1530)

On one hand, members of the electorate were very clear in the last election. They stated that they did not want to pay more taxes, but, by the same token, they still want government to support the many safety and social programs that we have come to depend on in this country. That becomes a contradiction and the roadway that governments have to travel: living within their means, spending appropriately, while at the same time still investing across this country. That is why I was so pleased that in the throne speech, our government and the Prime Minister, even today in question period, referenced so much about investing and growing the economy through major projects that built this nation. It has been done before. Going back in its history, this country was built on great visions from coast to coast to coast, investing in significant infrastructure that grew the country over the years.

One of the issues that was loud and clear to me in my riding over the past election was an area that the federal government shares with provinces. That is the area of health care transfers. Today, the Prime Minister, in an answer in question period, referenced the fiscal statement that we will present to the House as presenting increases in health care transfers. I am going to speak to the area of health care, recognizing that it is a shared constitutional responsibility. In fact, this morning, my colleague, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, tabled a petition in the House on this particular subject.

The subject that I want to talk about was the number one issue raised at the doorsteps in my riding, and that is health care. Everywhere I go, I hear real frustrations about the state of health care, and I share the concerns of all those Islanders. Over the past number of years, I have spoken with thousands of people in my Egmont riding and, over the course of the last election, I spoke with many again. Again and again, I am told that access to health care is getting more and more difficult. Frankly, I have come to the conclusion that what I am hearing is correct. The province's response to a genuine health care crisis is not keeping pace with need.

Let us be clear. In 2023, the federal government joined with the province in a new funding arrangement for health care. Ottawa came to the table, with P.E.I., with \$1 billion over 10 years. There was \$300 million in new funding. This year, the federal government will provide \$236 million to the province through the Canada health transfer. Everyone in here knows how this works. Under the Constitution, the provinces operate the health care system. In other words, the province is in charge of health care recruitment, hospitals and professional services. Our role in Ottawa is to support that work through financial transfers, and that side of the arrangement has been respected.

However, here is what I have heard at the doors: People in Ottawa may be spending money, but we residents are not getting the health care we need. In fact, I heard from many residents that they are now very weary of the province's excuses. Sadly, those provincial excuses are meant to deflect responsibility for poor service, long wait times and inadequate access. For Islanders, this is increasingly distressing and, again, I share their frustration. As a member of Parliament, my duty is to understand the day-to-day needs of the residents. The part that really hurts is that so many Islanders are enduring uncertainty every day because of poor access to health care. This has to be fixed. When I speak with young parents about their worries, it is very hard not to share that anxiety. When I speak to older Islanders concerned about loved ones and spouses, it is hard. The federal government has done its part. The money is there. The federal end of the partnership has been met and exceeded. I will say that until Islanders are confident and content with their health care system, I will continue to demand better.

We live in the greatest country in the world. We are extremely fortunate to have great financial resources and an outstanding education system. For that reason, I do believe elected representatives of the federal government should start insisting on measurable improvements. We should make our voices heard. The federal government has kept up its side, and now is the time for all of us to insist that our provincial colleagues keep up their end and focus their considerable resources on the front lines of our health care system.

• (1535)

Clifford Small (Central Newfoundland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a promise was made to the people of Prince Edward Island, as it was made to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, that the ferry passage rates would be drastically reduced, to less than half. I know that the member has been quite irritated. I saw in the press not long ago that he expects that the rate should be dropped by July 1.

With regard to the promise that was made that affected the outcome, and he spoke about outcomes in his speech, is that promise going to be kept, or was it just a promise that was pulled out of thin air to affect the outcomes of the elections in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Prince Edward Island?

Robert Morrissey: Mr. Speaker, the promise that was pulled out of thin air was the Conservative platform promise on the same issue. Our promise was real. It was fiscally responsible. We indicated that we would reduce the tolls on the Confederation Bridge to \$20, with a corresponding reduction for all Atlantic Canada ferries by a similar percentage amount. That is a promise that was made. It is a promise I have every confidence that the Prime Minister will deliver on.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, but he will have to explain a few things to me.

In 2020, the Premier of Quebec and governments across Canada asked the federal government to increase health transfers from 22% to 35%. I would like to remind my colleagues and those watching at home that the initial agreement was for 50%.

However, because of the well-known fiscal imbalance, the federal government kept money in its own pockets to fund other things and infringe on the jurisdictions of Quebec and the other provinces. Then, three years later, after the request from the Premier of Quebec and premiers across Canada, the government increased transfers by 2%. That is right: 2%. Health transfers were increased from 22% to 24%.

My colleague will have to explain to me how proper health care services can be provided in Quebec and rural areas, like the one he represents, if the federal government is only increasing transfers from 22% to 24%, when the initial agreement was for 50%.

[English]

Robert Morrissey: Mr. Speaker, my colleague overlooks the major fact that, over the years, the federal government moved out of the fiscal capacity area in taxation to allow the provinces to move into that field to fund health care more and more. When we look at the actual numbers, the total revenue available to the provinces has increased significantly.

It was our government in 2023 that signed an agreement with each of the provinces, where they came forward and said that this is the money they need from the Government of Canada, in addition, to fix the health care problems they are facing in their provinces. What I am saying is that it is time they stepped up. We delivered the money. We kept our end of the bargain.

Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague is a great advocate for rural areas and especially rural health care. We are at a time when it is no longer possible to die or be born in our community because we have to go to urban centres to receive health care. The situation in rural Canada is dire.

I would like to hear my colleague explain what the issues are and what he thinks the solution could be for rural health care.

• (1540)

Robert Morrissey: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has fought me a lot, as a seasoned politician, I will admit, about rural Canada and rural parts of this country. The challenges of health care in rural parts are significantly different than in urban parts. First of all, the jurisdiction responsible for the delivery of health care must recognize that. This is where the provinces come in.

Voters were telling me, in the last election and over the last number of years, that it is time that Ottawa put more strings attached to the fiscal transfers given to the provinces in the delivery of health care and put in specific criteria about the outcomes and the benchmarks that must be achieved to improve rural health care delivery. Unless the Government of Canada does that, we are going to continue to slide in the services available to rural communities, and we will have a continuation of what my colleague has just articulated.

Jonathan Rowe (Terra Nova—The Peninsulas, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I get into the meat of my response, I just want to thank the 19,605 people from Terra Nova—The Peninsulas who

The Address

voted to have me here today to bring their voices here to Ottawa. I am a proud Newfoundlander, with an entangled heritage with the Rock. While there are many things to be proud of, the thing that makes me the most proud is that I am part of a community that truly cares for one another.

A great example of this is when eight-year-old Adalyn Skinner went missing in the woods and the whole community banded together to make sure she came home safe. I am proud to stand here today to say that she was found safe and sound. This story does not just bring us together; it also shows who we are, because when something like this happens, politics do not matter and status does not matter. What matters is looking out for one another, no matter the cost. That is the spirit of a Newfoundlander, that is the spirit I was raised with and that is the spirit I bring to the House.

We know that success is not measured by what we accumulate for ourselves but by how we show up for the people around us. That is why I have grown to hold this motto: “Success is helping other people succeed.”

“One day the sun will shine and have-not will be no more” were the famous words of our premier, Brian Peckford. The sun did shine. Under the last Conservative government, our province was thriving. For the first time in history, we had an economy we could be proud of, but during the lost Liberal decade, our province has been spiralling into poverty.

Almost every aspect of our life has been in decay. Our hospitals are closing, and the ones that remain have closed departments with no emergency services. Patients with life-threatening issues are having to drive over deplorable roads. Just to give an idea of how deplorable the roads are, after my only 36-day campaign, I had to replace all the suspension in my pickup truck. The MHAs in my province would love nothing more than to be here and announce more hospital funding and repave every inch of our eroded roads. Unfortunately, our province is in a dire financial situation and is running major deficits due to the Liberal government's failed economic policies.

My district of Terra Nova—The Peninsulas touches five bays, and we have more small craft harbours than any other district in Canada. Whether off Point May or St. Bride's in the south, or New-Wes-Valley, Bonavista or Bay de Verde in the north, fishing needs to continue to thrive in these regions.

When I travel from wharf to wharf, it is no trouble to tell that the fishermen are at their wits' end with the Liberal government and its policies that are hurting the fishermen's industry, yet the worst is yet to come. With the government planning to allocate 30% of our ocean as marine protected areas by 2030 and 50% by 2050, these targets will once again be a major blow to Newfoundlanders' livelihoods. Can members imagine the uproar if Ottawa decided to take 30% of farmland from farmers?

The Address

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are not putting up with it. We will come here week after week and fight for our constituents and for our province.

Despite having the most small craft harbours in Canada, my district's top employer is construction. Places like Marystown, Green's Harbour and many more towns in our district have a long history of construction and boat building. On the Burin Peninsula, companies have built boats for World War II, ferries and even the top sides of oil rigs, but under the Liberal government, there are not one but two state-of-the-art, multi-million-dollar shipyards sitting idle, and this is not the only thing sitting idle.

The Bull Arm Fabrication Site cost half a billion dollars to construct in the nineties and is probably worth billions of dollars today. It has built multiple oil rigs, including the Hibernia and the Hebron, which was the fifth-largest in the world. To give an idea of the magnitude and size of this facility, I wanted to inform everyone that it has the second-largest doors in the world, second only to NASA's facility.

My father, my mother and I all worked at another oil rig construction site in Argentina. It was more than a job; it was a legacy. Three members of the same family came together to build something that would stand tall in the North Atlantic, something we could be proud of, but just like so many other sites across Newfoundland and Labrador, this site too will be idle within a few months, now that the project is coming to completion. It is another facility, another opportunity, sitting idle. What is even more frustrating is that there is no plan to fill the void, just silence where there should be progress.

● (1545)

We have an oil refinery as well. It produces 135,000 barrels of oil a day. Oh, wait, it used to produce 135,000 barrels a day. That is the kind of capacity that built middle-class families and allowed young people to stay at home to work. Then the Liberal government invested 89 million taxpayer dollars, not to improve it and not to modernize it but to incentivize the company to reduce its throughput to 14,000 barrels of biodiesel. We should think about that; it is a 90% reduction.

This was not a market-driven decision but a politically manufactured one. Now we see the media publishing stories saying that the refinery is struggling and its future is uncertain. In fact, just yesterday it had layoffs. I ask the government what it expected. It suppressed the whole business with regulations and industrial carbon tax, poured millions of dollars into shrinking its output and now acts all surprised that it is on the brink of collapse.

Speaking of collapsing industries, Newfoundland's mining industry is hitting rock bottom. I have been in the pits, seen the blasts and stood shoulder to shoulder with the hardest-working men and women in this country. Mining is not just a job in Newfoundland; it is one of our economic foundations. That foundation is crumbling. Within six months, four mines closed on our island, one of which was in my riding. That is not a coincidence; that is a crisis. These were not exhausted sites or failed ventures; these were viable operations that had to close down rather than keep going down. They closed down due to the government's embarrassing policies, poli-

cies that are chasing investors away and eliminating our competitive edge.

Let me be clear: The prices of gold and of minerals are global prices. We do not control them. What we control is how competitive we are as a country. Now, the artificial costs, like the industrial carbon tax and the inefficient bureaucracy, eliminate our competitive edge. The minerals are still in the ground, but the wrong leaders are still in government.

The throne speech talks a lot about giving Canadians a tax break, which is great, but we cannot tax someone if they are not working. Right now, we have the highest unemployment rate in the country, at nearly 10%. That is not because our people do not want to work but because there are no jobs, and that makes me frustrated. What frustrates me the most is that we are sitting on a gold mine of oil facilities, an untapped potential that the Liberal government keeps suppressing. We have the resources, the infrastructure and the workers, but instead of building, it is blocking. Instead of digging, it is diverting.

Where shall my constituents find work? I can tell the House that they will not find work in Ottawa, since most of them have not learned French in our rural schools. It is no fault of their own but a failure of the system, a system that forgets about rural Canada until it is election time. Now young people are being disqualified from federal opportunities because of it.

I do not think they would find much work building a pipeline either. While the Prime Minister tells one side of the country he is building pipelines, he tells the other side a different story. Perhaps they could get a visa and work in other parts of the world where he has invested in building pipelines, but unfortunately that is not here at home.

With the production caps and emissions caps, I do not think they would have very much luck getting a job in the oil sands either. I have my doubts they would be working on the nationwide energy corridor, because I do not think the Liberal government has the guts to do what it takes to put it through Quebec into Labrador, where it could build enough hydroelectricity to make it the green energy superpower that we want it to be. The power is there and the people are ready.

Let us not forget that the topic affecting every Canadian is the high cost of living due to inflation. This inflation did not magically appear out of nowhere. No, it is as a direct result of reckless overspending and economic mismanagement. It is because the Prime Minister, the very one who now leads us, was advising the former prime minister to waste tax dollars, saying that budgets would balance themselves. Now he does not even have a budget at all. Not only are single mothers struggling now, but we also have double-income parents who are struggling to provide for their kids. Food bank usage is up, and there is no sign of its slowing down.

I have gone to houses in my district where seniors have the upstairs of their home tarped off and are sleeping on the couch because they cannot afford the heat. There are seniors wandering shopping malls trying to stay warm in the winter. I have even heard of seniors who are eating pet food because they cannot afford the skyrocketing grocery bills. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. After a lifetime of paying into the system, this is the dignity we afford them. These seniors are the very people who voted for the current government. They supported it. They voted for it to fight Donald Trump with tariffs and have a plan for Canada's economy, not to drop the tariffs and have no budget.

• (1550)

Furthermore, the throne speech completely turns its back on seniors and offers no help to survive the economic storm these Liberals have created. "One day the sun will shine and have-not will be—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I need to interrupt the hon. member.

We will move on to questions and comments. The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

Hon. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on his maiden speech in Parliament. I welcome him to this place, particularly as an Atlantic Canadian.

There are a few things I want to make sure he knows, as he enters this place, in the ways the government has helped to support the good province of Newfoundland and Labrador, whether that was by changing the approval time for offshore oil and gas permitting from 900 days under Stephen Harper to 90 days; investing in rate mitigation in this province, with \$5.2 billion from the government to support his province; or making crucial investments across the province. Those were delivered by the Liberal government.

However, as I sit here and listen in the House, the oil and gas question is a bit devoid. According to the International Energy Agency, oil and gas production has actually increased by 29% in this country over the last 10 years. How does the hon. member stand in this place and suggest that oil and gas has not benefited under this government in terms of oil and production?

Jonathan Rowe: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can correct me if I am wrong, but I believe it took 1,282 days to get Bay du Nord approved before the government finally drove that project away.

We have had two years in Newfoundland's offshore with no bids. I am not sure what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are expected to do, but we need work, and we have the opportunity to create

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an economic superpower in Newfoundland. We just need to get out of our own way.

[Translation]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech. He said that the Liberal government has failed seniors, and I think he is absolutely right.

The Liberals increased the pension amount by 10% only for seniors aged 75 and over, so the Bloc Québécois introduced a bill to also increase the pension amount for seniors aged 65 to 74. Members supported that bill through almost every stage of the process.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

[English]

Jonathan Rowe: Mr. Speaker, it is good to see any help going to seniors, but we definitely need to do more. Seniors built this country. They put their blood, sweat and tears into building things and raising us, and we definitely need to support them more.

Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute joy to welcome my hon. colleague from Terra Nova to the House, and there is no doubt he is going to be a tremendous addition and complement to the people's House.

We heard a lot of recent and happy talk from the other side of the House, the government, about oil and gas. However, it is kind of coded. It is shrouded in talk such as "maybe they are going to do it" and "possibly they are going to do it, if it meets certain requirements and stipulations, passes certain loopholes, and after 17 subcommittees, parent committees and overarching committees, they will look at it, examine it, come back and re-evaluate it once again."

My question is simply this: Is it time for a change so we finally get a government in place that could actually get these projects off the ground and done?

• (1555)

Jonathan Rowe: Mr. Speaker, I believe a Conservative government would make the sun shine once again through the creation of high-paying jobs that prioritize the livelihood of each Canadian, not just the long list of consultants the Liberal government has on speed dial.

*The Address**[Translation]*

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's speech, and there is clearly an issue when it comes to energy and some of our regions. Our Prime Minister has been very clear about the goal of making Canada an energy superpower in both conventional and clean energy and of reducing our emissions. From that perspective, yesterday's meeting in Saskatoon was clearly a huge success.

Can we count on the Conservatives to support working as a country made up not of 13 separate entities, but of one single voice?

[English]

Jonathan Rowe: Mr. Speaker, removing interprovincial trade barriers seems like a good idea, and it may have come from our side of the floor.

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to stand before the House for the first time as the newly elected member of Parliament for London—Fanshawe. Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to the people of London—Fanshawe for entrusting me with this great responsibility. Their voices were heard loud and clear, and it is my duty to ensure they echo strongly within these walls.

I extend my sincere thanks to my campaign manager, Al Pickard, for his tireless work and leadership, and Jason King for his dedication and long hours. I would not be here today if it was not for them and our incredible campaign team and volunteers, which includes Carrie Anne Stephenson, Dave and Veronica Heffernan, Patrick Mair, Sam Lichtman, Nick Spina, Peter Vanderley, Matthias Vanderley, Cory Bennett, Jason Morand, Adam Cull, Arun Matthew, Ian Baldock, Chris Hagelsten, Michelle Wilson and her son Chase, Tami Hoggard, Chris Seal, Jay Cosgrove, and Rodney and Louise Sheil. There are also the other countless volunteers and members of the London Fanshawe Conservative association who helped me share the Conservative vision of a better future.

I also wish to thank Grant Vezina, Paul Vezina, Rick Meyer, John Brotzel, Andrew Kaikkonen, Barbaralee Vail, David Weber, Shirley and Pete Heisz, Bonna Bryan, Chris O'Neil, Patrick O'Neil, Shawn Bender, Beatrix Enter and Paul O'Neill for their invaluable encouragement and support throughout my campaign. I thank each and every one of them from the bottom of my heart. Of course, I want to say a special thanks to the Hon. Pierre Poilievre for aspiring a movement to give people in London—Fanshawe, and all across Canada, hope.

I also want to thank my brother, Keith; my sister-in-law, Kavita; their children, Devan, Dhiren and Diva; my sister Krystle; my brother-in-law, Justin; their children Tyler, Evan and Krystin; and my girlfriend, Dilcia "Dee" Casilla, whose love and support mean the world to me. Most importantly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my father, Ken Holman, and to my late mother, Lucy Holman. They have been both my foundation and my greatest inspiration. Through their example of personal sacrifice for the greater good and the lively debates that we shared over the supper table, I learned to believe in myself and to never to give up, understanding that with hard work and determination, I can help make a

difference. It is because of these values and lessons that I stand here today.

My election represents a historic moment for London—Fanshawe. For decades, many in our community felt their voices went unheard and their concerns overlooked. Today, as we are witnessing a new dawn, London—Fanshawe stands proudly as a beacon, a testament, to the power of democracy and the change that it brings when pursuing genuine representation. Our community will no longer be a silent observer but an active participant shaping in our country's future.

As the first Conservative member of Parliament in London—Fanshawe's history, on my first address in this sacred chamber, it is my duty to speak truth to power. The truth is that the last decade has been an unmitigated disaster. The Liberals, together with their NDP accomplices, have destroyed the middle class and cheapened the dollar while inflating the price of everything. They have trampled on Canadians' rights and freedoms, and they have caused so much division. Worst of all, they broke the Canadian promise that, up until now, has passed from generation to generation, which is the promise that hard work leads to a good life and a beautiful home on a safe street. That was not theirs to break. It is much bigger than any party, bigger than any prime minister. It is the heart of what makes Canada the best country on Earth. I will fight relentlessly to restore that promise for London—Fanshawe and for all Canadians. This is what it is all about.

On her deathbed in 2015, my mother said to me, "Kurt, live a wonderful life and be happy." I think it is safe to say that every parent wants this for their children. We must restore Canada's promise so that all Canadians can live a wonderful life and be happy.

I am a computer analyst, raised in a small town in Forest, Ontario. I am a graduate of North Lambton Secondary School, class of 1999, and a graduate of the computer engineering technology program at Lambton College in Sarnia, Ontario, in 2002. With 27 years of information technology experience, I recently earned, from McMaster University, an MBA in digital transformation utilizing artificial intelligence.

In information technology, when a system fails, we can try rebooting, but if the issue is at the core, a system restart will not do much. Turning the Liberal government on and off, over and over again, will not fix Canada's problems.

● (1600)

Until recently, I would have never even thought about running for office, but I could not sit this one out. I saw too much struggle, pain and despair, and I felt compelled to do something about it, so I put disappointment and frustration into action.

The Prime Minister ran on change. He distanced himself from the failed experiments of the former Liberal prime minister and even borrowed a number of Conservative policies. If he is sincere, if that was more than just rhetoric, I, along with my Conservative colleagues, will gladly work together to bring real change. I echo the Hon. Pierre Poilievre in welcoming the Prime Minister to borrow many more Conservative ideas, which our country so desperately needs.

Unfortunately, with every passing day, it is becoming clearer and clearer that, when it comes to actions, not words, the new Liberal government is no different. It is not exactly a big surprise, with the same team of radicals in the cabinet, but it is very disappointing nonetheless. Canadians deserve to be treated like adults, with honesty, respect and transparency. The status quo, whether it is in silly socks or fancy banker suits, is still the status quo.

The Prime Minister promised change. He presented himself as the man with a plan, but as soon as he was elected, he tabled a massive, half-trillion dollar spending bill, increasing government spending by 8%, and announced that he will not give a budget any time soon. Does that look like change?

Let us talk about “elbows up”. If only Canadians could save a nickel off their taxes every time the Prime Minister said those two words. However, we discovered that his cabinet, behind closed doors, quietly exempted American industries from nearly every tariff they publicly championed. Does that seem like change? No wonder President Trump endorsed the Liberals.

Let us talk about the cornerstone policy of the NDP-Liberal government over the last decade: the carbon tax. After ignoring the painful economic consequences of this inflationary punishment, the government now attempts a sleight of hand, shifting the tax from consumers directly onto the producers. Are Canadians really expected to believe businesses will simply absorb these costs? Of course they will not. The costs will fall onto everyday Canadians.

Across London—Fanshawe, small and medium-sized businesses form the heartbeat of our local economy. Under these new burdens, our businesses are expected to “elbow up”, but in reality, the government is tying their elbows behind their backs. I am a firm believer that success builds success. Our businesses need the government to get out of the way so they can succeed. It is common sense that their success will build a successful economy. This carbon tax, much like the original, is not environmental stewardship. It is economic sabotage. London—Fanshawe's entrepreneurs deserve better. They deserve policies that unleash innovation, foster competition and allow our businesses to thrive, not barely survive.

Moreover, young families and students in London—Fanshawe face unprecedented challenges as housing prices skyrocket beyond reach, yet the government's new housing minister says that lowering housing prices is not even on the agenda. What kind of future are we building when home ownership becomes an unattainable dream?

Inflation under this government has pushed hard-working families to the brink. London—Fanshawe residents are seeing their paycheques shrink and their expenses surge every day. We cannot afford this directionless drift any longer.

The Address

Our economy needs clarity, not confusion. We must empower, not impede, our businesses, entrepreneurs and workers. It is time to remove the barriers holding them back and give them the freedom to drive our economy forward. The business people, entrepreneurs, and white-collar and blue-collar workers are the pillars of London—Fanshawe. They are the people who will work long hours to put food on the table. They just want to know that hard work leads to a good and happy life, both for them and one day for their children.

As a government-in-waiting, we stand ready with practical solutions. To the parents who lie awake wondering what tomorrow will bring, they can rest assured that we will fight to secure a brighter future for their children.

London—Fanshawe chose hope over division, prosperity over empty promises and leadership over empty gestures. I am committed to representing their interests vigorously in Ottawa. Together we will ensure our community's voice is strong, respected and impactful.

• (1605)

Will Greaves (Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member opposite on his election. I look forward to working with him in this chamber.

However, like we did from many of his colleagues, we heard in his maiden speech more hyperbole and exaggeration than actual fact or analysis of the reality of this country after a number of very difficult years due to major, historically world altering circumstances.

The member suggested that Canadians deserve honesty and respect, and I could not agree more. I wonder whether the member would agree that one way to show honesty and respect to Canadians would be to acknowledge that, in the election that we just had, his party was found wanting, his party's leader lost his seat and Canadians chose the Liberal Party to form the Government of Canada.

Kurt Holman: Mr. Speaker, I heard various scenarios directly from the residents of London—Fanshawe at the door. For example, a constituent, a 65-year-old nurse, broke into tears when I knocked on the door. She broke down when she told me how exhausted she had been under the previous Liberal government, telling me about her inability to afford life. Because of the government, she and her husband are living paycheque to paycheque, unable to even think about retirement. The government failed her and millions of Canadians like her.

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague on his election.

The Address

Earlier, the Liberal member for Egmont gave a speech that I thought was absolutely outrageous. He said that health is not just a provincial jurisdiction, even though section 92 of the Constitution says that it is. Ottawa got involved because changes in government revenues allowed it to meddle in provincial affairs. All of the provincial and territorial premiers have called for the government to increase its contribution for health to cover 35% of the cost of the system, but the Liberal government has never respected that part of the contract. Now, today, the Liberals are telling us that Ottawa has done nothing wrong and that it is the provinces' fault if they are struggling to provide people with health care.

Does my colleague think that the federal government should increase health transfers to cover 35% of the cost of the system? Does he agree that the federal government should be sending those transfers with no strings attached?

[English]

Kurt Holman: Mr. Speaker, all I can say with regard to what is happening in London—Fanshawe is that there is a contrast between what the Conservatives say and the Liberal and NDP approach to dealing with what is affecting Canadians today. There are all sorts of issues affecting London—Fanshawe locally, as I said, which I heard at the door: the increased cost of living, the burden that the next generation is unable to afford housing, and the increase in crime. The issues keep occurring and occurring, and the sitting government does not solve the problems.

• (1610)

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, one of my good friends had his truck stolen in Edmonton. I know that crime is a problem across the country, and I thank the hon. member for bringing up crime.

I am wondering if the member has any examples of crime that has happened in his constituency and can perhaps note the trend lines that have taken place over the last 10 years.

Kurt Holman: Mr. Speaker, there has been an increase in crime in London—Fanshawe, primarily the break and enter of small businesses, and that does impact the local economy. I applaud entrepreneurs who build these businesses, but unfortunately, break and enters and thefts have occurred at the local small and medium-sized businesses that try to thrive in London—Fanshawe.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, since he is a new Conservative member, I am curious.

Does the member believe that global warming is a real, scientifically proven phenomenon?

[English]

Kurt Holman: Mr. Speaker, climate change is a concern that needs to be addressed across Canada and therefore with the environment itself. However, at a critical time like this for London—Fanshawe and the country, I feel there are other critical issues, as I said earlier: the cost of living, housing prices and crime.

[Translation]

Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Compton—Stanstead.

First, I want to congratulate all members of the House of Commons on their election, and congratulate you on your appointment as Assistant Deputy Speaker.

As the member for Trois-Rivières, I rise today with a deep sense of humility. I want to thank the people of Trois-Rivières for putting their trust in me. I will live up to this responsibility and mandate. I commit to defending their priorities and aspirations.

Success is never a solo endeavour, so I would like to take a moment to thank all the volunteers who helped during the campaign. It is a long list, but I would like to give a nod to Mathis, Marianne, Pierre, Mikailou, Steven, Catherine, Claude, Eric, Jean-Christophe, Reem, Audrey, Johanne, Dominic, Luc, Sylvie, Mo, Ginette and all the others who provided advice, funding and knowledge.

I also want to thank my colleagues in the Quebec caucus who came to lend a hand. It is no accident that the Quebec Liberal caucus now has 44 MPs in the House of Commons representing the interests of Quebecers.

It is a team effort, and we will be a strong voice for Quebec in the House of Commons. Lastly, I owe my deepest gratitude to my family: my husband Danny, who has been managing two teenagers on his own for several months, and my children, Brave and Maya Lin. I could not have had the privilege of serving the people of Trois-Rivières without the unconditional support that they have given me not just over the past few months, but also throughout my career.

Trois-Rivières is in the Mauricie region, at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and Saint Maurice rivers. No, there are not three rivers in Trois-Rivières. It is a vibrant, bustling city that is deeply rooted in its traditions while looking toward the future. It is a capital of poetry and a cultural and historical hub that contributes to Quebec's heritage.

As a proud member of the Quebec nation, I am deeply attached to the French language, and I know that together, we are stronger. That is why I am delighted with our government's commitment to support Radio-Canada, both in Quebec and in minority communities outside Quebec. It is an essential institution for ensuring the vitality of our identity and our language. Trois-Rivières is a city that has risen from tragedy after tragedy and, thanks to the solidarity and determination of its residents, has reinvented itself as a cradle of innovation. I am proud to represent the city, and I am determined to contribute to its development in the House.

The Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Majesty King Charles III, lays out a vision of a united, resilient, and safer Canada with the strongest economy in the G7. It is a Canada that invests in its future, has bold ambitions and is ready to take its rightful place. That vision resonates strongly with the priorities in my region. People told me so again and again during the election campaign, and they spoke loud and clear on April 28.

During the election campaign and in the Speech from the Throne, our government promised to invest in nation-building projects to grow the Canadian economy. For Trois-Rivières, that means a high-speed train that will generate significant economic benefits and increase labour mobility. It is a once-in-a-generation project that will bring Canada into the 21st century. I hope we can work hand in hand with all members who feel committed to this project.

There is also talk of investments in the Port of Trois-Rivières, a mainstay for the region and a national and international logistics hub. Its expansion will continue to support small business growth and job creation for our workers. The Port of Trois-Rivières can play a role in diversifying our export markets and helping us to reduce our dependence on U.S. markets.

We are talking about major infrastructure but also about protecting our industries and our workers from the Trump administration's unfair tariffs. Trois-Rivières is one of the most vulnerable Canadian cities in terms of the tariff war. Companies like Solucan and Germain & frère are directly affected by the tariffs and the uncertainty they are causing. Our government is committed to protecting jobs in sectors affected by the tariffs, such as the steel, aluminum and automotive sectors. Innovation et Développement économique Trois-Rivières, or IDETR, a driver of local economic development, has set up an oversight committee to accurately measure the impact and ensure that businesses in the region know where to get the support they need. I am committed to supporting this initiative.

This collaborative, solutions-driven attitude is what keeps our city moving forward, supported by a vibrant and innovative ecosystem. In Trois-Rivières, we are proud to have world-class research and technology transfer centres that are recognized in Canada and around the world as leaders in their field. Take, for example, the Quebec Metallurgy Center, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year and is a partner of choice to major companies such as Pratt & Whitney and Bombardier. I am also thinking of the Innergex Chair for the production of green hydrogen at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and the Centre Innofibre at the CEGEP in Trois-Rivières, leading partners in the Vallée de la transition énergétique, an innovation zone set up by the Government of Quebec with which we work closely.

• (1615)

These institutions embody the spirit of collaboration between academia and industry. They are pillars of our ability to advance applied science, attract investment in leading-edge sectors and decarbonize our heavy industries. Canadians know that the commitment of our government and the Prime Minister to green and renewable energy is a priority, and we will not slow down our actions in this area. Canadians know that the Liberal Party is the party that has put in place meaningful measures to protect the environment

The Address

and fight climate change, and that the energy transition will require innovation and ingenuity.

At a time when our sovereignty is under threat, it is more important than ever that we invest in the defence sector to rebuild the Canadian Armed Forces, protect our vast land and bolster our military industry. The Mauricie region is ready to answer the call, with companies like Marmen, an industrial flagship that produces not only wind turbines, but also submarine parts and nuclear reactors. This company and many others in the region can play a leading role in defence and critical infrastructure projects. That is what it means to build a strong and sovereign Canada.

Our Liberal government knows very well that to build a prosperous future, we must ensure that no one is left behind. Providing access to affordable housing, day care and dental care and tackling homelessness are essential for reducing inequality. Some opposition members are using old-fashioned scare tactics to call that communism. We have a plan to make life more affordable for Canadians. It is a plan for right now, not promises to be fulfilled in four years. During the election campaign, I heard Canadians' concerns loud and clear, and I can say that they are pleased with our measure to lower taxes for the middle class. Around 22 million Canadians will benefit, including thousands of my constituents. Our commitment to continue investing and to redouble our efforts to address the housing crisis by building more social and affordable housing was greeted with relief by my constituents. This work must involve all levels of government.

In closing, we are at a crossroads. The rules have changed, and we need to adapt our game plan. We are committed to building the strongest economy in the G7, and we have everything we need to succeed. We will do it by promoting local businesses, local materials and homegrown labour. That is how we will build a strong Canada. We will build it by being focused, by holding firm to our convictions and by rolling up our sleeves and working together.

• (1620)

[English]

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne had 2,500 words but not a single mention of the fentanyl crisis, the opioid crisis, that has gripped our nation, nor a single mention of the 51,000 Canadians who have lost their lives since 2016.

I know my hon. colleague is new, but I would like to know how she feels about the fact that her government has failed. The new Prime Minister, the man with the plan, has failed to address the single most challenging crisis that our country has had to this point.

*The Address**[Translation]*

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, we presented a strong plan to build a strong Canada and a strong economy. We are committed to bringing in stricter measures for serious crime. That is what we are going to do. A throne speech does not need to be 30,000 words long to be effective. We know what we are doing. Our plan is clear and robust. That is why we are going to implement it.

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech.

She said that the issue of the French language is important to her. I would like to know what she thinks of the fact that her government's official languages policy only supports English in Quebec. For example, roughly \$100 million is invested every year in official languages support programs and it does nothing but finance the development of English-speaking communities, the anglophone education system, health services in English and so on.

Over the years, more than \$3.5 billion has been spent in Quebec to promote English and that is still going on to this day, while it is French that is in jeopardy in Quebec. What does my colleague think of that?

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be a member of this Liberal caucus, which has not only 44 Quebec MPs to vigorously promote the French language but also francophone MPs from communities outside Quebec.

Protecting the French language requires support for francophone communities outside Quebec. Quebec is not the only one that needs to promote the French language; all communities do. I am thinking of my colleagues from Guelph and southern Ontario. There are many francophone communities and we need to support them.

That is why we have allocated funding for Radio-Canada for regions outside Quebec, to ensure that we support French across the country.

That is how we will stay strong. That is how French will maintain its vitality.

[English]

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, the member was very clear that the Liberals have a plan and they know what they are doing.

I do not know anybody who buys a car without knowing how much the payments are going to cost. I do not know anybody who buys a house without knowing if they can afford the additional payments. I do not know anybody who prepares a meal without knowing what is in the cupboards. The previous Liberal government spent the cupboards bare. There is no budget. We have no idea where things are at.

Could the member articulate when the budget will be coming and what it will entail?

• (1625)

Caroline Desrochers: Mr. Speaker, we have committed to building the strongest economy of the G7. One of the first things that the Prime Minister did, earlier in March, was to cut the carbon tax for

consumers. When the numbers came out last week, we saw that already inflation has been reduced to 1.7%.

We have also tabled the main estimates. It is prudent fiscal management to make sure that we know exactly what we are tackling and how much it is going to cost. There was a meeting with the first ministers yesterday, which was really positive, with all of the provinces and territories.

[Translation]

We are building the economy of tomorrow.

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great humility and determination that I rise today to deliver my maiden speech in the House of Commons.

I do so with a great sense of responsibility to the people of Compton—Stanstead, who put their trust in me and sent me here with a clear mandate. I thank them very much for that. I want to be a strong, engaged and authentic voice for them, a voice for the regions that truly deserve our consideration. I want to take a moment to thank the volunteers, my loved ones and my family who campaigned with me. It is because of their confidence, energy and commitment that I am here today.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, who passionately represented Compton—Stanstead for 10 years. Everywhere I go, I hear about her presence, her thoroughness, her leadership and her ability to get things done. She has been an incredible mentor to me, and her example has also opened the doors to this place. I want to sincerely thank her on behalf of the people of Compton—Stanstead, but also, I dare say, on behalf of women, young people and the regions, who deserve to be heard.

[English]

I would also like to thank the honourable David Price, the very first member of Parliament for our riding, back in 1997. Still today, he continues to serve our community with heart, notably through his ongoing commitment to the Grace Village Care Foundation. Marie-Claude and David served Compton—Stanstead with dedication and effectiveness. I can only hope to live up to the trust they inspired in this beautiful corner of the country that I am so deeply attached to.

Compton—Stanstead is a border riding, rich in contrast and full of character, with 36 municipalities spread across nearly 5,000 square kilometres. It is francophone and anglophone, rural and urban, from cultivated farmland to high-tech labs. At the heart of all this diversity, there is a rare kind of harmony, a deep ability to co-exist, to collaborate and to reinvent ourselves, especially in times of adversity. In a world that feels increasingly polarized, Compton—Stanstead is a reminder that it is possible to build together, with respect and solidarity.

I think of one powerful symbol, the Haskell Library in Stanstead, which was built quite literally on the Canada-U.S. border as a shared cultural space between two peoples. For years, Canadians could simply walk along the sidewalk to enter through the U.S. side, a tradition that ended this spring by order of the American administration. In just 30 hours, a grassroots campaign led by Canadians and Americans, French and English, raised the funds to create a new entrance on the Canadian side. That is the spirit of the Eastern Townships: solidarity, resourcefulness, openness and a deep commitment to co-operation and living together.

[Translation]

I would like to take a moment to congratulate my colleagues from Sherbrooke and Brome—Missisquoi. Together we form a united team, determined to give the people of the Eastern Townships a voice at the table where decisions are made, and yes, those folks have a lot to say.

On the campaign trail, I met with and listened to people in my community, and I took the time to understand their concerns. The number one concern has to do with what is happening south of the border, with our neighbours. I really get a feeling that, beyond the concern, folks want action. They want us to roll up our sleeves and seize the opportunity to create a stronger, more resilient and more united Canada. That is exactly the energy I want to bring here.

Let us start by talking about our SMEs. Our SMEs are more than just numbers and balance sheets. They are villages, families and projects rooted in our communities. Our SMEs breathe life into our regions by creating sustainable jobs and maintaining a strong economic system. They represent an opportunity for our young people to build a future where they grew up, without having to leave. Unfortunately, they are not immune to shocks, especially when U.S. protectionism directly undermines their stability. One example that comes to mind is Waterville TG in the automotive sector. No, the auto industry is not only in Ontario.

• (1630)

I am also thinking about Champeau, in the forestry sector, and Confections Troy, which is part of the textile industry. Their future depends on the predictability of trade as well as the support we can offer them.

Our government is already supporting them. We have pumped the revenue from countertariffs into businesses affected by our economic war with the United States. We have reinvested in economic development agencies. We have implemented work-sharing programs to keep workers and employers connected. We have also eliminated the waiting period for EI.

We are also growing markets. First, on the domestic front, we are working to build one Canadian economy out of 13. We are working to eliminate barriers to interprovincial trade in areas that fall under federal jurisdiction. I am pleased to see Quebec taking concrete steps in this direction with the introduction of a bill last Friday.

I would be remiss if I did not mention one pillar of our regional economic development and vitality: agriculture. It is at the heart of our food self-sufficiency and our way of living on the land. For everyone, it is our food security. I am going to start by saying that supply management is simply non-negotiable, full stop. We also

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have to broaden the agricultural discourse and include other sectors. We need to help big businesses export and small businesses process products locally to create value in our regions. That is what the throne speech says.

Let us not forget about families and cost-of-living issues. I will start by saying: promise made, promise kept. Our government's first act was to cut taxes for millions of middle-class Canadians. We are committed to maintaining social programs, such as the Canadian dental care plan, which has been fully rolled out. Two million Canadians have already received care. We will maintain pharmaceutical and the Canada-wide affordable child care system.

We are also talking about access to housing and home ownership. We need to build. The “build Canada homes” initiative is an ambitious plan to accelerate construction. We will cut red tape and leverage our resources, our businesses and our expertise. We are committed to sound fiscal management, because making life more affordable must never come at the expense of intergenerational fairness.

Another important issue in rural areas is connectivity. We have accomplished a lot in terms of high-speed Internet, and we are proud of that. It is time to take another step forward in improving cell coverage by partnering with the provinces, municipalities and the private sector. It is a matter of safety, economic development and fairness. No community should be cut off from the world because of a lack of network coverage.

I know that not everything can be said in one speech. There are other issues that I feel strongly about and will continue to advocate for. These include protecting our lakes and natural environments. They are a vital part of our identity and quality of life. Another issue is border security. This is a real issue for communities like mine, because living near the border is our daily reality. There are significant exchanges between our communities on both sides of the border. I also include our minority language communities. They must be able to thrive everywhere in the country.

I would also like to say a word about the essential role of CBC/Radio-Canada and its importance to Quebec's anglophone communities. Yes, CBC is important. In a world where disinformation is increasingly prevalent, we need the diligent and independent journalism that our public broadcaster can deliver locally. I am committed to bringing these priorities to the table with rigour, consistency and openness in all future debates.

I truly believe that, beyond party lines, the challenges facing regions like mine require not only courage, but also a genuine willingness to work together. On the ground, we do not debate in a vacuum. On the ground, we listen to each other, we help each other, we build, sometimes with little, but always with passion. It is this spirit that I want to bring to the House, the spirit of our farmers, our business owners, our families, and our young people who choose to stay in their community and make their corner of the country thrive.

I am ready to get to work.

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• (1635)

[*English*]

Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned something that is near and dear to me, being in a rural remote area in Cariboo—Prince George, in northern British Columbia, which is the connectivity issues. There is a serious lack of connectivity in some of the areas in my region.

However, I would like to go on a topic that I have not talked about yet and asked the members opposite about, and that is crime. In one of my communities, with a population of 10,000, six prolific offenders commit 98% of the crime. In the largest community in my riding, Prince George, with a population of 77,000, eight prolific offenders commit 98% of the crime. The government, in its previous form in the last session, launched Bill C-5 and Bill C-75.

I wonder if this member of Parliament is experiencing the same rates of crime that we are seeing in rural remote areas in British Columbia, and I know in other communities across the way. Will she advocate for her government to repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

[*Translation*]

Marianne Dandurand: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, just this past weekend, there was a femicide in my riding. Rates of domestic violence are alarming, and we need to tackle this issue head on. That is why we have gun control. Gun violence and domestic abuse often go hand in hand. We really need to protect our citizens.

Our government is taking action. Our government believes in a safe society. We will continue to work to ensure that tragedies like these do not happen again.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to say hello to the people of Rimouski—La Matapédia, whom I proudly represent.

I congratulate my colleague from Compton—Stanstead on her speech and her election.

My question is very simple and concerns supply management. We know that this issue affects her riding in particular. The Bloc Québécois did what it said it would do during the election campaign. It reintroduced a bill to ensure that supply management will be fully protected in future negotiations, particularly with the United States. We want to ensure that it will not be sacrificed in the same way it was under her government in the last three trade agreements.

If the member believes that protecting supply management is not a luxury but a matter of survival for many of the farmers she represents, will she commit to sitting down with her party's representatives, supporting the bill introduced by the leader of the Bloc Québécois, the member for Beloeil—Chambly, and prioritizing this bill so it is brought forward as soon as possible?

Marianne Dandurand: Mr. Speaker, supply management is indeed a priority.

Legislation aside, negotiations with the U.S. government have already started. What we need now is a strong commitment from the government not to cave, but to uphold supply management. The Liberal Party has made that commitment. It is the party that created supply management. That is the first commitment our Prime Minis-

ter made when he ran for the leadership of our party. We will continue to promote supply management and we will continue to stand up for it. It is essential for the vitality of our rural communities.

[*English*]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast to coast recognized a very important meeting that took place in Saskatchewan, where the premiers and the Prime Minister, along with the leaders of the territories, came together to recognize in particular President Trump, the tariffs and the trade issue and to talk about potential special projects. That meeting was important for all of us. It was a team Canada approach, I would suggest.

I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts in regard to why it is so important that we have a team Canada approach when dealing with and overcoming these issues.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Marianne Dandurand: Mr. Speaker, that was an historic meeting. Earlier today, some members of the House called it a love-in.

When it feels like everyone is working toward the same goal of creating one economy out of 13, we know that we are going to create a lot of wealth in this country. We must build on collaboration between the regions, between the provinces, to ensure that we become more autonomous, more independent, more resilient. That is what ordinary folks want.

[*English*]

Pat Kelly (Calgary Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, although this is not my first intervention in this Parliament, this is the first opportunity I have had to take a moment to thank the voters of Calgary Crowfoot. I am getting used to the riding name change. Many riding names have changed, but I thank the voters of Calgary Crowfoot for sending me to this place for the fourth time in nine and a half years.

I want to thank my opponents in the election for putting their names forward. Without choice and without options for people to vote for, there is no democracy, so I thank all participants in this election.

I would like to thank the volunteers in Calgary Crowfoot, the amazing group of volunteers who helped us get out to 25,000-odd doors, put up thousands of signs and make an argument to voters for a change of government.

I would also like to thank, of course, my loving family: my wife Kim, my daughters Katie, Jessica and Meaghan, and my mum Marnie Kelly. My father Duane Kelly passed away, sadly, only a few months before the election.

I would like to congratulate all members of Parliament on their election, in particular the new MPs. There are many new MPs in this Parliament, and I look forward to meeting them and getting to know who everybody is.

I also congratulate the new cabinet and the new Prime Minister. They have tremendous work to do. It is important to me as a Canadian and to the people who sent me here that Canada prospers and does well and that we have competent, prudent and proper public administration and stewardship of public resources. I wish the government the best in doing so.

I will also say that I am part of a government in waiting, and we are ready to step up and form a government should this government fall. We will demand accountability. We will demand competence and execution. We will be here to scrutinize the laws the Liberals propose and the administration of the government in general. That is what we are here to do. That is what all members of Parliament do. Members do not even need to be in the opposition benches to do that. I challenge the backbenches on the government side to do their jobs as legislators and demand accountability from the government and their own party. That is their job. It is not just their job to cheerlead for the front bench. I hope they will take seriously their role in holding the government to account, as all parliamentarians should.

Here we are in June 2025, and the same government has been in power for nine and a half years. It has added half a trillion dollars to the national debt and brought in a structural deficit. It has no plan for a balanced budget in sight. We are enduring a housing crisis wherein mortgage payments and rent have more than doubled on its watch. We have seen a sense of hopelessness creep in among younger people, who believe that they will never have a path to home ownership other than through inheritance or the sharing of real estate equity from their family. Crime in every category has gone up. We have a drug overdose crisis.

As for the military, the most basic core function of government is national security and protecting Canadians, and tanks are in extremely short supply and falling apart. We have ships rusting out and jets wearing out, with recruitment, retention and housing in crisis. We have gaps in domain awareness in the Arctic and a RADARSAT system that is going to reach its end of life without a replacement. Procurement is in a state of disaster. We cannot even procure, build and supply basics like artillery shells. The recently retired chief of the defence staff has said that there has not been an acute need for military preparedness since the end of the Second World War and we are not there.

• (1645)

We have the threat of Trump to deal with, and the tariffs and all that his administration has said it may do. However, perhaps the most important statistic that I can point to is the per-capita GDP in Canada. Over the last 10 years, its growth was the lowest in the OECD. In fact, it was not growth at all. Canadians are no better off now than they were 10 years ago. This is a lost Liberal decade.

Where were we 10 years ago? When the Liberal government came to power, it inherited a balanced budget, affordable homes that working people could buy, a northern gateway pipeline that was conditionally approved and a Trans Mountain pipeline that was

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going to be built with private money, not with taxpayers' money. The energy east project was ready to be proposed. The F-35 were ready for contract and ready to be procured. Crime was at the lowest on record. This was the Canada that the government came into power with, and this is where we have been taken over the last 10 years.

It is not something that just randomly happened. There were concrete actions by the government all the way along that brought us here. They brought in the culture of "no". They brought in new regulations and laws, like Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, that make it impossible to get energy infrastructure projects built. That was by design. This was not even just a mistake on the part of the government.

Furthermore, there is no end in sight. The Liberals have brought in, and we have seen it creeping in, a culture of corporate welfare where connected insiders benefit and where Liberal insiders benefit. We saw over that time period the Liberals cancel the F-35s. They came in and said that they were not going to procure them at all and that they were going to have a separate procurement process. They dithered and wasted time while our need for this aircraft carried on. We would already have the F-35s if they had simply procured them when they took office. These are the things that have happened over the last 10 years.

The Speech from the Throne contains no concrete plan. There is no budget that would signal a plan or even tell Canadians and be honest about where we are financially, what our fiscal plan is and what the deficit will be. The Liberals have said some things that are encouraging to many. They have taken many ideas from the Conservative benches and the Conservative campaign. If someone puts a tax cut in front of me, I will vote for it. If someone proposes to eliminate a regulation that is destroying the job opportunities in my riding, I will support it. However, what I will not support is a Speech from the Throne that gives vague promises without any type of a clear road map, while the Liberals simultaneously table a set of estimates that show ballooning public expenditures for consultants, of all things. This is all while the Liberals have allowed the public service to grow enormously during their time while service to Canadians declines.

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Copying our ideas is the most sincere form of flattery, and we would be prepared to accept it as Conservatives, but the government is not a new government. It has a different Prime Minister, but it has the same people in the front benches, who, for the last 10 years, have criticized Conservatives. When I look at Hansard, I can see some of the things that members of the front benches said to me and other members when we proposed important ideas, like axing the tax, which is something they were all too quick to adopt in the election. As such, I have doubts about the ability of the government, with the same group of people in the front benches, to execute on improving life for Canadians.

• (1650)

Hon. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I would share the desire to want to focus on regulatory reform. I would like to hear more from all members on this side of the House on some of those pieces. We have heard a lot about the oil and gas sector. The government is signalling its desire to drive and build big natural energy projects across the country, whether conventional oil and gas or renewable in different types of forms.

I want to bring the House back to some air of reality. Perhaps the hon. member did not like some of the ways in which the government did speak about the oil and gas sector, but it is important to recognize that the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and Reuters both talk about the fact that oil and gas production actually increased over the last 10 years.

I will remind the hon. member that it was this government that built a pipeline to tidewater. Under Harper, there was no pipeline built.

Can we bring this back? Would the member at least recognize that there has been an increase in oil and gas production in this country in the last 10 years? It is important to at least recognize facts and not just conjecture here in the House.

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, it is true, thankfully, that over nine and a half years was not long enough for the government to actually completely kill the industry. We are thankful for that.

There are a number of points that the member brought up. He brought up TMX, and it still astounds me, the credit that the Liberals want to seek for driving private capital out of the oil and gas business. They had to take over and nationalize a project. This project would have been built sooner and at no risk to the taxpayer. When they chased out all of the private proponents for pipelines, yes, they built one. Even before they did that, though, they killed the northern gateway. The northern gateway was approved. It was almost literally the first act of the Liberal government when it came to power. Now they say, after 10 years, that they want to get big projects built. There is a credibility gap here.

[Translation]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his re-election.

We need legislation to protect supply management because the Canadian government does not decide what is on the table during a negotiation. Each party decides what it is putting on the table. The Americans have announced that supply management will be on the table.

I listened to my colleague from Compton—Stanstead, and the rhetoric has changed. At first, the Liberals were saying what would not be on the table. Now, my colleague is saying that they are going to hold the line when it is on the table. The last time they told us they would hold the line, they folded. Ultimately, they sold off a share of the market.

I know that this is important to her. I know that it is important to her predecessor. However, the Liberals are telling us here today, through the member for Compton—Stanstead, that they will not be supporting our bill. That is what we are hearing.

Will my Conservative colleague commit to supporting a bill to fully protect supply management in order to tie our negotiators' hands when they are told to fold?

[English]

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I did not comment on this in my remarks. I was hoping for questions and comments that were related to the speech I made. We will see what is proposed, and we will examine legislation as it is proposed.

Scot Davidson (New Tecumseth—Gwillimbury, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague just alluded to the carbon tax. I have spoken many times about the rural top-up that residents in my riding were denied. The fact of the matter is that there is now a very concerning issue that has come up. I now have the CRA coming after constituents who have mistakenly received the rural top-up that they actually thought they were entitled to. We had government-approved software, UFile, that selected people for the rural top-up based on the postal code, because the zero in the postal code meant they were rural. These people did not even select it. We now have 613 numbers coming in at these people.

I just wonder if the member can talk about the effects of the carbon tax still lingering for us.

• (1655)

Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, it certainly would have been better to have not had a carbon tax at all, industrial or consumer. We would not have had this series of bureaucratic difficulties that the member mentions.

From roughly 2017 to 2019, I was the shadow minister for the CRA. I would hear, every day, staggering examples of the challenges Canadians face in dealing with that agency, often made more complicated and more difficult by the government and the general complication of our tax system.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege and an immense honour for me to represent the people of Beauce today in the House as the member for Beauce. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their extraordinary support. Beauce, the capital of entrepreneurship, has overwhelmingly chosen an entrepreneur to represent it. I am deeply humbled by their overwhelming support, and I want them to know that I will carry this responsibility with the respect, determination and pride it deserves.

This work was not done alone. I would like to thank my incredible team of volunteers for their passion, hard work and considerable involvement over the past few months. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my father, my sisters Vicky and Wendy, and the entire Roy and Groleau family for their unconditional support. I especially want to thank the love of my life, my wife Pascale, and our two daughters, Lily-Rose and Emma, for their love and support. It is for them that I embark on this great adventure, for the future of my daughters, for the future of our children.

I would also like to take a moment to pay tribute to an exceptional man, a man of principle, a man of conviction with unwavering dedication. Richard Lehoux has devoted 25 years to public service, including six years here in Ottawa. He has worked with heart, discipline and humility in the service of his constituents, whether as mayor, reeve or member of Parliament. He has always been a good listener guided by great wisdom. His involvement has never been limited to politics. He has always been in close touch with the people, attentive to the concerns of farmers, families, entrepreneurs, seniors and youth. He has been a tireless worker, a man of honour, always available, listening, and deeply committed to his community. I thank Richard. His commitment has left its mark on the Beauce region.

The people of Beauce are known throughout Quebec and Canada for their entrepreneurial spirit. They are proud, resilient, resourceful and, above all, supportive. Beauce is a region built by entrepreneurs, farmers, hard-working people and loving families who believe in creating their own opportunities. The proof is that Beauce has nearly 2,000 farms. Those farms produce a variety of foods, such as maple syrup, dairy, pork and poultry, as well as fruits, vegetables and grains. All my colleagues here will agree that the 300 dairy farmers in Beauce produce exceptional milk. Of course, everyone will agree that we are also known for the best maple syrup in the world. I invite Canadians to find out for themselves just how exceptional our products are and what beautiful scenery we have.

We also have a reputation for hospitality in Beauce, especially at our agri-tourism sites throughout the region. Beauce is a region rich in heritage with an entrepreneurial culture. People can come see us at tourist destinations like the Miller Zoo in Frampton, founded by Clifford Miller and Émilie Ferland. It is both a wildlife sanctuary and an animal rehabilitation centre that gives many wild animals a second chance.

I also invite people to visit some of our local attractions, such as Domaine Taschereau, Maison J.-A. Vachon and the aviation museum in Sainte-Marie; the Beauce historical village and the Marius Barbeau museum in Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce; the Rapides-du-Diable park in Beauceville; the Sept-Chutes Regional Park and the Saint Georges church, which is a beautiful part of our religious heritage; and the Notre-Dame-des-Pins covered bridge, to name a few.

This summer, people can come visit our local farms: the Goulet blueberry farm in Saint-Frédéric; Le Verger à Ti-Paul in Saint-Elzéar; the Marland blueberry farm in Sainte-Marie; the Bourque strawberry farm and Les Roy de la pomme apple orchard in Saint-Georges-de-Beauce; Verger L'Argousière in Saint-Côme Linière; the Frampton Brasse microbrewery in Frampton, with a stunning view of the mountains; the Martin Bilodeau farm in

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Saint-Éphrem-de-Beauce; La Pralinière chocolate factory; La Miel-lerie de Sophie in Notre-Dame-des-Pins; La Pépité d'Or cheese factory, with locations in Saint-Georges-de-Beauce and in Sainte-Marie; Fromagerie Gilbert cheese factory in Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce; and Ferme JN Morin farm in Saint-Zacharie, which makes the best barbecue sauces, spices and vinaigrettes in the world, all delicious and all maple-based. There are many other magnificent places to visit, of course.

Whether at the plant, in the fields, on construction sites or behind the counter, the people of Beauce get up every morning and go to work with determination and dedication. I will staunchly defend that attitude every day.

● (1700)

However, despite our entrepreneurial spirit, we are facing new challenges. Given our shared border with Maine, Beauce's economy is closely tied to the United States, one of our main partners. For decades, our trade in goods and services with our neighbours to the south has obviously been extensive. For many of our businesses, the United States accounts for 80% of their sales. The 25% tariff that has been imposed and the Trump administration's real threat of a 50% tariff on steel, for example, are having a major, severe impact on our businesses. We need to take action to ensure that our businesses are not left behind. We must protect the industries that are essential to the future of the economies of Beauce and Canada by supporting the ones that are affected. The Liberal Party needs to act now.

Our proud agricultural heritage has always been our region's strength. Agriculture remains a vital sector of our economy. Farmers across the country are working tirelessly to supply food to Canadians and contribute to our economy, but they are often left without the supports they need to succeed in a competitive global market. It is essential that we fully protect policies such as supply management, which I will defend vigorously. Supply management ensures affordable prices, stability and quality for consumers. A self-sufficient agricultural sector is crucial to Canada's long-term prosperity and security.

The housing crisis is being felt across Canada. Beauce is particularly hard hit. Some municipalities in our region have a vacancy rate of less than 2%. As a result, rents have increased significantly, which is hurting families and slowing economic development. Since 2021, some parts of the region have seen rents rise by more than 50%. We urgently need to curb rent increases, accelerate housing starts, reduce red tape and roll out quicker, more affordable and more flexible federal programs.

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Economic immigration plays a crucial role in Beauce's continued growth and success. The unemployment rate in our region is extremely low, less than 3%. That is an indication of the strength of our local economy. It also means that we have to rely heavily on temporary foreign workers to fill jobs. These workers are essential to maintaining the productivity and competitiveness of our industries. The need for temporary foreign workers is very different in big cities from what it is in the regions. We need to set up a system tailored to each region in order to improve the situation and meet the growing demand for workers. Beauce and its businesses deserve better. It is time for the government to provide solutions that reflect the reality of our regions.

I want to talk about the housing cost crisis in Canada. It is time for the government to genuinely tackle a problem that is making life harder for Canadians every day. This is critical for our seniors. Many are living on fixed incomes and are feeling the pressure of increased expenses. The tax reduction measures that were announced to make life more affordable for Canadians are woefully inadequate. Canadians need much more.

We must make our streets safer by fighting violence and keeping criminals behind bars. Affordable, prosperous and safe communities are essential to the well-being of all Canadians. We must put more energy and effort into making this a reality.

Today, I am thinking of my two daughters. Every decision I make, every challenge I take on, I do it for them. I want them to grow up in a safe, economically stable, fair country where they can achieve their dreams and prosper. That is the kind of future I am fighting for, not just for my children, but for all our children. I am proud to say I am Canadian, and I am proud to say I am from Beauce. That is why, throughout my term in office, I will stand up for the people of Beauce to protect our way of life, support our businesses and ensure a prosperous future for us all.

Together, let us build a stronger, fairer and more vibrant Beauce and Canada.

• (1705)

Hon. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House. His predecessor, Mr. Lehoux, was a very good member of Parliament. I will work with him to advance agricultural issues in the House.

Listening to my colleague's speech, I understood how important the agricultural sector is to Beauce. However, during the election campaign, I was a bit surprised because there was no mention of the importance of supply management in the Conservative platform. There was nothing about the importance of the sector or about concrete initiatives.

Will my hon. colleague raise these important issues with Mr. Poilievre and talk to him how important it is for the Conservative Party to make concrete promises for the agricultural sector?

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my colleague that Pierre Poilievre's message on the Quebec platform was very clear: Supply management is non-negotiable.

As I said, there are more than 2,000 farms in Beauce. I will defend them tooth and nail. If negotiations are reopened with the

Americans, we need to understand that the state of Wisconsin alone produces more milk than all of Canada does.

This means that supply management must be protected at all costs. In my region, it is a priority.

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Beauce and pass on best wishes directly from the people of Mirabel, which was recently named the maple capital of the world. However, good maple syrup can be found everywhere.

Ottawa often automatically thinks that the federal government can fix everything. However, my colleague spoke about helping businesses, cutting taxes and making our economy more competitive. To do that, the provinces and Quebec must be able to be more fiscally competitive. The fact that health care costs account for almost half of the Quebec government's program spending prevents us from being competitive for our businesses.

In light of that, will my colleague, as a representative of Quebec, support the Quebec government in its calls for health transfers to be increased unconditionally from 24% to 35% of system costs immediately and, I repeat, unconditionally?

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mirabel. I believe his region produces good maple syrup too.

First, the government needs to be run like a business. What I have seen in the past two weeks here is that there is not even a budget. Every expenditure and purchase needs to be put in a budget. Right now, there is no budget. The government is flying blind. I am a bit disappointed about that.

In answer to my colleague, I think that the Liberal government needs to table a budget in order to be able to study the files.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we often hear from the Conservatives about the issue of a budget. The reality is that when Stephen Harper was elected as prime minister, it was in February, and he did not introduce a budget until May.

There was a federal election on April 28, and we have a new government and a new Prime Minister. Does the member really believe it is that simple to put forward a national budget when billions and billions of dollars are being spent? It took Mr. Harper, many years ago, a number of months to present a budget.

Why does the Conservative Party seem to have a differing opinion regarding Harper's performance or capabilities and the current Prime Minister's?

• (1710)

[Translation]

Jason Groleau: Mr. Speaker, I think Mr. Harper was new when he first got here, at the very beginning. As I understand it, we have had the same government, the same ministers, the same people for the past 10 years. They are not anywhere close to tabling a budget.

Let me give an example. It is like a restaurant. They say they are going to change the menu and everything else, but the only thing that changes is the sign and the name of the restaurant.

Here, we have the same government and the same ministers. There is no budget. It is extremely disappointing.

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard (Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Whitby. I join my colleagues in congratulating you on your appointment. We all know that the Assistant Deputy Speaker is an important role that sets the tone in the House.

Like many of my colleagues have done today and in recent days, I rise for the very first time in this 45th Parliament. It is an honour and a privilege that comes with great responsibility. I owe my being here to the people of Hochelaga-Rosemont-Est, whom I would like to acknowledge right off the bat. They are proud, supportive, and creative Montrealers. Hochelaga-Rosemont-Est is where families greet each other at Place Simon-Valois and meet at the Maison-neuve market. It is where friends get together at Morgan, Lalancette, and Louis-Riel parks to picnic and solve the world's problems. I have done it myself. It is also where hundreds of children play in the back alleys that have been a feature of the neighbourhood for decades, and where young and old alike shop in the many flea markets and bring Ontario Street to life.

I am asking the question here. I do not know if anyone has ever been to a race involving not Formula 1 cars or horses, but scooters. Yes, there is a scooter race in “Hochelag”. To experience it, one has to be there in July. It is both unique and memorable.

The people of Hochelaga-Rosemont-Est chose to put their trust me in the last election. As this parliamentary session begins, I would like to tell them that I aspire to be as persistent, resourceful, sensitive and ambitious as they are. They were very upfront during the election campaign. I can say that their expectations of me are high but, more generally speaking, their expectations of the political class as a whole are immense.

I know that all parliamentarians in the House today did as I did in recent weeks and laced up their most comfortable shoes to knock on hundreds of thousands of doors in an attempt to win the confidence of voters. Sometimes people made bad choices about footwear and regretted it. In my case, I am quite proud of my results: I knocked on 8,000 doors. From these discussions, I learned about the diverse realities of Hochelaga-Rosemont-Est. The needs are many, but above all, they are varied. It is my duty to receive all of these requests, as varied as they may be. These requests, aspirations and dreams must be heard in this place.

People in the House have all sorts of resumé, all sorts of past experience. I urge everyone to see that as an asset. I am proud to say that I have a degree in dance. In a country like Canada, an artist, a child of the public education system and a renter who does not own a car can make the leap into active politics. There is something about that idea that makes me happy, reassures me and inspires me.

After a 20-plus-year career in arts and culture as an artist, dancer and producer, I had a second career. This is the beginning of my third career. I was a Radio-Canada host for over 10 years. I hosted

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news programs, and it is very funny seeing my former colleagues in the corridors. We are all in this dance together. Obviously, I will be a proud advocate for the long-term future of CBC/Radio-Canada.

I would like to commend the tremendous amount of work that was done by Pascale St-Onge, a former Liberal minister. She had an insightful vision for the future of Radio-Canada. Radio-Canada is us, not just because it bears the name “Canada”, but because it tells our stories, shapes us and helps us stand out. The throne speech clearly mentions the future of CBC/Radio-Canada. Our government's position on that is unwavering.

As members know, there is a team behind every major undertaking. I would like to take this opportunity today to express my sincere gratitude to my campaign co-managers. We were very progressive in Hochelaga-Rosemont-Est. Simon Boucher and Béatrice Lavallée encouraged and supported me.

● (1715)

Yianni Papadatos, Malia Chenaoui and Alexandre Devaux already know how much I value them. Still, I want to thank them again, and it is especially meaningful to do so today within these walls. My dedicated volunteers have been a strong and flexible link between the passionate, cheerful, and curious woman I am and the people of Hochelaga-Rosemont-Est. Thanks to their political convictions and their confidence in the Liberal Party, I am here to proudly to represent more than 110,000 Montrealers, Quebecers and Canadians from seat 150. Among them are people who voted for me, and I am touched by that.

Many people chose to place their trust in candidates from other parties. I respect their choice. However, I would like to say today that the door to my office on Pie-IX Boulevard in Montreal will always be open to everyone. I invite people to come and see me. I want to hear the concerns of everyone, regardless of their political stripe. To me, the verb “to serve”, as in “to serve the people”, is a noble term. It is an action verb that suggests listening, empathy, and dedication.

I see politics as a team sport, but also a relay. I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Soraya Martinez Ferrada, the former Liberal member for Hochelaga. The riding was not called Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est at the time. She was ambitious and had a vision for the riding during her last two terms. She left many legacies, but I will name one: the creation of the Sommet de l'Est. She did not do it alone, but she did an incredible job on it. The Sommet de l'Est puts wind in the sails of business owners, organizations and people who want to use their mission to contribute to the vitality of Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est. I will follow in her footsteps and be there to support those who want to help the area thrive.

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On May 27, His Majesty King Charles III read the Speech from the Throne. It is a speech that I support. It is a speech that conveys a clear vision and a plan that is ambitious and, most of all, unifying. When I was door knocking, Canadians told me that they want greater unity. Together we are stronger. I did not write that, but I very much believe in it. That is what I heard people saying during the election campaign.

We are proposing all sorts of measures, but the ones that are most important to me for the people of Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est are those that strengthen our social safety net. In Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est, that is crucial. We need measures to ensure that no one is left behind. There is a major housing crisis across the country, but it is particularly bad in Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est. My riding is intimately acquainted with the homelessness crisis. For the past several years, I have been speaking out against the comments of the Conservative Party, which is trying to equate homelessness with crime. It is hurtful and insulting, and it is no doubt the result of a lack of understanding of a very complex issue. I hope that we will move beyond partisanship to provide all Canadians with a safe and decent life, no matter where they live. That is especially true in my riding.

In closing, I would like to thank my two grandmothers, who are no longer with us. They are probably looking down on me from above. They were two women who never minced words and who probably gave me that drive without even knowing it. I would like to thank my parents, Michel Ménard and Doris Grenier, who always encouraged me by making me believe, rightly I hope, that yes, we can stand tall, have convictions, and try to make even the smallest changes to create a better future for everyone. I apologize in advance to my family, as I will often be late for dinner. I want to thank my partner, Michel, who believes in me and whom I love. I want to wish everyone a good legislative session.

• (1720)

Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est. I really enjoyed her speech. There was one part about the Conservative Party's vision and safety on our streets that I disagree with, but I agree with a lot of what she said.

Considering that my colleague comes from a media background, I would like to hear her thoughts on her government's solution to halting the decline of French. The only line about it that I see in the throne speech involves promoting CBC/Radio-Canada internationally as a way to showcase our culture. However, there are many other things to be done. I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Mr. Speaker, there is only so much time in a speech. I lived in Winnipeg for three years, and I worked there in French. That gave me the opportunity to learn about francophone realities outside Quebec.

My colleague is absolutely right. The use of French depends on more than just robust and ongoing support for Radio-Canada. The use of French depends on its promotion, especially here in the House. Promoting a language means making it resonate. My government is rather uncompromising on that. There are two official languages in Canada. In any case, I will be a strong defender of French.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and congratulate her on her election. She talked about a major issue in her riding: homelessness.

I will explain to my colleague and to those watching at home today that the word “homelessness” does not appear in the Speech from the Throne. It was there in 2020 and again in 2021, but there is no mention of it in 2025. It magically disappeared, as if the problem had been completely solved. However, the reality on the ground is very different. Between 2018 and 2022, homelessness in Quebec skyrocketed, increasing by 44%.

How is it that the throne speech makes absolutely no mention of such a major problem in Quebec that was recognized by the previous government?

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign and since I took office, I have had the opportunity to speak many times with community organizations, the people with real expertise on the ground. Obviously, everyone would like to see their concerns reflected in a throne speech. The Speech from the Throne is a choice. It is still a road map. What reassures me is not the homelessness crisis, but knowing that there are capable organizations inspired by the idea of working, particularly with the federal government, to manage this crisis, which is rampant across the country but especially dire in the riding of Hochelaga—Rosemont-Est.

[English]

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is quite a bit of misinformation and disinformation online. We have seen the impact here in the House, with the members opposite, yesterday, repeating some pretty wild conspiracy theories here in the House of Commons, nonsense in this chamber, protected by parliamentary privilege. I am not going to mention the never-ending tide of propaganda from south of the border.

Based on the member's background, can she tell us how important it is to have a strong media and a common frame of reference for all Canadians?

[Translation]

Marie-Gabrielle Ménard: Mr. Speaker, let us go beyond the very existence of CBC/Radio-Canada. In Canada, we are privileged to live in a democracy. We just went through an election. Canadians had a chance to have their say. Democracies are protected by strong journalism, verified information and non-partisan news, among other things. CBC/Radio-Canada is part of that landscape. However, it is not the only institution, and I hope that, as a society, we will continue to implement safeguards that help us continue to move forward as a democracy.

• (1725)

[English]

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in this honourable House to serve the people of Whitby. I have been elected for the third time, and it is a great honour to be back in this chamber representing my community once again.

We have begun the 45th Parliament at a time of real challenge and great promise for our nation. Around the world, alliances are shifting, economies are evolving, and uncertainty is rising. Here at home, our economic security and sovereignty have been tested recently, but I believe Canadians remain hopeful and focused. They sent us here, I believe strongly, to find solutions and build a stronger country together.

In Whitby, families are working hard, caring for one another and trying to make ends meet. They are the reason we are all here. That is why the Speech from the Throne that was delivered by His Majesty King Charles III matters. It calls on us to meet this moment the Canadian way, by coming together to build, protect, secure and unite. This is our government's commitment to Canadians: to protect our progress, build on what we have, secure our future and move forward together.

Today, I want to speak on the priorities that must guide our work: number one, building the strongest economy in the G7; and number two, making life more affordable, keeping our communities safe, as well as uniting Canadians in a common purpose.

We begin where it all starts, with the economy. When I think about the economy, I do not think of charts and stock indexes. It is not just about numbers. Economies are, first and foremost, about people. I think of the entrepreneur in Whitby starting a small business and hiring local grads from Ontario Tech University. I think of the skilled trade student at Durham College earning his ticket, saving for a home and ready to build a life. I think of the auto worker at the General Motors plant with two kids who lives with uncertainty because of the tariffs placed on us by the U.S., the newcomer with global experience who cannot seem to find the right job or families who are wondering if and when their hard work will truly pay off. That is the real economy: people striving to reach their potential. It is up to us to shape it.

That is why the government is focused on building an economy that delivers for everyone. We are breaking down old barriers to trade between provinces. Removing these barriers could add \$200 billion to our economy. That is how we grow: by working as one, one economy for all Canadians.

We are also looking outward. Canada has free trade agreements with 51 countries, covering over 60% of global GDP. By diversifying our trade, we reduce our reliance on any one partner, and we can deepen ties with trusted allies who share our values. We are fast-tracking major nation-building projects in energy, transit, trade, housing and digital infrastructure. As the Prime Minister has said, it is time to build; we have done it before, and we can do it again. That includes cutting red tape, streamlining approvals and driving nation-building projects forward, projects that create jobs, lower emissions, connect our regions and expand the flow of goods to markets.

We are also doubling the indigenous loan guarantee program to \$10 billion, empowering more indigenous communities to be equity partners in major projects. Economic reconciliation is not a slogan; it is a path to shared prosperity.

We are also scaling up businesses and boosting productivity, starting with critical minerals and AI adoption. We are modernizing

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the SR&ED program, launching a patent box to help protect Canadian ideas, introducing flow-through shares for start-ups and recapitalizing the venture capital catalyst initiative with \$1 billion. These are all tools to attract investment, leverage our strengths, scale innovation and lead the G7 in economic growth. When Canadians have the tools to succeed, when we invest in their potential, our economy grows for everyone.

Affordability is a key topic in my riding. In Whitby and across Canada, I hear the same message time and again. Life is getting too expensive: groceries, rent and energy. People are doing their best, but they just cannot get ahead. Now, affordability is not just about statistics; it is about dignity. It is about making sure hard work actually pays off. We are protecting the progress we made with universal child care, dental care, pharmacare and the national school food program. These are not luxuries but lifelines for some of the most vulnerable in our community, and we are going further.

● (1730)

We have introduced a middle-class tax cut. The average dual-income family will keep \$840 more of their hard-earned dollars this year and every year after. That is a real difference. It means sports for the kids, school supplies or a few more bags of groceries at the grocery store. We are also keeping \$10-a-day child care going strong. It is not just good for kids; it is great for the economy. It allows parents, especially women, to get back to work, and it saves families thousands of dollars each year.

We have expanded dental care, so no Canadian has to choose between healthy teeth and putting food on the table, and we are making bold moves on housing. For too many Canadians, we know the dream of home ownership feels out of reach. Young people, newcomers and seniors, everyone deserves a place to call home. We are removing GST from new home purchases and saving first-time homebuyers up to \$50,000. This builds on existing measures for helping first-time homebuyers, like 30-year mortgages, a 25% reduction on mortgage insurance and tax-free savings accounts to save up for their first home.

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We are also cutting development charges in half, with federal support to offset the cost of housing infrastructure. We are launching “build Canada homes”, a public developer that will build deeply affordable housing; investing \$25 billion in innovative pre-fab builders and \$10 billion in low-cost loans for affordable housing developers; and using public lands, standardizing design and scaling up Canadian-made modular and mass timber construction. We will build faster and better; buy Canadian steel, lumber and more; and create good jobs right here at home.

In Whitby, we have seen results, with \$25 million from the housing accelerator fund, a motel transformed through the rapid housing initiative, the expansion of a local housing co-operative and over 11,000 units on our waterfront that will be unlocked through the housing infrastructure fund. These are real, tangible results in my community, and I am very proud of the Liberal record. I am certain that is why Canadians returned us to this side of the House to continue leading the country forward. Now we are committing to building 500,000 homes per year across Canada, because housing is a foundation for a good life for Canadians.

Now let us talk about security for a moment. Our country can only thrive when people feel safe, and right now, Canadians are deeply concerned. Auto theft, gun violence, drug and human trafficking and organized crime are real threats that keep my community members up at night. I want my constituents to know we are responding. The example today is the tabling of Bill C-2, the Strong Borders Act, and we are going to do much more.

We are investing boldly to protect Canadians and defend our sovereignty, starting with our armed forces. We are giving a raise to Canadian Armed Forces members, building more housing on bases, improving access to health care and child care for military families and much, much more.

As climate change continues to impact our north, we are protecting our Arctic sovereignty, which has become more and more urgent. We will forge a new Canada-Europe Arctic security agreement to meet the moment. We are also stepping up at our southern border. We are training 1,000 new RCMP officers and 1,000 new CBSA officers, and deploying new scanners, drones, canine units and much more.

We are also cracking down on repeat and violent offenders, making bail harder for car thieves, human traffickers and home invaders. Sentences will be tougher for organized crime and sexual violence, including online abuse and deep fakes. As hate crime rises in our communities, we are acting decisively. We will make it a criminal offence to intentionally obstruct access to or intimidate those attending schools, places of worship or community centres. This is great progress. When we protect what matters, our families, our communities and our country, we give every Canadian the confidence to build a better future, together.

Lastly, let me wrap up by saying the throne speech lays the foundation for progress. It gives us the tools to build a strong economy, make life more affordable, keep our communities safe and strengthen our democracy and country. More than that, it gives us a vision we can rally around.

I believe in Whitby, in Canada and in the strength and determination of our people. Let us get to work with compassion, courage and conviction. Let us build a country our children can be proud of, a Canada that is stronger, more affordable, more secure and more united than ever before.

● (1735)

Cheryl Gallant (Algonquin—Renfrew—Pembroke, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I am most interested in hearing more about the access to medical care for the families of soldiers. Do they have to live on a military base to get access? What does that look like? Who do they call to get access? This is very serious, and every summer it gets worse because there are postings from one to the next. Tell us how it works.

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in the House with the member opposite asking good faith questions about an issue that is very important, which is how we support both our veterans and our armed forces members, who deserve our greatest respect and greatest support.

In the platform, we have committed to building more housing, offering more supports to our veterans and armed forces members. More details will come on how we will implement that in the future.

[*Translation*]

Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my friend, the member for Whitby, whom I congratulate and salute, was one of the main standard-bearers of the Trudeau government's environmental policy.

I have here a mailer he sent his constituents in June 2022. In it, he defended the carbon tax and rebates for zero-emission vehicles, for which there are no tax credits anymore. He also sponsored a motion to speed up the passage of Senator Galvez's climate-aligned finance bill. The member was one of the main standard-bearers of those policies. Today, he belongs to a government that thinks, as the member for Guelph said, that the energy transition goes hand in hand with increasing our oil production.

That is an open question. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[English]

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to say that the hon. member for Mirabel collaborated quite well with me on numerous standing committees that we served on in the last Parliament.

This is truly an area that I feel passionate about and have done a lot of work in. I believe strongly that our environmental policies from the past have a lot of credibility. We are pivoting and ensuring that we can build a strong economy at the same time as reducing our emissions in this country. Obviously, that is a delicate balancing act when the context at the moment is that our sovereignty and our economic security are under threat.

We are evaluating how best to achieve both of these nation-building projects while reducing our emissions. I look forward to working with the member opposite.

Hon. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Whitby for his speech today, which had lots of passion.

What needs to be noted in the Hansard of the debate here is that he is an absolute champion for sustainable finance. He has hosted a number of forums outside Parliament, bringing stakeholders together from across the country. I am interested in his thoughts on that. He mentioned regulatory reform and cutting red tape. I offer an opportunity for him to either address sustainable finance and how the government can continue in this avenue or red tape. Is there a way to blend the two? I hand it over to the member.

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from Kings—Hants. I very much appreciate the question.

He is right: I have done a lot of work in the sustainable finance space. I was happy to see, in our platform, a commitment to expedite taxonomy for sustainable finance in this country, which underpins financial products, eliminates greenwashing and increases credibility and competitiveness in the Canadian economy and across our businesses and industries. That is a good step forward.

There is also a commitment in our platform to move forward on mandatory climate-related disclosures. The idea here is to mobilize a lot more capital and investment in the areas that can help us with the net-zero transition. We have lots more work to do.

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on December 12, the member tweeted that the carbon tax had a minimal effect on the cost of living and inflation.

However, on April 1, when he got his fresh talking points from the Prime Minister, he said that axing the carbon tax made life more affordable. The Prime Minister is not here to tell him what to say. What does the member really think about the carbon tax?

• (1740)

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, our government did a poor job of selling Canadians on the truth, which was that the carbon tax was the most cost-effective measure for reducing emissions.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Ryan Turnbull: Mr. Speaker, of course the member opposite is heckling me, which is fine.

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Our government acknowledged that this had become a divisive issue for Canadians. We eliminated the consumer carbon tax because we really think that we can find a way to reduce our emissions that will put less burden on the average consumer.

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, standing here today and representing my community in the 45th Parliament is the honour of a lifetime. I want to begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to the people of Kitchener Centre for placing their trust in me. Their voices, their concerns and their aspirations are at the heart of everything I will do in Ottawa. I also want to take a moment to recognize the dedicated volunteers who made this journey possible. Their passion, hard work and unwavering commitment carried me to this moment. I am not standing here alone; each and every one of them is here with me.

My husband, Chris, my mom, my closest friends, my dad and my daughter, Abigail, are my strength, my motivation and my greatest supporters. Their love and belief in me have guided me every step of this path, and I am forever grateful. To my predecessor Mike, I say thanks for his service to Kitchener Centre. I will continue to be a strong advocate.

Kitchener Centre is more than a place on a map. It is where I was raised; it is where my heart belongs. I attended J F Carmichael, then Queensmount, and went off to Forest Heights, before completing my education at Conestoga, where I earned a diploma in mechanical engineering, specializing in robotics and automation. My career in management has spanned over 18 years, focusing on effective communication, fiscal responsibility and policy creation to improve efficiencies. These are principles I will carry with me into public service.

I grew up in a home where money was not plentiful, but resilience and determination were abundant. I was taught the value of hard work, ambition and the belief that, with effort, anything was possible. That was the Canada and the home that I grew up in, a place where dedication and perseverance could lead to home ownership, financial security and a good life in a safe neighbourhood. Today, those dreams feel farther out of reach for many. This reality is one that I will fight to change.

I am committed to building a future in which affordability is not an obstacle, jobs provide stability and communities are free from the devastating impacts of addiction and crime. I am here to listen. I am here to act. I am here to make sure that every person in Kitchener Centre has the opportunity to thrive.

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The rising cost of living has tightened its grip on families, young professionals and seniors alike. I heard the stories at the doors: parents stretching every dollar, young people questioning whether they can afford a home or local businesses trying to stay afloat amid increasing expenses.

Affordability is not just a word; it is the difference between stability and struggle, between hope and hardship. During the campaign, I had the opportunity to tour the Waterloo regional food bank. While I was deeply impressed by its efficiency and dedication, I found myself grappling with the unsettling reality, the sheer scale at which such an operation is needed in our community.

Between 2023 and 2024, the number of new households accessing food hamper programs for the first time skyrocketed by 210%. In that same period, 29,786 hampers were distributed to families in need, for an increase of 109%. These staggering numbers are a direct consequence of the rising cost of living, which is forcing more and more people to turn to essential support services just to put food on the table. This is not just an economic issue; it is a human one. It is a call to action that demands urgent and meaningful solutions to ensure that no family in Kitchener Centre or beyond has to struggle for their basic needs. We must forge policies that ease this pressure, ensuring less taxation, affordable housing and stability for our communities across Canada.

Equally vital is my commitment to job creation. Kitchener Centre has long been a hub of innovation, with a thriving tech industry and entrepreneurial spirit. However, opportunity must be more than a promise. It must be a reality for every worker, every student choosing to stay in the region while entering the workforce and every small business daring to dream. We must invest in key technologies and industries: green technology, the arts and creative sectors, advanced manufacturing, med tech, deep tech, AI and more. We need to implement policies that empower our people and drive investment, ensuring our economy is sustainable and future-proof.

• (1745)

Today, our community has an opportunity to forge a new path ahead, and we are well positioned to do so. We must support the initiatives of the leaders of our industries on a federal level to ensure a prosperous future for Kitchener Centre. However, amid these ambitions, I must address the harsh reality that so many of our neighbours face: this drug crisis. It is a crisis that is not just statistical and not economic; it is profoundly human. I have listened to the voices of families who have lost loved ones; frontline business owners and workers grappling with its impact; and communities, especially in our downtown core, caught in the crossfire of addiction and crime.

One conversation that deeply resonated with me was with Cynthia, a constituent from Kitchener Centre. Not only has her business suffered because of this crisis, but she also brought to my attention a critical issue: the Alexandrian. It is a residential building in the heart of our downtown, which is not alone. This building is home to many newcomers to Canada and low-income families, including children of all ages. These children deserve to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment, yet they are exposed to the harsh daily realities of downtown life.

Criminal activity unfolds right in front of them as they wait for the school bus or play in the nearby park. This is unacceptable. The safety of all of our children must never be an afterthought. It is our responsibility to ensure that they can live, learn and play in communities free from fear. The solution is not stigma; the solution is compassion and treatment. We must expand access to mental health support, strengthen rehabilitation programs and ensure that no one falls through the cracks.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with members of our outstanding Waterloo Regional Police Service, who shared with me that in 2024 alone, they responded to over 11,000 incidents in our downtown core. Since January, the WRPS has been actively collaborating with our local BIA on initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges and enhancing community well-being. To further support these efforts, we must take a firm stance on crime and repeal the soft-on-crime provisions in Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. These policies have made it more difficult to hold repeat offenders accountable and have contributed to a revolving door in our justice system. We need to ensure that individuals who repeatedly victimize our communities are kept off our streets and that those responsible for trafficking deadly substances such as fentanyl face the most severe penalties, including life sentences for kingpins.

I did not enter public service to offer empty words. I am here to work for the single parent balancing two jobs, for those living under the poverty line, for the young graduate searching for stability, for the entrepreneur building something new and for the countless individuals wanting a second chance. Kitchener Centre is not just my riding; it is my heart, and I vow to work for it with every ounce of my dedication. To my fellow representatives in the House, I say let us move forward with courage and conviction. Let us not simply acknowledge these challenges but solve them. Let us prove through action that public service is more than governance: It is the unwavering pursuit of a better future. Together we can build it.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member referred to solving challenges. From the throne speech, I want to highlight two things. One is the whole team Canada approach in dealing with the Trump tariffs and trade. We saw a great demonstration of that yesterday in Saskatchewan, where the premiers gathered with the Prime Minister. I believe that is on a perfect track to move us forward. That is one thing in the throne speech.

On the other thing, I would ask the member to demonstrate very clearly. The first initiative the Prime Minister took right after the last federal election was to give a tax break to Canadians.

Will the member support those two initiatives?

• (1750)

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, Kitchener ranks as the fourth-most affected city because of tariffs. However, our technology sector has the potential for unprecedented growth. When will the Liberal government unlock investment opportunities by streamlining and reducing taxes?

The Conservative platform on investment focuses on cutting taxes, reducing regulations and boosting economic growth. That is another one for the Liberals to copy. Please, I welcome it.

[*Translation*]

Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague talk about safety and crime. I would like his opinion on the possibility of creating a registry of criminal organizations, restoring minimum sentences for gun crimes and prohibiting community-based sentences for violent sexual offences.

[*English*]

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, while I was at the doors knocking, when the topic came up of this drug crisis we are facing, not one person I talked to was not either directly or indirectly impacted by it, whether they had lost a loved one or knew someone who had, or they had seen someone in their community under the influence of these toxic drugs. What has been happening is completely inhumane.

I ask the Liberals this: When will they stop supporting these social experiments and failed policies and start supporting mental health and rehabilitation services so that we can bring our loved ones home happy, healthy and drug-free?

Andrew Lawton (Elgin—St. Thomas—London South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely congratulate my colleague on her election.

I had the privilege of meeting the member at an event in her city of Kitchener before she was the candidate, and I am so glad to see her here. I know that she worked tremendously hard in the election, and I was wondering if she has any stories she could share about where we are as a country right now that stand out from the doors she knocked on and the voters she spoke to and that she has carried with her to Ottawa.

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, it was an honour to meet the member during the campaign, and I am honoured to serve with him here in Ottawa as well.

When I was knocking on doors, one of the main concerns was affordability. I thought to myself that if we asked the average Canadian if they wanted to pay \$1,400 a year for someone to consult, I think the answer would be no.

When will the Liberal government stop putting Canadians' hard-earned money into the pockets of their consultant friends so they can put it back into their own pockets instead?

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the hon. member opposite, and congratulations on your election.

The Address

I can hear in your voice the genuine concern for the people in your riding, so I am wondering this: Will you join municipal councils and other people in this province to call on the province to increase ODSP rates and Ontario Works rates, to build affordable housing, to scrap the removal of rent control, to hire more judges and to build more courts?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (John Nater): I would remind my hon. colleagues to address their comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Kelly DeRidder: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the warm welcome.

I am here on a federal level, and I have actually started conversations with our municipalities and also with our provincial representatives to ensure that we can collaborate and work together for the best interests of Kitchener Centre residents.

Dalwinder Gill (Calgary McKnight, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise for the first time in the House of Commons. I would first like to express my appreciation for the people of Calgary McKnight for placing their trust in me. It is a great responsibility to be their voice, and I am both humbled and motivated by their support. I also need to thank my family, friends and relatives. Every individual who volunteered on my campaign and spread the Conservative message by knocking on doors, making phone calls and putting up signs inspired me with their commitment, which served as a reminder of the impact we can make when we come together in service of our communities.

I thank my neighbouring MPs from Calgary East and Calgary Skyview for their guidance and support throughout this process. Finally, I want to thank the returning members of the House for welcoming me and all newly elected MPs with kindness and grace. I am eager to work alongside colleagues from all parties to deliver results for Canadians.

Just like this chamber, Calgary McKnight is made up of people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It is a riding filled with hard-working individuals who take pride in their roots and in the journeys that brought them to Canada. People from every corner of the world are proud to call northeast Calgary home. They have started businesses, raised families and built vibrant communities. It is a place where neighbours support one another, where different traditions are celebrated side by side and where the Canadian dream is lived out every day in various languages, religions, cultures and acts of community service.

Their stories of sacrifice, determination and hope for a brighter future are what I carry with me into the chamber. Like many of my constituents, I also immigrated to northeast Calgary to live out the Canadian promise. Back then, if we worked hard and played by the rules, we could afford food and an affordable home on a safe street. Unfortunately, after 10 years of the Liberal government, that promise feels increasingly out of reach.

The Address

People in Calgary McKnight are simply tired: tired of seeing their savings eroded by inflation, tired of watching their children struggle to get ahead and tired of seeing crime destabilize the safe and welcoming communities they once knew. I ran to be a member of Parliament because I saw the issues that my neighbours in Calgary McKnight face on a daily basis. I have seen the rising cost of living make it harder and harder for members of my community to keep up.

Families are being forced to choose between affording groceries or filling up their car with gas, between heating their homes through the cold winter months or enrolling their children in sports or extracurricular activities. I see seniors stretching every last dollar of their retirement savings: The price of basic necessities continues to rise while their purchasing power declines due to the Liberal government's inflationary spending.

The youth in my community are no longer striving to get ahead financially or save for a down payment on a home. They are simply trying to keep their heads above water. New data from the Financial Resilience Institute shows that anxiety about money is now reported more than loneliness. The rise of youth unemployment to 14% has left young people hopeless and depressed.

Despite their education, skills and willingness to work, many young Canadians are unable to find meaningful employment and are forced to skip meals or move back in with mom and dad. This is not the future they were promised, and it is not the future that we should accept in the House.

A recent RBC survey found that over a quarter of Canadians have gone into debt, not to upgrade their education or buy a car but simply to cover basic living needs. Fifty-five per cent of Canadians describe themselves as being financially paralyzed. Overall unemployment is also on the rise in Canada and in my community. We have all heard stories of highly skilled and educated people unable to find work because their qualifications, earned abroad, are not recognized here. This is not only unfair; it is a missed opportunity for our public services.

● (1755)

I will advocate for policies like the blue seal program, which would give professionals a pathway to demonstrate their expertise and apply their skills in Canada. Through this program, tens of thousands of health care professionals already living in Canada could find employment and ease the strain on our overwhelmed health care system.

Northeast Calgary has a proud spirit of enterprise. For generations, the desire to start a business has served as the foundation of a strong Canadian middle class. Unfortunately, the past 10 years of Liberal taxation, bureaucracy and red tape have punished those who seek to innovate and build. Small business owners in Calgary McKnight have been facing increasing regulatory burdens and higher taxes that make it more difficult to sustain and grow their enterprises.

I will continue the fight for policies like cutting red tape by 25% and eliminating capital gains taxes on reinvestment, because small business owners in Calgary deserve to be rewarded for their hard work and personal investment in our communities.

My constituents are also deeply concerned about the rising wave of crime that has swept across our country. Just last month, a transit driver in my riding had to fight for his life after being brutally assaulted while driving a bus. Throughout my campaign, I met numerous constituents who had been victims of crime, people whose homes and vehicles had been vandalized or broken into, families still shaken by recent attacks and small business owners distraught after multiple armed robberies. Many shared that these incidents have become more frequent in recent years.

While Canadians are living in increasing fear, the Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies continue to enable repeat offenders to return to our streets and threaten the safety, livelihood and dignity of law-abiding citizens. This is unacceptable. We need to work together in the House to deliver practical solutions to combat violence and restore public safety across our great land.

Canadians deserve a real plan from their government. Last week's throne speech and the Liberals' decision to not present a budget unfortunately do not provide one. With summer break coming up after six months of prorogation, many are left wondering what to expect from a government that is already starting to look a lot like its predecessor.

Conservatives will continue to put forward common-sense solutions to make Canada safer and more affordable, self-reliant and united. It is time to cut taxes and red tape and to restore the dreams of home ownership and entrepreneurship. We must rein in government spending to bring down inflation and restore the value of our dollar. We need to make our communities safer by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are kept behind bars.

As our leader has previously stated, a good government should deliver effective essential services and then get out of the way so that Canadians have the freedom to work, build and pursue their dreams. It is my mission to restore that Canadian promise for the people of Calgary McKnight and for all Canadians who simply want a fair shot at a good life.

I thank the people of Calgary McKnight once again. I will serve them with integrity, passion and an open heart.

● (1800)

John-Paul Danko (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations to my colleague across the floor for his election in Calgary McKnight. I appreciate a speech that I think he mainly wrote himself, which is refreshing.

The member mentioned cutting red tape and also the energy sector. Does the member consider other portions of the energy sector that do not include pipelines? In Ontario specifically, we talk about growing nuclear, carbon-free energy, and also, in Quebec, there is the hydro sector. How would the member suggest growing the entire energy sector in Canada?

• (1805)

Dalwinder Gill: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal record over 10 years has proven that paying more taxes will not make life more affordable or improve the climate. The Conservative plan is about responsible regulations and cutting red tape by 25% while maintaining clear rules that protect Canadians and the environment. We want to free up time and capital so small business owners can hire, expand and drive local economies forward.

Moreover, Conservatives have a plan to invest in the energy sector. We can invest in technologies for green energy that are good for the environment. There is some demand in Europe for Canadian energy. We can explore our markets in Europe so we can export our energy there. We need to spend in the energy sector.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and congratulate him on his election.

The Quebec National Assembly unanimously rejected the federal government's proposal to create one economy. The Bloc Québécois does not want to see the regional differences and economic diversity in Quebec, and indeed in many regions of Canada, ignored. This is not what Quebec wants either, as the Quebec National Assembly clearly indicated.

I would like my colleague to tell me whether he agrees with the unanimous will of the Quebec National Assembly to respect the fact that Quebec's economy is very different from that of the rest of Canada.

[English]

Dalwinder Gill: Mr. Speaker, we respect Quebec regulations, or whatever Quebecers think.

We should have our own economy. We should explore our own resources. We have so many resources in Canada. If we invest in our own resources, we can export our energy or other resources to other countries. It is a united country. I believe in a united Canada.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his comments, the member talked about crime. In our judicial system, crime is a shared responsibility; both the provincial government and the federal government have a significant role to play, as do municipalities. The Conservative Party as a whole wants to focus its attention on this particular government. I am wondering whether the member would concede the fact that it is not only the federal government but several levels of government that are responsible for keeping our communities safe.

Dalwinder Gill: Mr. Speaker, families in my riding are forced to buy security systems and cameras for their home because they are afraid of their cars being stolen or their home being broken into. Intimate partner violence is on the rise, and so is human trafficking.

The Address

We need to do more to put our communities first. Parents should feel safe letting their kids walk to school. Seniors should be able to take the bus without fear. Small business owners should not have to worry about being robbed. We need to empower our first responders and keep repeat violent offenders off our streets so our communities can once again feel safe.

Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand here in the House of Commons. Congratulations on your success in becoming the Speaker. I paid close attention to your speech, and I look forward to your leadership as you shepherd us through the 45th Parliament.

When I was first elected in 2015, people asked me how long I planned on running for. I said it would be as long as I have the sense of awe when I walk into the House of Commons. I still have that sense of awe today as we sit here in West Block. Previously, in 2015, we were in Centre Block, which is undergoing a major rebuild. I am struck that I have had the opportunity to sit in both places. It has been truly an honour.

I did not get here today to make this speech without the support and help of so many volunteers and supporters in Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma. My riding is one of the new ridings after the electoral commission went through a process of reviewing what kind of seats should be in Canada.

At the time, the commission recommended getting rid of one of the seats in Northern Ontario, and that ended up being Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, which was held by Carol Hughes, who sat as assistant deputy speaker and who served the area quite well for 18 years. My riding got all of Algoma plus parts of Sudbury. At the time, I argued against the change because northern Ontario did not need one fewer voice. However, to that matter, I knew that I could represent the area very well.

My father was born in Blind River, Ontario, in 1929, in the new riding. My family made it to Blind River via the traditional Irish story. My father's grandfather came over on a boat during the famine; my great-grandfather travelled with his mother, father and brother. Crossing the ocean during the potato famine, the mother passed and was given a burial at sea. Then the father passed and was given a burial at sea, leaving the two young boys orphaned. The Québécois adopted my great-grandfather and allowed him to keep our name. That was on a farm in the Saguenay area. That was sort of our origin story.

The Address

Eventually my great-grandfather went out west, to where his brother had been adopted on another farm, in Saskatchewan. The family lost the farm because of hail and a number of other things. This was before insurance. My great-grandfather made his way to Blind River to manage a hotel and to stay there. It was great knocking on doors in that area in particular, because I could hear about a lot of the issues in Algoma east, which were similar to the new issues that I heard in Algoma north.

To drive my riding from tip to tip takes about eight hours. That is not unusual for many members of the House. However, when the change happened, David Akin from Global TV contacted me and said that my riding probably has some of the most significant changes related to geography and population, because we had over 100,000 electors. I think it was about 114,000. I had spent a long time working in that area, in business and economic development, skill development and apprenticeships, so I felt quite at home. It was my secondary home.

I just wanted to acknowledge that great area because I represented Sault Ste. Marie before, which had part of Algoma, but not that significant area. It was absolutely fantastic. The people were really impressed with the platform and the vision of the new leader of the Liberal Party, soon to be the Prime Minister. I heard again and again that the new Prime Minister had people's trust because of his ability to shepherd us through the new challenge.

● (1810)

I could not stand here making this speech without recognizing all the great volunteers who supported me. We did not have much infrastructure in Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, but it was amazing. We made pleas on social media, and people came through our door. Many of them had volunteered on other political campaigns before. Many of them had never, ever, voted Liberal, but they came through the door because they saw how critically important this election was. Some people who came through the door had never, ever worked on any political campaign.

I was very touched that so many people volunteered, so I want to thank all of them, including the new volunteers from all over Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma. However, I would be remiss not to thank the people who have worked on all four of my campaigns. They have been there every time. It was absolutely amazing. One of the media pointed out that it was the first time Liberals had won four times in a row in that riding. It is always a horse race among all the political parties. I would not be standing here again without those volunteers. My heartfelt thanks goes out to them and to my supporters and donors. There were so many that I cannot name them all.

Within that group, some of my best volunteers were, of course, my family. As I mentioned during question period today, I am celebrating my 25th wedding anniversary with my wife, Lisa Bradford, whom I met many years ago. I was already in politics. In November, I will celebrate 28 years of local representation, which started with the school board and city council. There is an old saying that behind every great man and woman, there is a partner. In my case, my partner is not behind me but beside me, and I say *chi meegwetch* to her.

Before I go too far, I would like to also acknowledge that the land I am on right now is the traditional territory of the Algonquin.

My wife and kids are members of the Batchewana First Nation. In my new area, there are also the Ojibwe and Cree first nations. I thank them for sharing their land with us, and I give thanks to all indigenous people across this great nation, including the Métis, for sharing their land with us.

As I went to the door in the new riding, the number one concern for people was, of course, the threat to our sovereignty, the constant badgering by the American administration about Canada's becoming the 51st state. It was amazing: I was knocking on doors in Elliot Lake, and senior citizens had some of the strongest words of opposition. Some of them used words that I cannot use in the House. They were standing up strong and hard because they built this country to be what it is today. The Prime Minister's words resonated very strongly with them about standing up to Donald Trump.

In my riding, there are two major steel operations: Algoma Steel, which is the second-largest steel producer in all of Canada, and Tenaris Algoma Tubes, which produces tubing for the oil and gas industry across Canada.

With threats of tariffs, I used to say that I had seen this movie before, but the reality of the new American administration is a movie I have never seen before. It is something that is beyond belief, beyond comprehension, with the continual up and down. We can hear another announcement from the American administration, and by the end of the day, it has changed. The reality of that unsteadiness has created a lot of angst, and rightly so. In 2018, we did have tariffs, but we stood up with countermeasures. We supported workers.

● (1815)

That is why I was really pleased to see in the Speech from the Throne particular sections that deal with our relationship with the United States of America, which has always been a critical partner to us. We have always been friends. We always refer to each other as cousins. There have been misunderstandings before. Sometimes, because of the great size of their country, they do not really pay attention, and not just to Canada but to the rest of the world.

I remember one time when I was at Lake State, which is a university across the way where I studied poli sci and business, we came back across the border in my car. We were waiting in line at the border and we were taking a bit of time. My friends in the back said, "Would it not be great if we were just one big, great country?" I looked at them and said, "Yes, it would be great having one prime minister" and they said, "Say what?" We began that kind of conversation.

Again, given the Speech from the Throne, dealing with the United States in particular in a multitude of fashions is important. As we renegotiate CUSMA, it is critical that we have a Prime Minister with great business acumen who is known around the world and can sit straight across the table and deal with that administration.

However, to deal with that administration, we also need to diversify our economy, and that is why when the Prime Minister talks about one economy, it resonates so much with me and the constituents across my great riding. We all know in this House that we are a Confederation of 10 provinces and three territories, and it is strange, especially for me, having worked in business, economic development and skills development, that it is difficult for people to do business with each other within Canada. Tearing down these barriers and having what was referred to today in question period as a love-in, with people like Premier Ford saying it was the best meeting he has seen in 10 years, are critically important.

The fact that we are working together sends a signal to our American friends that we can be dependent upon each other. If we tear down those barriers, \$200 billion will be added to our economy. However, when I think about that, it is not just about that \$200 billion. Over the last few years, I have been co-chair of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group. Japan is the third-greatest foreign direct investor in Canada, and when we tear down those barriers, it makes it easier for other countries to do business with us, as we can locate plants anywhere, in particular in Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, which is really central in Canada. It could be a logistical hub. There are great opportunities.

This ambitious Speech from the Throne, which King Charles III delivered so eloquently, also identifies a mountain of opportunities related to growing our economy and working together as the sovereign state that we are. With King Charles III here, it definitely demonstrated that we are different from the United States. We are a Confederation. We are a mosaic of people. We expect people to keep their identities throughout Canada, just as my family did in Quebec. In the United States, they expect people to melt into the pot, and that is so different. The Canadian economy, that one economy, is absolutely critical. We have so much potential to deal with such important things.

As it relates to Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma, we are also a border community. A lot of trade comes across the way, so building up our infrastructure is absolutely critical. Ports, rail, roads and corridors for trade are so important because that stuff can absolutely be funnelled into the United States once we get back to our relationship. That makes so much sense, because we cannot deny that the United States is always going to be a factor as a trading partner.

I sit on the trade committee, and a lot of stuff is continually going north-south, but we have to secure our borders. We have to secure our borders in a way that makes sense.

• (1820)

We know for a fact that we are not the problem as it relates to the United States' issue with fentanyl. Using its own data, we know we are less than 1%. However, today we introduced the strong borders act, which is going to make Canada even stronger. That is critically important.

The Address

Being on a border town, I know for a fact that drugs are coming from the United States into Canada and illegal guns are coming through. In the Speech from the Throne, the King talked about investing in the RCMP and having 1,000 new RCMP officers. It is absolutely critical for us to make sure that we keep the bad people and the bad stuff out of this country.

This is after 10 years of cuts by the previous government. We know that almost \$1 billion was cut from both the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency. We have already rehired, but we are going to go further on that. We are looking forward to that in Sault Ste. Marie, to make sure that we keep investing to keep our streets safe. The act goes further into a multitude of things.

As we are talking about safety and safety issues, the Speech from the Throne also talked about how we are going to rebuild our military. The Canadian Armed Forces is absolutely critical. My college roommate, one of my best friends, Captain Donald McFarling, served two terms in Afghanistan. He is currently a professor at the Royal Military College. We thank all the men and women who have served our country, who have protected our country from threats and who have policed areas in peacekeeping missions.

As I mentioned, I am now serving Algoma, the place where Lester B. Pearson served. He served that area so well. Everything in Elliot Lake is named after Lester B. Pearson. He was a great prime minister, always one of my favourites, and it is truly an honour to serve where he did.

We are rebuilding the military for the right reasons: so that we are less reliant on the United States. As we rebuild and refurbish our military, it will be good for Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma because Algoma Steel makes armour-grade plate. In fact, it is the only place in Canada that makes armour-grade plate of its significance. This steel will be used in the shipbuilding program and in rebuilding our armoured vehicles. It is so important because it is the right thing to do, and it is also going to help create jobs in Sault Ste. Marie—Algoma.

This is an ambitious plan that the premiers and the Prime Minister talked about in Saskatchewan. My grandfather worked on a farm. It is so important that we have the ability to work together. When we build, we are creating jobs upstream and downstream in the supply chains. Getting our resources to tidal waters is tremendously important for businesses like Tenaris. We and Algoma Steel also know that building bridges is good because they are going to use steel.

S. O. 52

Our housing plan, which was referenced in the speech, is also important. Doubling our housing is going to mean using Canadian wood, which will receive some preferential treatment. There are places throughout northern Ontario with mills, including in White River, where a mill was shuttered when Stephen Harper was prime minister. It reopened recently in partnership with first nations in the area, including Pic Mobert, and is now working.

I am making the point that wood, steel and aluminum are all critically important for the most ambitious building project we have seen. How do we deal with the American administration? We fight, we protect and we build. Those are important things that we have to do. In doing so, we are not just creating jobs in steel, wood and aluminum; we are also creating jobs for our workers.

As I mentioned, I used to be the apprenticeship guy in the Algoma region. I was pleased to see that we are supporting the growth of apprenticeships by covering the costs of apprentices with an up to \$8,000 grant. That is tremendously important because there are costs associated—

• (1825)

The Speaker: I really dislike interrupting the hon. member, but his time is up.

We have time for a very quick question and a very quick answer.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

• (1830)

Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his re-election.

One thing I did not hear about in his comments was crime. I met a lady yesterday and was chatting with her, and I asked how her day went. She said it was a day from hell because she had to call the police three times to have people removed from her business.

I wonder if the member recognizes the impact the Liberals have had as far as crime getting out of control goes. Does he support jail, not bail for repeat offenders? Would he repeal Bill C-5 and Bill C-75?

Terry Sheehan: Mr. Speaker, building on Bill C-48, which made substantive changes to Bill C-75, creating the reverse onus, and working with the provinces and territories, we are going to strengthen it; we are going to go further. The Prime Minister has said we are going to go even further as it relates to judicial and court reform.

EMERGENCY DEBATE

[English]

WILDFIRES IN MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the wildfires in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Nunavut.

I first want to express my sincere appreciation to all the frontline workers, firefighters and health care workers who are working around the clock to respond to the wildfire disasters. I would also like to thank the people of Peguis First Nation, Sagkeeng, The Pas, Thompson, OCN, Norway House, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin, Winnipeg and beyond who have opened up their homes to friends and families affected by this climate tragedy. Finally, I want to thank the chiefs and community leaders who are caring and advocating for their people in a time of crisis.

To all the children, families and elders who have been impacted by this emergency, I am with them with all of my care and love.

Wildfires continue to burn in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, forcing thousands of people away from their homes, particularly in northern, remote and first nations communities. I am here today on behalf of community leaders to inform the federal government that there has been a failure to properly consult with indigenous peoples, which is resulting in treaty and charter rights being violated.

The federal government is obligated to uphold the dignity and well-being of first nations that are affected by these wildfires, and this includes the following. The Government of Canada is bound to respect its fiduciary duty of care and treaty obligations when working with indigenous peoples. It is also obligated to uphold our Canadian charter, specifically section 7 of the Canadian charter, which concerns rights to life, liberty and security of the person.

This has not happened, as evacuees have often been exposed to unsafe conditions as a result of an inadequate federal government response. We have heard from first nations chiefs that evacuees may remain in overcrowded, under-resourced accommodations. Families are being separated. Vulnerable children, elders, and medically at-risk individuals are being placed in unsafe and uncertain conditions.

We have also heard from first nations that the government delayed its support for evacuations, placing evacuees in greater danger, as we witnessed in Pukatawagan, where community members, elders and children were forced to leave the community six people at a time when their airstrip was closed, allowing for only helicopter access. In spite of the community coming forward a few days before instructing the government that they were in an emergency situation, they had to wait to be taken out to safety.

The federal government must uphold its fiduciary, treaty and charter obligations in its work with provinces, territories and indigenous peoples to ensure that indigenous human rights are upheld and respected without qualification. This means enforcing and supporting emergency measures for evacuees and fulfilling its legal obligations rather than passing off responsibility to provinces and territories and delaying action and response times due to jurisdictional bantering.

Here is the issue: This is not the first time this has happened. In spite of calls by the NDP to put in place permanent infrastructure and resources to respond to extreme weather events, the government has idly sat by, and now communities are struggling to get community members to safety and be placed in accommodations where they can live in safety and dignity. We have already borne witness to examples of the federal government's failure to protect people from extreme weather events.

● (1835)

In 2011, Lake St. Martin First Nation was flooded, and many people from the community were unable to return home for more than a decade. During that time, many women and girls from that community were sexually exploited and suffered from sexual violence or human trafficking due to being uprooted from their community and placed in unsafe situations.

We have a crisis of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls in this country. We have people being placed in urban centres, and it is their first time ever being away from their community. Where is the federal government to ensure that it is providing funding for proper mental health supports and proper supports for families so they can be safe in the city of Winnipeg? We not only need to ensure that we give evacuees access to housing and health services, including mental health and reproductive health services; we also need a plan to bring folks home safely, prevent future tragedies like this and have plans put in place should the unfortunate event happen and people are unable to return home for a long period of time.

We cannot neglect that these wildfires are the new normal and follow a broader pattern of rising temperatures causing them to burn hotter and wilder, causing much greater destruction. We know fire season is starting earlier, is lasting longer and is harder to contain. Look at what just happened in Jasper or in Lytton, B.C. We see this time and time again.

It is shameful that at a time of a climate emergency, the Liberal government continues to ignore what has now become the new normal. In fact, the Liberals are calling for the building of more pipelines and extraction projects, fast-tracking consultation processes and environmental assessments, getting rid of environmental assessments and jeopardizing free, prior and informed consent, a constitutional obligation they have with indigenous peoples, violating their obligation to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, even though Bill C-15 affirmed its application in Canadian law. They continue to play games with the lives of people who are most impacted by extreme weather events.

As I said, extreme weather events are becoming the new normal. I can say that the NDP will continue to push the government to put in place permanent emergency response systems that take place in

consultation with indigenous people and that uphold the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, to come up with responses that are regionally based, led by, controlled by and specific to the nation in which the negotiations are taking place.

As I said, this is not the first time this has happened. The government needs to commit to preventing future emergencies through the creation of a national wildfire fighting force and the establishment of a youth climate corps to help respond to extreme weather events and promote climate resiliency. Nobody should be left behind in a climate emergency. As many evacuees struggle to find housing, health resources and safety, including in Winnipeg Centre, the government has an obligation to uphold UNDRIP, the Charter of Rights, and its fiduciary responsibility to ensure the dignity and security of all those impacted by the wildfires.

This means that there needs to be direction to federal departments, including Indigenous Services Canada, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and Crown-Indigenous Relations to work with provinces to enforce and support emergency orders and take federal responsibility where provincial action is insufficient—

● (1840)

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the member, but it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt that having an emergency debate on these extreme wildfires is justified. What is a bit disappointing, I must say, is that the member for Winnipeg Centre seems to have this preoccupation with being critical of the government. Can she cite a criticism coming from the Province of Manitoba, in particular Premier Wab Kinew, that the federal government is not playing a role? The Prime Minister has stepped up.

I take a bit of exception to the member referring to the flood at the Lake St. Martin reserve. As she knows, it was the provincial government that caused that flood, yet she seemed to give the impression that it was the federal government's responsibility. I will not tell her which political party was in power. She can figure that out herself.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot speak for the Premier of Manitoba. I am speaking on behalf of first nations leadership.

I know the member opposite has had a really difficult time understanding the federal government's constitutional obligations to free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people, but perhaps he can read that in a book.

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Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for bringing this critical issue to the floor of the House of Commons tonight for an emergency debate. There are many ways in which this is an emergency.

In June 2018, this House voted that the climate crisis was an emergency. The next day, the government approved a pipeline. Tonight we are debating an emergency where we are seeing people running for their lives from remote communities in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

I ask the hon. member what she hopes can come out of this debate tonight to change from rhetoric to action on the climate crisis.

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, here is the thing. In the middle of wildfires, where is the Prime Minister? He is meeting with other premiers around the country to fast-track resource extraction projects, getting rid of environmental assessments and fast-tracking consultations with indigenous peoples. We need a couple of things to happen. We need proper consultation processes with indigenous people.

The federal government has been in power for over eight years. It is time for it to stop sitting idly by and put in place the infrastructure necessary to deal with extreme weather events that have become the new normal.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing forward this emergency debate. In my riding, there is some good news. It appears people have been able to get back home after an out-of-control wildfire was, fortunately, stopped just south of the hamlet.

The member talked about the federal government's need to get involved earlier in the case of Manitoba. She is surely aware that under our legislation, it is the province that has to make a request for assistance to the federal government. Does the member have a suggestion perhaps on a way we could change the legislation so that the federal government could act more quickly in these cases? What does the member suggest we do to address the concern she has?

• (1845)

Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, in the case of first nations communities, it is in fact under the jurisdiction of Indigenous Services Canada, which has a fiduciary duty of care.

For example, in the case of Pimicikamak Cree Nation and Pukatawagan, where six people at a time were being lifted out of their community because its airstrip closed down, that is a failure of the federal government. It is certainly time that the federal government stops passing the buck to the provinces to uphold its fiduciary duties.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that June is National Indigenous History Month. I hope we all take any opportunity this month to appreciate and learn about indigenous peoples. For my part, National Indigenous History Month is an opportunity to remind parliamentarians that Inuit, first nations and Métis are brilliant. When indigenous peoples enter the path of forgiveness and intergenerational love, they thrive and make Canada a better country.

Parliament must do better to honour the former residential school students. Parliament must do better to honour the children who, rather than playing in playgrounds, were buried by the schools they were forced to be in. If Canada had established a much better relationship and started honouring treaties with indigenous peoples back then, we would have a much better Canada today.

Turning to the emergency debate, first, *qujannamiik* to first responders in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Climate change is accelerating the frequency and size of disasters such as wildfires. Canadians are experiencing unprecedented forest fire seasons, and this season has only just started. Local and provincial first responders and firefighters are already overwhelmed.

Manitobans, Saskatchewanians and those in many remote and northern first nations communities are being forced to leave their homes due to raging forest fires. Both provinces have declared states of emergency. To date, about 8,000 people from Saskatchewan, and over 17,000 people from Manitoba, have been evacuated. The federal government's emergency response system is inadequate for addressing the urgent needs of evacuees, particularly those from indigenous communities.

The federal government must accelerate its efforts to protect Canadians and lessen the impacts of climate change. Community leaders have expressed concerns about housing space and health care resources for those who have fled the fires. The Government of Canada needs to enact a preventative system that is regionally and community-based, as well as specific and controlled, to stop tragedies before they happen.

This particular emergency debate, which I thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for seeking, is of particular importance to Nunavut. Nunavut has a heavy reliance on medical travel, and Winnipeg is a major hub for medical travel patients. Every day, there are medical travel patients going back and forth between Nunavut and Winnipeg.

The health care system in Nunavut is very basic. If one goes to the health centre for pain and discomfort, the patient is sent home with pain relief. Sometimes months, and sometimes years, pass with the patient going back and forth without proper care. That same patient often ends up being diagnosed with cancer or a debilitating disease, in places such as Winnipeg, if that patient is lucky enough to get a referral to a clinic there.

Communities are served by health centres, where the bulk of care is provided by nurses. Many centres in communities have been forced to remain closed, and only open to emergency cases, because of the lack of available nurses. Some larger communities, such as Iqaluit, have resident doctors. There is only one hospital in Iqaluit.

Most communities access the care provided by a visiting doctor or specialist very infrequently. In 2022, the Qanuinnigitsiarutiksait study showed that about 16,000 medical appointments went to Manitoba. The study found that approximately 80% of births by women from the Kivalliq region occur in Manitoba, primarily in Winnipeg. They experience one month of confinement, away from their familiar surroundings. The costs of one such birth is approximately \$14,000.

● (1850)

The federal non-insured health benefits program pays for medical travel, as it is a federal obligation. Unfortunately, the federal government is refusing to meet its obligation. The Government of Nunavut is basically functioning as a bank for the federal government, rather than investing in housing or infrastructure. The federal government is refusing to negotiate in good faith with Nunavut, to the tune of \$236 million for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Without timely negotiations and transfers, Nunavummiut will continue to be forced to access health care in places like Winnipeg. While the 17,000 or so people being evacuated to Winnipeg are so important, my constituents must not fall through the cracks as Winnipeg sees a huge influx of people who will, at some point, require health care.

I will turn now to the impacts on indigenous peoples experienced by first nations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Manitoba premier, Wab Kinew, declared a province-wide state of emergency, announcing that more than 17,000 people are expected to be evacuated from wildfire-affected communities. A recent CBC story said that first nations leaders are pointing out that Manitoba cities are largely booked up as people continue to seek temporary housing for evacuees fleeing communities surrounded by the wildfires.

What will the government do to make sure the evacuees are properly housed, fed and able to take care of each other? The federal government's role in wildfire protection with regard to indigenous peoples includes wildfire suppression on federal lands, also known as Indian reserves, or on military bases. We must be given an update as to whether this is occurring. First nations have called on the Government of Canada to uphold its obligations to those who are impacted by wildfires. Indigenous peoples are voicing that their charter rights, particularly section 7, "right to life, liberty and security of the person", may be engaged if evacuees are exposed to unsafe conditions through inaction.

Indigenous Services Canada holds and must exercise a fiduciary obligation to provide supports when federal action is required to protect indigenous peoples and communities. Indigenous Services Canada must ensure that health care services are increased with the increase in the number of people now in Winnipeg. My constituents must not lose their health care, as they were forced to leave Nunavut to receive such services in the first place. Finally, the federal government must respect UNDRIP and ensure that first nations, Inuit and Métis truly provide their free, prior and informed consent with the Liberal government's "one project, one review" system.

Canada is already on fire. Expediting mining projects would make all of our lives worse. Those from first nations that have been evacuated cannot provide free, prior and informed consent on projects that may be on their territories, and their rights must not be

violated. We implore the Liberal government to ensure that free, prior and informed consent is truly the practice when working with indigenous peoples.

● (1855)

Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the House.

It was a pleasure of mine during the last government to work alongside the member for Nunavut on the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. In fact, as part of the work in that committee, we did a study looking at emergency response in the north and in indigenous communities. Of course, this is really the subject matter of today. One of the key areas that we looked at was how the government can support culturally appropriate responses. I wonder if the member opposite might be able to speak to that.

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, I congratulate the member on his re-election. I did enjoy working with him at INAN. While his is such a good question regarding culturally appropriate services, I think the first thing that needs to happen is, at the very least, for basic services to be provided.

As I mentioned in my speech, Nunavummiut are forced to leave. It makes it more difficult for Nunavummiut, for northerners, to be engaged in Arctic sovereignty and Arctic security if they have no choice but to leave for basic medical care. Nunavummiut need to have access to safe, affordable, comfortable homes. Too many families are living in overcrowded housing conditions. Too many families are living in mouldy conditions. While to try to reach that next level of culturally appropriate care is appreciated, I think we need to get back to the basics and make sure the basics are invested in.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for sharing the experiences of her constituents in this very important debate.

This past fall, I had the opportunity to sit on the environment committee, where we explored the devastation following the fire in Jasper National Park this past summer. One thing I was quite struck by was the numerous testimonies we heard from indigenous groups who talked about the history of areas such as Jasper National Park, which do not look like the Jasper National Park I grew up with.

In fact, the wide swaths of lodgepole pine we see in Jasper National Park are not natural, according to indigenous oral histories. It was much more grasslands before Parks Canada moved in and brought in fire suppression. The witnesses told us that, if we had explored more indigenous ways of managing fires, we could more effectively mitigate a lot of these fires we are seeing in the country.

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I wonder if the member had any comments on that and any thoughts she wanted to share with the House.

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, when I was at INAN, one of the first things I always wanted to ensure that we did in our reports of our studies was to remind parliamentarians that indigenous peoples were in Canada before Canada was created, since time immemorial. Before colonialism, first nations and Inuit were taking care of these lands using their practices. During our management of it, there were not as many disasters as we see now.

In our decision-making as parliamentarians, the guidance we give to bureaucrats and the national work that is done to implement other activities in international law, we always need to make sure we are using indigenous knowledge, indigenous traditional knowledge, in the same way that science is being used. Indigenous knowledge is science, and we need to make sure decision-making is based on indigenous expertise, expertise we have had since time immemorial.

• (1900)

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my colleague's comments, she talked about resource extraction, fast-tracking and the implications, of course, for indigenous communities on free, prior and informed consent. In addition to that, in the face of the climate crisis and what is going on, I wonder if she can expand on that comment about what her concerns are with the climate crisis, with the fast-tracking of resource extraction.

Lori Idlout: Uqaqtittiji, while the Prime Minister and the Liberal government are looking to get rich off first nation, Inuit and Métis lands, we are going to continue to be suppressed. This is what my biggest concern is with "one project, one review". First nations, Métis and Inuit will not be able to give their free, prior and informed consent if it is fast-tracked, especially if they are being evacuated to places like Winnipeg.

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski (Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. Minister of Indigenous Services.

I want to begin by thanking the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for bringing this important and timely debate forward.

Like many Canadians, I have seen the devastating images coming out of Manitoba and Saskatchewan: thick smoke, orange skies, whole communities forced to evacuate and families unsure whether they will have homes to return to. It is frightening, and it is heart-breaking. My thoughts are with everyone who has been displaced and is worried about their homes, health and loved ones. These are difficult times, and the uncertainty is real.

Since the early stages of this crisis, I have been working closely with my provincial counterparts to manage the federal response and to make sure help is reaching the people who need it most. Coordination between federal officials, the province, indigenous communities and humanitarian organizations is constant, and all partners are meeting every day to ensure that we are doing all we can to keep people safe.

I want to express my deep thanks to first responders, firefighters and volunteers, and particularly the Canadian Armed Forces and Coast Guard, who have stepped up and placed themselves in danger to protect others. Their commitment and courage are extraordinary.

I also want to recognize the leadership shown by indigenous governments and local officials, particularly in remote communities, where evacuations are so complex and difficult, and resources are so hard to access. This has been an incredibly challenging time, and the leadership on the ground has been essential.

I want to be clear: Our government acted swiftly when called upon. On May 28, the Prime Minister spoke with Premier Wab Kinew. That same night, we approved two requests for federal assistance from the Government of Manitoba to help evacuate first nations communities under threat. Canadian Armed Forces members were deployed immediately. They began assisting with evacuations the very next morning.

I have heard the concerns raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, but again I want to be clear that this was not a slow or bureaucratic process. The requests from Manitoba came in late at night. They were approved immediately. This was one of the fastest federal responses in recent memory. By the next morning, Canadian Armed Forces personnel were on the ground, already assisting with evacuations. This was, and still is, a constantly evolving emergency in the case of the first nations, with conditions on the ground changing by the hour.

In places like Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, the situation was especially urgent. I do understand the frustration and the fear that are surely felt by community members and leaders when fire conditions worsen and change, but I want to assure the House that we had contingencies at every step, as we always do.

When the landing strip could not accommodate larger planes, we had to source smaller ones, so the evacuation was necessarily slower. Large planes like the Hercules could not land at that strip. If fixed-wing aircraft were not an option because of smoke or weather, we could move people by helicopter. If helicopters were not viable, we were looking at boats. Our objective was always the same, to reach people quickly and safely, no matter the method. Resources from the Canadian Armed Forces were brought in from across the country, with the result being one of the largest air evacuation operations in Canadian history.

At every stage, we worked in real time with our provincial and indigenous partners to adjust our response to the ever-changing circumstances on the ground. The response was not just fast; it was well coordinated. I have been in regular contact with my provincial counterparts in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the provinces that were under immediate threat, and we have kept those lines of communication open as the situation evolves. My conversations with ministers Naylor and McLeod were constructive and focused. They all expressed appreciation for the speed, clarity and flexibility of the federal response.

● (1905)

This is really what effective emergency management looks like: governments at all levels working together to adapt, to act and, above all, to protect people. We are working with the Manitoba and Saskatchewan governments to bolster the support from Canadians who donate through the Red Cross, by matching their donations dollar for dollar. Through this, we will stand with Canadians and assist those impacted by the wildland fires through the Canadian Red Cross wildfires appeals.

As Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, I am overseeing the federal response. I work with the government operations centre, and we coordinate efforts across departments, like National Defence when the armed forces are called out, Indigenous Services, Transport and Health, to make sure that we are providing the right support at the right time. This response is being coordinated day and night, around the clock.

While Saskatchewan has not submitted a formal request for federal assistance yet, we are ready to respond the moment we are asked. In fact, I have already had discussions with Minister McLeod, my counterpart, and I have also had discussions with Mike Ellis in Alberta, before they even asked us, to tell them that we are available for them the moment they need our help.

In the meantime, Indigenous Services Canada has stepped in to support affected first nations. I am working closely with my colleague, the Minister of Indigenous Services, to ensure that all communities have what they need. I want to thank her for her support and her very strong leadership during this difficult time.

When the immediate threat has passed, we will be there to help communities recover and build back. That is where disaster financial assistance arrangements come in. It is a federal program that supports provinces and territories with the cost of responding to major disasters. It helps make sure that rebuilding can happen and that people are not left to do it alone. Canadians rightly expect that when disasters strike, every order of government will do its part, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Let me say this as well. These kinds of moments should not become partisan flashpoints. They should be moments for unity, for standing together to support those on the front lines, to support those whose lives have been upended, and to support them with speed, coordination and compassion. That includes listening to indigenous communities who have told us, clearly and repeatedly, that they face unique and indeed disproportionate challenges during emergencies, especially when it comes to evacuations, overcrowded accommodations, access to culturally safe supports and long-term recovery. We hear those concerns, and we are acting on them.

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We know there is more to do. We are committed to doing that in partnership and in good faith. I assure members that in my role as minister for disaster management and also community resilience, I will be focused on ensuring that we learn from these disasters and we prepare better to respond and mitigate the very real threats that we face each year. I invite all members of the House to join me and the government in working on solutions to these important issues.

I want the people of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, Cross Lake, La Ronge, Lac La Ronge Indian Band and every other community affected by these fires to know that the government is here for them. We will continue to work around the clock to get them the help that they need. We will be there as evacuations unfold. We will be there as recovery begins. We will be there in the following weeks and months. There is a long road ahead. We will be walking it with them every single step of the way.

● (1910)

Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the presentation from the minister.

I live in the riding of Prince Albert. We are receiving some 7,000 to 8,000 evacuees, and that could go up to 15,000 throughout the province of Saskatchewan. Lots of people are asking questions about how we are going to take care of these people and what types of resources are going to be available.

The Province of Saskatchewan has mentioned that the Red Cross are going to be there, and it is going to provide them with \$15 million in funding to support the evacuees. I have two questions. What would you recommend that the communities that are receiving evacuees do? Will the federal government consider something similar, as we used to do for disasters in other parts of the world, whereby if people donate to the Red Cross, it would match those donations?

The Speaker: Before I go to the minister, I will just remind members to direct their questions through the Speaker.

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member's question regarding evacuees, he can tell them that the federal government has their backs, that we will be there to support them and that, in fact, the Red Cross and other humanitarian task forces in these situations are on the ground, assisting evacuees when there are difficulties with accessing accommodation.

I might add one other thing. The problem with dealing with these wildfires at this point in time is that the evacuations have been rolling, so it is not like a situation in which we are evacuating one community, like Jasper. It has been one community, then another community and then another community, all rolling. That is especially so in the province of Manitoba, and I suspect it will happen in Saskatchewan too. That means an incredible strain on resources, and it is a continuous strain on resources.

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All I can add to that is that we will continue to do all that we can, because again, the safety of Canadians, including people from Saskatchewan, is our top priority.

Chris Malette (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canada's largest air force base, with no fewer than six flying squadrons in its fold, 8 Wing CFB Trenton in my riding of Bay of Quinte is always at the forefront of our airborne military transport efforts around the world. However, it is equally important here at home in emergency assistance as it is to our citizens from coast to coast to coast.

My question for the Minister of Emergency Management is this: What plans does our government have to deploy assets from CFB Trenton in this pressing emergency, and is CFB Trenton being advised to stand by to receive evacuees from areas of our north that are hard hit by the wildfires in its large cadet camp facility?

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski: Mr. Speaker, I can indeed advise that there were two squadrons from Trenton that were deployed, one with respect to the Mathias Colomb evacuation and the other with respect to the Cross Lake one, and I would again at this point in time like to thank all of the forces members for helping evacuate members of those communities under very challenging and, as I have indicated before, unpredictable situations. Of course we always have great gratitude for those individuals who risk their own lives to bring other people to safety.

• (1915)

Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague said that the government has done all it can. People disagree, including Chief Monias of Pimicikamak Cree Nation, who has claimed that the Government of Canada has neglected its constitutional obligations to collaborate and consult in the evacuation process, often citing bureaucratic issues and jurisdictional disputes that are delaying processes.

First nations chiefs in Manitoba have also voiced that, while the federal government could have immediately deployed the Canadian Armed Forces to assist with coordination, wellness checks, evacuation logistics and reception of evacuees in Winnipeg, it did not do so, costing nations time, resources and peace of mind.

Does the member opposite agree with me that this is the new normal and that the federal government needs to put in a permanent response to deal with the escalating climate crisis?

Hon. Eleanor Olszewski: Mr. Speaker, I can advise that, indeed, our department will be looking at all kinds of different mechanisms for dealing with responses to emergency situations like wildfires and floods. We are going to be doing that because we know that every time a crisis happens, we learn from that crisis. We learn and we take lessons; we take those lessons to our local, provincial and indigenous counterparts, and we work to make a system that is better with respect to all aspects of emergency preparedness and evacuations.

Hon. Mandy Gull-Masty (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): *Wachiya*, Mr. Speaker.

[Member spoke in Cree]

[English]

It is my pleasure to congratulate you on winning this seat and representing us as the Speaker in the House.

[Translation]

It is a privilege to speak for the first time in the House as the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. I would like to sincerely thank the residents of my riding for allowing me to represent them in the House.

[English]

It is also an honour to rise as the first Minister of Indigenous Services who is herself indigenous, a bold and historic move by our Prime Minister in the formation of his cabinet. I want to also acknowledge my colleagues from the indigenous caucus for coming to support this important debate tonight.

I rise in this House with a deep sense of urgency and responsibility. Across Canada, wildfires are presently burning. They are threatening lives, homes and entire communities. These fires are not isolated events; they are part of a growing pattern, yes, driven by climate change. They are affecting more and more people more frequently and more severely than ever before.

I want to acknowledge the profound impacts the wildfires have had on individuals, families and communities. To those who have lost their homes, who have been forced to evacuate, and who are living with uncertainty and fear, I extend my deepest sympathies.

[Member spoke in Cree]

[English]

I am thinking of everyone.

I want to also share that my ministry has been in close communication with many chiefs and first nation leaders. We have been supporting these communities through these challenging times, working around the clock to keep people safe and securing them in an ever-changing situation. Sometimes I receive calls from leadership who have been on the front lines fighting fires themselves. I want to acknowledge their leadership and courage.

To support their evacuations, Indigenous Services Canada has first ensured that we provide advance payments to first nations communities. These funds help to ensure that communities have the resources they need when they need them in critical moments. This approach is proactive. It is necessary. When communities are given the right tools and resources to act swiftly, lives are protected and damage is minimized.

The ministry is working alongside first nations partners, as well as provincial and territorial counterparts, to monitor and to ensure that we respond rapidly to ever-evolving fire situations. I am in near-constant communication with my federal colleagues, such as the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience. We have spoken with our provincial counterparts over the last few days. I want to commend the minister for her support, open communication and response to urgency when I called upon her at all hours of the night.

I also want to acknowledge the many leaders who have spoken with me. Chief Waylon Scott is one of the chiefs I have had the opportunity to speak with recently, and he offered a quote to be shared as part of the debate this evening:

[Our] nation has been evacuated for some time now due to wildfires in Northern Ontario. The new Minister of Indigenous Services directed her team reach out to me directly, and they have been available and supportive throughout this emergency. I, Chief Scott, Ontario Regional Chief Benedict, and other Ontario Chiefs affected by the wildfires also met with the Minister virtually.

Their situation, their needs and the best way to support their response were reflected in how our team, on numerous occasions, day and night, responded to the community and community members. During this crisis, the Government of Canada has been a strong partner for first nations across Ontario, and we are proactive in reaching out to all provinces. This partnership reflects our shared responsibility. No single government or organization can face this challenge alone. It is through unity and mutual respect that we find the most effective solutions.

• (1920)

The emergency management assistance program, under Indigenous Services Canada, reimburses eligible costs related to wildfire response and recovery. This includes evacuation support and culturally sensitive services, offered with wraparounds on site, taking into consideration mental health, traditional food, language interpretation and child care. I want to share that we have been delivering these in a collaborative way to ensure that we are reflecting and respecting the needs of first nations.

To ensure timely support, we have also provided advance payments to on-reserve and eligible first nation communities. This funding helps communities respond to the immediate need without waiting for reimbursement in a time of crisis. These upfront supports are a reflection of our commitment to uphold the dignity and well-being of every community member during a time of crisis.

I spoke earlier today to Chief Bobby Cameron, and I want to echo his statement: Federal and provincial governments need to work together to respond to first nation emergencies jointly and collaboratively. We have shown that we are open to that dialogue and that partnership.

We are also working to ensure that we are looking at long-term wildfire preparedness. Our FireSmart program supports preparedness through firefighter training, fuel management and vegetation clearing projects. The non-structural mitigation and preparedness program also helps to develop and test emergency management plans and to build capacity to respond to future emergencies.

Preparedness is key. These supports are about building strength before disaster strikes so that communities can mitigate the impact to the greatest extent possible. It is to ensure not only that they have the ability to respond but also that they have the capacity to recover and thrive. We have started to support indigenous nations in other provinces, such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, calling them and ensuring that our dialogue is in place to respond to their emerging needs.

Indigenous Services Canada has taken steps to strengthen its approach. This includes implementing a new risk-based funding model, improving emergency management plans and enhancing pro-

gram indicators. A key part of this work is multilateral emergency management service agreements, which are agreements that recognize first nations as full and equal partners alongside federal, provincial and territorial governments. These agreements are not just administrative tools; they ensure that we are showcasing shared responsibility and culturally appropriate emergency services.

The future of first nations emergency management is top of mind for me as I take on this new role. It is an issue that has come up in many conversations that I have had with first nations leaders over the past few days. I would like to share another quote. Grand Chief Wilson of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs said, “I want to acknowledge the minister for listening to our concerns and establishing direct lines of communication. We are making progress, and we understand there are gaps that need to be addressed. I look forward to working with the minister to address these gaps.”

We are also looking ahead to the 2025 wildfire season to ensure that we are not waiting; we are preparing. This ministry dedicates annual funding to capacity, mitigation and preparedness in first nations communities. This includes support for emergency management coordinator positions, and many have showcased their skill and capacity over the past few days. We are laying the groundwork for a future where communities are not just reacting to emergencies but equipped to prevent them. The post-wildfire season will be met with a debrief with first nations communities to focus on preparedness and the response and reaction. There is always room to improve. We want to ensure that it comes directly from first nations.

This is a new government, with new opportunities, and we will respond in a new way, focused on first nations, indigenous peoples, Inuit and Métis. I want to ensure that health and safety of all first nations community members is the priority of this ministry. We are doing work to support in all capacities. Emergencies occur, and we want to support communities and ensure that they can restore their positions, bring their members home in a culturally safe way, avoid vulnerability and exploitation, and strengthen the resilience they have as first nations people.

In closing, wildfires are devastating. They test the strength of first nations communities and the bonds that hold us together.

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● (1925)

I want to acknowledge all entities that have supported this process, including the Canadian Armed Forces, all volunteers and all other organizing resources that have supported first nations in their evacuation and in the time that they are spending away from their homes. I also want to acknowledge those that will work with us to return the evacuees safely to their communities. *Meegwetch. Nakurmiik.*

Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the riding of Prince Albert, we have extended our hospitality to the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River if he needs an office to work out of in Prince Albert as some of his constituents are moving south, so he has a place to work out of.

I just want to make sure that the Government of Canada has people in place to help and receive these people as they go through issues of, maybe, unemployment insurance, social services and whatever other items that may come across, that they would normally get in their riding and are now going to receive in areas where they are displaced to.

What have you put in place to actually accomplish that, and what other things do you think should be put in place at a local level to make sure these individuals are properly taken care of?

The Deputy Speaker: Before I allow the minister to respond, I will note that the question must come through the Chair. I cannot respond, but the minister can provide an answer.

The Minister of Indigenous Services.

Hon. Mandy Gull-Masty: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for this important question.

We are not only supporting our members as they are outside of the community in evacuation centres. We are offering wraparound services, including mental health and health care, and working with first nations bands and communities to support them in their administrative processes as they are not able to offer that service in the community, including ensuring that payroll is carried out and responding to the needs of HR processes outside of the community. These are all critical aspects of supporting them so that they can continue working for their members, be it in a position of coordinating evacuation or ensuring that payments are made to members in this time of crisis.

I also want to acknowledge that many first nations communities have stepped up, with their capacity and their expertise, to support their fellow first nations members and relations, bringing them into a space to feel welcomed and communicated with, and to ensure that it is done in a culturally safe way. We are looking to build that relationship beyond and outside the scope, inviting our partners and government to work with us and collaborate with us. I look forward, asking all members of this chamber for support in this time of crisis.

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her very important speech. In the Outaouais, we have had similar situations where one of the indigenous com-

munities in my riding had to be evacuated. I would like to thank everyone at Indigenous Services Canada for their support.

Can the minister elaborate on what steps the department is taking to support indigenous communities affected by the wildfires in Manitoba? I would particularly like to hear more about the cultural support and temporary housing provided to indigenous communities.

Hon. Mandy Gull-Masty: Mr. Speaker, I think we are in a time of crisis. We can see that several communities have told people that they are welcome in their community. I am very proud that several first nations invited people to come and opened the doors of their communities to welcome them.

I come from a nation where I have had the same experience. A number of municipalities around my nation also opened their doors to welcome people. It is truly a collaborative process to ensure that we are providing fair, quality service for people in evacuation centres.

The Department of Indigenous Services is working with several partners, including the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and our provincial partners. One of our priorities is to improve the way we communicate. During this process, my team oversaw several discussions directly with the communities, chiefs and the people responsible for emergency processes to ensure that the way communities are evacuated in times of crisis has been clearly understood and follows a process that fosters greater respect for cultural needs and that allows evacuees to be served in their language and by their own people.

[*English*]

Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank members for being here tonight for this important debate about the situation going on in Canada, in my riding and in the riding north of mine in Saskatchewan. I will be sharing my time with the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. I know he has some things to talk about with regard to the impact it is having on the people of Manitoba.

When I landed in Saskatoon on Friday at the airport, it was like I landed in another world. One would swear one was in eastern Canada in a fog, but it was not fog; it was smoke. Those flying the airplane probably could not see across the runway. They were definitely on full instrumentation when they landed, no question about that. Getting off the plane as they opened the door, I could smell the smoke coming into the cabin of the plane. I have experienced forest fires in previous years, but this in the city of Saskatoon was something new, I think, to everybody there.

I want to give members a sense of just how grave the situation is in Saskatchewan. Last week, I reached out to mayors and reeves to talk about what was happening in their communities. I want to talk a little about that today and give a situation update on Saskatchewan so the House is aware of what is going on there and some of the actions that are taking place. Then I want to highlight some of the amazing people who are working behind the scenes to help fight the fires and take care of evacuees as they are being displaced. They are trying to deal with their stressful situations as they are being moved because of the fires.

Right now, the largest fire is just outside of Candle Lake. Candle Lake is a resort village with lots of people who live there year-round. It has a volunteer evacuation going on at this point in time. A 100-metre berm has been put in along the highway to give them a bigger area to stop the flames from coming toward the community. Basically, they are doing everything they can to protect the community from fires, and they have been getting lots of support from the provincial government and the SPSA. There are also extensive fires north and northeast of Prince Albert.

Last night, we saw the evacuation of La Ronge. That was a scary event for a lot of people. They were basically told to pack up supplies for at least three days, if not more. They made the trek from La Ronge to Prince Albert, and then from Prince Albert, I understand, they are being displaced to different cities around Saskatchewan. Sucker River, Wadin Bay, English Bay and Nemeiben subdivisions were all issued evacuation orders on Monday.

As of Tuesday, there are 20 active wildfires in the province, with seven considered contained. Air quality warnings are still in effect for much of the entire north. At least 20 communities have been evacuated so far in Saskatchewan and 8,000 people have been evacuated, with the premier saying today that he estimates it could be as high as 15,000 in the next three or four days.

The shoe fire, currently the largest in the province, has prompted the closure of Highway 165 and evacuation alerts for several communities, including East Trout Lake, Whelan Bay, Narrow Hills and Little Bear Lake. This is a list of evacuation areas: Lower Fishing Lake, Piprell Lake, East Trout Lake, Little Bear Lake, Narrow Hills Provincial Park, Whiteswan, Whelan Bay, Brabant Lake, Hall Lake, Nemeiben Lake, Sucker Lake, Wadin Bay, English Bay, Foran Mine and McIlveena Bay, Jan Lake, Pelican Narrows, Creighton, Denare Beach, Weyakwin, the resort subdivision of Ramsey Bay, Sturgeon Landing, the northern hamlet of Timber Bay, Molanosa and the resort village of Candle Lake, which is a voluntary evacuation area.

The map is of concern. These fires are in an area where there is just dry tinder. When I was home on the weekend, I was walking on my grass and it actually crunched under my feet because it is so dry. We have not had any rainfall pretty well all spring. As we look at what is coming up for the weather and the wind changes that have been happening, it just creates more concern. Really, we are in the hands of God in a lot of ways. We are praying for rain.

One of the issues we need to deal with, of course, is air quality. For seniors, young people, young women, pregnant women, people who work outdoors, people involved in strenuous activities and people with chronic health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, lung

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and heart conditions, including asthma, and mental illness, air quality is important. Of course, the smoke is creating a scenario where people cannot go outside because the air quality is so bad. Air quality warnings have gone out right across the north, and as I said, the smoke has gone as far as Saskatoon and Regina. We hear stories of it going into northern states and other parts of Canada.

• (1935)

If there is a good story about this, it is people coming together. I have to say that I am so proud of the constituents I have and am lucky to represent. Whether it is putting together a group of people to make sandwiches for the volunteer firefighters, RM of Buckland's firefighting crew lending their water truck to SPSA or Taco-Time in Prince Albert making tacos for firefighters and evacuees, there are so many examples of people coming together to help each other out.

Actually, in some ways, it is truly community building, similar to what we used to see in the early 1900s when the province was being settled. People are working hand in hand together in saving their communities and protecting each other's farms. Along the Torch River, there is an area that is really dry, and there are lots of houses along the northern fringe. People are working together to protect those houses and farms, something that has been ongoing for the last week, week and a half. They are working late into the night and starting early in the morning, and nobody is grumbling or complaining. They are doing what they have to do to save each other's houses and their homes. That is the good part.

Now, with this, there are always some bad parts too, like the fact that the fires happened. It sounds like a good portion of them were man-made. Today, an individual was arrested who was actually lighting fires along one of the highways. Who could be so stupid? That is the type of thing that is really frustrating, because there are so many people negatively impacted by fires, and then there is somebody doing something as stupid as that.

This has had a major impact on communities. Even in the north, as we look forward, we have lost telephone lines and power grids. The highways are closed. These things are not built or rebuilt overnight, so it is going to require a lot of work in this region to get it back to normal once the fires are put out and people return home.

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One thing Premier Moe has talked about, and I will talk about quickly, is the need for surge capacity and a federal water bomber fleet. There needs to be something in place so that when we have fires throughout Canada, we have the ability to react quickly and move resources where they are required. That is something the federal government should talk with the provinces about: Is this something we should be imagining in light of what has happened over the last few years? Whether it is in British Columbia, as it was last year; Quebec, where it could be next year; or Saskatchewan and Manitoba, as it is this year, it seems like there is a need for surge capacity to take the expertise and move it to the fire location to deal with the fires.

We cannot just take somebody off the street and say, "Go fight forest fires." The fire we have in Saskatchewan is so violent, for lack of a better word, that we cannot take somebody who does not know what they are doing and put them in the bush to fight that fire. We need trained professionals. A lot of those trained professionals, such as first nations people, have been doing it year after year, so we have to rely on them. We cannot just take somebody and say, "Hey, go fight fires tomorrow." That does not work. We have to rely on the people who know the territory, how to properly fight fires and how to evacuate when they need to evacuate or retreat when they need to retreat. We have that expertise in Saskatchewan; we just do not have enough of it.

Of course, we have to keep in mind too that when running water bombers and helicopters, pilots time out. Even though the hardware is sitting at an airport, the fire could still be going on but we do not have the people and personnel to operate that hardware in a 24-hour-a-day cycle. It is the same with CATs and things like them. I know that in our communities, a lot of farmers have that type of capacity and are using it. They are doing berms and firebreaks. They are being proactive, trying to make sure they are protecting each other.

It is really a sad event that has happened. As I said, in some ways it has brought people together, but in other ways, the power of Mother Nature is really sobering. When I talked to the mayor of Prince Albert, one of the things we discussed was, as we receive evacuees and understand the stresses they are facing, what we can do to help. How can we help the kids who are not going to school? Can we do some sports events? The city is talking about opening up its leisure centre and maybe the Prince Albert Raiders will do ball hockey. We are looking at different ideas to keep people active and busy, and we are open to other ideas. If other communities have done things in the past that have been effective at helping evacuees deal with the stress of not being at home, we look forward to having that information and any of those ideas so that we can take care of these people as they go through this stress.

I am proud of the people in my riding of Prince Albert. I am proud of what they are doing and how they are stepping up. I am proud to represent them, and I want to thank them for putting me here. It is an honour to represent them. I just wish my first speech in the House had been about something different, rather than talking about forest fires, but that is what we have here today.

● (1940)

Corey Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone on the ground who has been working to fight this

terrible tragedy and make right what has been made wrong by nature. I appreciate the speed with which everybody has worked, including the ministers. I know how hard these situations are to manage, and I give my sincere thanks to all involved for keeping people safe.

The one thing I want to ask the member about is the long-term effect of this. Could he give his thoughts on that? I worked for the Government of Alberta, and we found that one of the challenges with an event like this is that it is often much longer lasting than people imagine. There is an event the world is watching, and the country is there in very big ways for people. Then they go home and their house is rebuilt if it has been lost, and life is supposed to go on. However, a year later is when some of the real mental health challenges can occur, and the country is not there.

I am wondering if you could react to that or give comments on what you think should happen long term for mental health supports for your community.

The Deputy Speaker: Before I allow the member for Prince Albert to respond, I will ask members, as it is going to happen a lot tonight, to speak through the Chair. I have no opinions.

The member for Prince Albert.

Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I made the same mistake twice tonight, and I have been here for 17 years. I apologize. It is going to happen, as you said.

The member raised some really good points that tend to happen. We take care of individuals when they are away from home, making sure we do everything we can to make their life as comfortable as possible, but then they go home. In the situation in Saskatchewan, they could be going home to somewhere with no power and no telephone because those systems have been wiped out by the fire. We do not know what the highways are going to look like once the fires have gone through the highway system. In a lot of the places, the communities people are going back to have one way in and out, which is basically the highway, so there are a lot of things on the logistical side that need to be dealt with for sure.

When we talk about mental health and items like that, some of the first nations in the northern part of the province have some really good individuals working in mental health. We just have to make sure we empower them so they are there to take care of individuals and help them progress through this tragedy.

● (1945)

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising in particular Candle Lake. I know we have a mutual friend who holds that community very dear. I am glad he brought that up.

Something he talked about was what Premier Moe was talking about, the surge capacity with water bombers. We know that building water bombers cannot be done overnight. We have De Havilland, now outside of Calgary, building world-class water bombers, but unfortunately all the orders for the foreseeable future are going to European countries. There is technology and equipment in this country to retrofit the Hercules, a military aircraft, to deliver water bombing.

With the military being increasingly called on for natural disasters, I want the member's thoughts on what needs to be done to ensure that the military is well funded and supported so its members can do whatever job they are asked to do, including fighting natural disasters.

Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. What is the role of the military when it comes to forest fires and emergencies? Our military is spread very thin, and if it is required to go somewhere else in the world and we still have this scenario going on in Canada, heaven forbid, I wonder if it can handle all that at the same time. The member also makes a good point about the ability of Canadian industry to build water bombers. We have all that technology in Canada. We just have to commit to it and say that it is something we make a priority.

The government over the last few years has watched Canada burn. It has done nothing proactive to create a scenario where there are resources put in place to be there for Canadians. I would encourage the government to change that view, have a fleet in place, sit down and talk to the premiers about how this fleet will operate and be funded, and make sure Canadians are taken care of, because it is our communities and future at stake.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will not get a chance to expand on this, but one thing that really impressed me when I was able to visit one of the evacuation centres was some of the volunteers, in particular some of the non-profit groups out there. One thought that came across my mind is that maybe we need better coordination among the many different volunteer organizations and groups out there. The provinces can work with Ottawa and vice versa and maybe develop some sort of registry. I am interested in the member's thoughts on that concept.

Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting question. I was just talking to a lady on Facebook who said it has the ability to bring these organizations together so we can go on Facebook and find them. There are solutions out there. It is about putting our heads together and finding a mechanism so they are all in one place to activate them.

The member brings up a good idea, and I think it is something we should consider and pursue. Maybe it is something a committee could study to see what it looks like.

James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your new role in the chair. You look great. I know it is something you are going to do an incredibly good job at, and that you will let me speak on and on tonight as I need to.

Since this is my first opportunity to rise in the chamber, I want to send out my thanks to the great people of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman for putting their trust in me again, for the eighth time. It is

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something to always get that support, but it is a humbling experience, because the chair I sit in is their chair, and I get to amplify their voices, which I will be doing tonight.

I want to thank my campaign team and the volunteers for making the election possible, and of course my family, who started on this journey with me over 22 years ago when I first ran for the nomination.

I am glad we are having this debate tonight. The forest fires we are dealing with really speak to the challenges we are having in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and they are something we have experienced across the country in the past. The Lac du Bonnet area is in my riding. The Bird River fire is largely in my riding. We know that in Manitoba there is a province-wide emergency in effect.

The Bird River fire is now over 198,000 hectares. It is out of control, and I am sure it will be over 200,000 hectares by the end of tonight, which makes it the largest forest fire in the province. Almost 1,000 people were evacuated because of that fire when it first started in the Lac du Bonnet area. There were 28 homes and cottages destroyed, mainly on Wendigo Road. Evacuation orders in the Lac du Bonnet rural municipality and the rural municipality of Alexander have been lifted, and people are now starting to return home.

Unfortunately, there was the tragic loss of two lives in our riding: Sue and Richie Nowell. I want to extend my sincere condolences to their family and friends. I know this is heartbreaking for their sons, TC, Ryland and Emmett, and this is a huge loss for our community. The Nowells were volunteers who were active in the community, and they were loved and respected by all their neighbours and friends. People who lost their homes and cottages can rebuild them, but the lives lost or the memories that were lost in those homes can never be replaced.

I have to extend my greatest gratitude to the first responders: firefighters, police and EMTs. They have all stepped up and done what they could in a fire that was completely out of control and moving so fast over a week ago that it consumed and overran our community. There have been so many volunteers who have been there, stepped up and helped out. I thank the municipal leaders and their staff in all the municipalities in the affected area for being there, providing guidance and support to those who were evacuated.

The Province of Manitoba has done an outstanding job of working with the municipalities and with frontline responders, making sure we have resources in place. That is a large credit to the provincial emergency management organization and the emergency management co-ordinators right across the province, at the provincial level but also at the municipal level, which have all come together to support the fight against the wildfires.

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The Canadian Red Cross and the Manitoba emergency social services are running shelters, making sure everybody has a place to go when they are evacuated and that they are cared for. Manitobans have also opened up their homes and their wallets. They are helping everyone who has been evacuated from their homes because of the out-of control wildfires. The number of evacuees stands at over 17,000 in Manitoba as of last night.

Other provinces have kicked in, with personnel and equipment from Alberta, B.C., New Brunswick and P.E.I., to help fight the wildfires across Manitoba, and there has been help from Parks Canada. I want to thank all of them for chipping in. We have water bombers. We are lucky in Manitoba as we have a fleet of water bombers. Seven of them are operated by Babcock, and they are the CL-415 and CL-215 water bombers. Babcock also has three 690 "bird-dog" aircraft.

Air Spray, which is an Alberta-based company, has four water bombers on contract to the Province of Manitoba full-time. It has four of the CL-415 aircraft. Minnesota has also chipped in with a couple of water bombers and one "bird-dog" plane. Resources have been brought in, and people are fighting the fires.

● (1950)

As we just heard, the smoke is everywhere. Nobody can overlook the magnitude of how serious the tragedy is and how dangerous the situation is. It is important that people follow the evacuation orders that are coming from the province and from their local municipalities. Let us make sure they are not going back to homes when they are in the line of the fires.

I am proud to continue to serve as the shadow minister for national defence. I want to thank our leader, Pierre Poilievre, for again putting his trust in me to carry forward this portfolio. I want to give a shout-out to the Royal Canadian Air Force, which has stepped up, providing logistical support as well as aircraft to help evacuate some of the remote northern communities, like Mathias Colomb Cree Nation and Pukatawagan, and the Pimicikamak Cree Nation. Those communities are in a really tough situation, so it was important to get everybody out of there to safety.

Some people may have questions around the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces with respect to their use of military personnel and equipment to help fight the forest fires. The provinces always have the ability to ask, under part VI of the National Defence Act, for aid to civil power. We need to make sure our provincial authorities can rely on them when needed. The Province of Manitoba has used that twice now in the evacuation of both Pukatawagan and Pimicikamak. The province asked; the armed forces delivered.

There has been talk here already about dual use of different aircraft. I would just say, though, that whether or not the Canadian Armed Forces has the capabilities right now to carry on its operations as well as to support aid to civil power through Operation LENTUS domestically, we should always know that we do not want the provinces to fall back and think that only the armed forces can provide the relief when it is called upon, because in times of crisis, the armed forces may be elsewhere.

The current situation, thanks to the lost Liberal decade, is that we do not have enough personnel, we do not have modern equipment, and our air force is in desperate need of new fighter aircraft. The Hercs are starting to age out, and the C-17s already have over 15 years on them. We want to make sure that the Canadian Armed Forces can be all it can be, and can be there to help Canadians when needed, but that means we have to fix the recruitment crisis. We have 10,000 troops who are undertrained and undeployable. We have another shortage of 8,000 troops on file because so many have left the Canadian Armed Forces because of the current situation under the Liberal neglect and mismanagement.

We did a report on aid to civil power in the last Parliament, through the Standing Committee on National Defence. We talked about the role of the Canadian Armed Forces in domestic operations. There are things we should look at, and the government has responded to the report. I am more than happy to answer some questions about it if anyone is interested, because of my role as vice-chair of that committee.

The other role the federal government has, of course, is through the disaster financial assistance arrangements between the federal government and the provinces and territories. I want to make sure the federal government is providing clear direction to the provinces, the municipalities and Canadians who are affected by this disaster so they can get the help they need and know where the help is going to come from. The province is the lead agency on this, for sure, but the federal government will be stepping in, adjudicating the claims and providing financial support to the provinces, municipalities and individuals who are impacted.

We need better coordination with the provinces from the federal government. We need to have a better emergency preparedness plan. Right now, that is lacking at the federal level. We know there needs to be better support provided to our firefighters, especially our volunteer firefighters out there, from the federal government in tax incentives.

As it was already mentioned, arson is a huge issue. We need mandatory minimum sentences for those people who are going around lighting fires just to create a show, which is endangering lives, people and property.

Again, let us make sure we stand up for those who have been victimized by these crazy fires and thank those who are helping.

● (1955)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will reserve another opportunity to talk about the military. I know that the member across the way is really keen on military spending and so forth, but that is for another day.

I wanted to add my condolences for Richard and Sue Nowell from the Lac du Bonnet area. It really was quite a tragic wildfire that encircled them and ultimately led to their death. It is a very tragic and sad story. I offer condolences to their family and friends, and to the community itself, which really felt the impact of that fire in a very real way when it found out about the deaths.

As the community of Lac du Bonnet stepped up in a very real way, providing soup and sandwiches for firefighters, and things of that nature, at the local arena, I wonder whether the member could provide his thoughts in regard to how the community itself stood up at a time of need.

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for expressing his condolences to the Nowell family as well. I know that we are all very grateful to the great people of Lac du Bonnet for how they have stepped up.

Whether it is the volunteer firefighters; the municipal operators; the volunteers who have opened up their homes and opened the arena, which they used as a centre of operations; everybody who was out there fighting the fire; or all the support crew throughout the entire municipality as well as in the municipality of Alexander, which is right on top of the municipality of Lac du Bonnet, they are delivering what needs to be done.

The fire is still growing. It is still huge. Nobody is out of the woods yet, to use the saying, but we know that roads are shut down, like Provincial Road 315. There are people who cannot even get to work—

• (2000)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon has the floor.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for very moving speech, since he hails from the province that has declared a state of emergency.

He said that the provinces and Canada may not have enough equipment to deal with the increasing number of natural disasters. He said that Manitoba will even need international aid. There is talk of getting reinforcements from Mexico, Australia and even Costa Rica to help our forest firefighters.

Does he think it is time for the provinces and Canada to get everything they need and for us to build all the aircraft we need right here so we can deal with current and future natural disasters?

[English]

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I know that in the province of Manitoba we are lucky that we have a fleet of water bombers that are operated under contract by two different companies. We know that Minnesota has also sent up some aircraft.

There is no doubt that, as was mentioned earlier, there might be a desire to have surge capacity at a federal level. There is a moral risk with that too. If provinces see that the federal government has a large fleet of water bombers down the road under a new department or under the emergency preparedness ministry through public safety, would that mean that other provinces might not want to invest in their own firefighting capabilities? That moral hazard has to be weighed into the discussion as to whether the federal government takes over those types of assets rather than provinces—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has the floor.

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Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is truly wonderful to see an Albertan in the Speaker's chair.

As the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, I am absolutely, unfortunately, quite familiar with the devastation of forest fires and what an impact they have on communities. In his speech, the member touched on the fact that many members in Manitoba have been able to open up their hearts and their homes to the evacuees. I was just wondering whether he could talk a little more about some of the supports that are available, because people who are evacuating from fire perhaps are tuning in tonight to listen here—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member to give the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman some time to respond.

James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, my friend is right. Many different organizations, service clubs and community organizations right across the province have stepped up and have organized volunteers from every community to help those who are in need.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Repentigny.

Although it is a sad occasion, I feel privileged to speak this evening in this emergency debate as the Bloc Québécois critic for public safety and emergency preparedness. I want to begin by saying that the Bloc Québécois stands in solidarity with the people currently grappling with the consequences of the wildfires, the disaster victims and all those affected, directly or indirectly. The Bloc Québécois also offers its condolences to the families and loved ones of the two people who were tragically killed when they were trapped by the wildfires.

We know that Manitoba has declared a state of emergency because of the extent of the wildfires that have been raging in the province for several days. Over 17,000 people primarily located in northern Manitoba communities are facing evacuation, including the 5,000 residents of Flin Flon. People are also seeking help in Brandon, Le Pas and the provincial capital.

According to TVA, as of today, June 3, some 97 blazes are out of control in the western provinces, including 12 in Manitoba, 20 in Saskatchewan, 28 in Alberta and 37 in British Columbia. According to Radio-Canada, the largest burned areas are in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, both of which are in a state of emergency. Evacuations are ongoing, especially in remote indigenous communities surrounded by fire.

We know that direct personal experience with a natural disaster or a tragedy causes significant psychological and physical impacts. It can also leave behind scars related to traumas such as loss, grief and fear. We know that individuals with existing health issues, such as lung problems, have an even harder time coping with the smoke and poor air quality still present in their environment.

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The Bloc Québécois would like to recognize all those who have been working tirelessly since the beginning to control the fires, as well as those who are supporting all the affected communities, municipalities and territories. These include the forest firefighters, police officers and first responders who are putting their lives and their health at risk to do all they can to bring these fires under control. We are also thinking of volunteer organizations such as the Red Cross and all Quebecers and Canadians who are volunteering their time to help the affected communities. We recently learned in a press release from the Red Cross that the governments of Canada and Manitoba have pledged to match all donations made between May 28 and June 27, 2025, to the 2025 Manitoba wildfires appeal.

I will quote the Red Cross in the hope that my colleagues will be inspired to make a donation: “Donations to the Canadian Red Cross will be used to assist those impacted in Manitoba with immediate and ongoing relief including financial assistance, support to evacuees and the communities hosting them”. In addition, for those who are suffering and in need of support and recovery, the Red Cross will be able to help with “recovery and resilience efforts in response to the wildfires, [and the funds raised will support] community preparedness and risk reduction for future all-hazard disaster events within Manitoba”.

Our thoughts are also with the armed forces personnel who have been called in to assist. Our thoughts are with municipal authorities and their staff, as well as members of the first nations communities affected by these wildfires. We were saddened to learn from Radio-Canada that indigenous leaders in Manitoba are calling for federal government action, citing a lack of coordination and equipment in their communities to fight forest fires. As we know, in Canada, emergencies are first managed at the municipal level, mainly by hospitals, police services and fire services. Municipalities can reach out to their province or territory for assistance. However, if the emergency gets worse and exceeds their capacity, the provinces and territories can request assistance from the federal government.

• (2005)

On May 28, for example, the Canadian Armed Forces lent a hand by deploying an aircraft to support evacuation efforts for members of both the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation and the Pimicikamak Cree Nation in Manitoba. They also offered logistical support. The Public Health Agency of Canada was also approached and provided assistance through the national emergency strategic stockpile. Provinces and territories may request these assets during public health emergencies or events when their own resources are depleted or not immediately available. These assets include personal protective equipment, therapeutics, beds and blankets.

In this disaster of exceptional magnitude, the provinces are showing up for one another in tangible and meaningful ways. In these types of situations, coordination between all stakeholders and all levels of decision-makers must be as efficient as possible and must be carried out quickly and urgently. We know that the Quebec government is currently providing assistance to Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. Eleven major wildfire management specialists from Quebec are expected to arrive in Alberta shortly. Some 60 firefighters and several SOPFEU representatives are scheduled to leave for Manitoba today, June 3.

Despite the tensions between the United States and Canada, a lot of help is flowing from the United States to Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia. More than 125 American firefighters have come to lend their Quebec and Canadian colleagues a hand. In addition, most Canadian provinces already have boots on the ground to ease the load on forest firefighters.

The fires are so big that authorities are already in contact with Mexico, Australia, Costa Rica and other countries to ask for additional firefighters. Tonight's debate highlights the fact that the priority is on fighting the fires, helping residents and protecting public health. The current situation and others from recent years show that natural disasters are increasing in scope and frequency. They are no longer the exception. Emergencies are now the norm, and their human, economic and environmental costs are rising.

It goes without saying that, in the short term, the priority is collaboration between the various departments and authorities concerned. The fires need to be extinguished and the victims rehoused in the best possible conditions. However, the emergency needs to be under control before we can assess how the crisis was managed and determine what could be done differently. We do not know whether tonight's emergency debate will really help those on the ground. Unfortunately, major forest fires have become the norm, as have emergency debates. We keep reiterating the importance of prevention, environmental and public health protection, and climate change adaptation.

Parliamentarians and the government have a duty to seriously consider the rising costs associated with the impacts of climate change. We must understand that, in order to reduce these costs, we need to invest in measures to adapt to the effects of climate change. In the context of the current emergency, the Bloc members are available. We stand with the affected communities and victims in the western provinces. We know that this sentiment was shared by our colleagues during the devastating fires that raged in Quebec, mainly in Abitibi and on the north shore, in the spring and summer of 2023.

We have no doubt that the members from the affected provinces are aware of the causes and consequences of these mounting disasters, which have direct repercussions on the lives of their constituents. These mounting natural disasters should lead us, as public decision-makers, to take preventive action. We must ask ourselves what action must be prioritized to reduce the impact these disasters have on the public, the communities and the land.

In closing, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I once again offer our warmest thoughts and our complete solidarity with the affected communities, victims and first nations. I would remind my colleagues that the important thing is to develop the autonomy we need to independently deal with the many challenges that come with major emergencies like forest fires and floods. It has become inevitable.

• (2010)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure the member would agree with me that one of the encouraging aspects is that it has really brought the nation together in the sense that individuals from across the country are contributing in different ways, whether it is monetarily, through prayers or through personal involvement. Different levels of government are also getting engaged. I think we should, at the very least, be acknowledging that so many people are recognizing the harm that is being caused; they are wanting, willing and, in many cases, actually participating in helping to resolve the wildfires that Canada has today.

Would the member perhaps like to comment on that aspect?

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, we are seeing more and more of these disasters. Quebec went through something similar in 2023.

We must think about what public policy makers can do to put preventive measures in place. It is clear that we will have to adapt to climate change. It is not enough to fix the damage; preventive action needs to be taken.

It appears that the government still has a lot of work to do to put preventive measures in place in an effort to prevent or mitigate the impact on our communities.

[English]

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, this debate cites Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but my home province of Alberta has been impacted by these wildfires as well. A number of years ago, there was a disagreement between the Province of Quebec and the federal government related to the Species at Risk Act. One of the indirect consequences of the Species at Risk Act that I have been informed about is its impact on increasing the risk of wildfire, because if we do not clear areas of dead forest, we increase the risk that these wildfires are going to be more devastating. When these wildfires happen and devastate our forests, there is no shelter left for wildlife species like caribou.

I wonder if the member could tell us a bit about the Quebec perspective on forest management and how we can do better to protect our wildlife and also protect our communities from wildfires.

• (2015)

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I am not a forestry expert. I do know that forest management is a provincial responsibility, which puts it within the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, and that each province manages its own forestry sector. I am not all that familiar with my colleague's claims that improper forest management could be the cause of some fires. I am therefore unable to answer my colleague's question.

I think that everyone needs to remember that forests are a renewable natural resource that must be looked after. We are currently living with climate change. The Bloc Québécois believes that it is important to consider rapid and preventive action to mitigate the

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impacts of climate change. Several specific things can be done, and all kinds of solutions have been proposed. My colleague from Repentigny will no doubt have some suggestions.

We are at a point in our history where it is time to take real and preventive action to fight climate change.

[English]

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I congratulate the hon. member on her new role as a critic. In the 44th Parliament, I sat on the indigenous and northern affairs committee, and one of the studies that we did was on emergency preparedness. I encourage her to look at it when she goes back to her office.

One of the recommendations that we made was for the federal government to work with the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council to improve the capacity of communities to respond to wildfires. Wildfires have been becoming more frequent, and this recommendation was actually a repeat of a 2018 recommendation as well.

I wonder if the member agrees that the federal government really does need to work with the council to ensure that communities have the capacity to fight wildfires.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague that there is nothing better than collaboration among all levels of government to find solutions to what indigenous communities may be experiencing. I know the current situation in Manitoba is hitting them the hardest. They are literally surrounded by flames. I know some indigenous leaders have complained that they do not have everything they need to stop the forest fires.

I strongly encourage the provincial and federal governments to sit down with indigenous leaders to find solutions to better intervene and protect indigenous communities.

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are taking part in an emergency debate this evening because of a very serious situation that has unfortunately become far too common. At this time, our thoughts are obviously with the people who are affected by the fires, as well as with the authorities and workers who are fighting them. I am particularly attuned to this kind of human tragedy, which turns people's lives upside down and leaves an indelible mark on them. The current situation is a stark reminder that the scale and frequency of natural disasters are on the rise and that these incidents are no longer exceptions.

Today, we are taking part in an important emergency debate on wildfires, yet another one. Do not get me wrong. It is so important to have these kinds of debates, but when we have to keep doing it, maybe it is because Parliament needs to have a discussion and a debate about the root of the problem. It is time for us to have a real emergency debate on the climate crisis, which is hitting people around the world harder and harder, and Quebec and Canada are no exception.

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At this time, it is completely irresponsible not to consider the fight against climate change to be in the national interest. However, the words “climate change” were not uttered once at the first ministers meeting in Saskatchewan yesterday. Worse, the government is looking at weakening environmental assessments to make it easier to approve oil and gas pipeline projects. Adding fuel to the fire by opening the door to oil and gas pipelines, when fossil fuels are the main cause of the climate crisis, is not prioritizing people's health and safety.

Indeed, as my hon. colleague said, people's health and safety are at stake. Canadian health associations are raising the alarm: Climate change is a health emergency. Just this morning, the Canadian Lung Association and its U.S. counterpart banded together to raise public awareness about the health risks associated with smoke from fires and forest fires.

Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns are contributing to longer and more severe droughts. This is creating the conditions for wildfires and prairie fires to start and quickly spread. Unless we address the root cause by cutting greenhouse gas emissions in Canada and rapidly transitioning away from oil and gas, emergency debates like this one will continue to recur and pile up, because crises like this will only become more frequent.

Climate change is causing more intense and frequent devastation, exacerbating the already unacceptably high human, environmental and economic costs. Climate action is not an expense; it is a necessity and an investment to improve the quality of life of current and future generations. As we said during the election campaign, and reality has confirmed it, the climate crisis is creating human suffering and increasing the cost of living. The strain on our public finances from the increasing number of natural disasters is a striking example. Frankly, it is disheartening that the fires of the past few years, including record forest fires in 2023, have not led to enough meaningful action in Canada. After countless studies and testimony from experts, scientists, specialists and forest firefighters, we know very clearly that action must be taken and that solutions exist.

The Bloc Québécois has proposed real measures not only to limit the impact of climate change, but also to prevent risks and reduce the high cost of damage. In addition to serious human costs, Quebec and Canadian households are already absorbing the economic costs out of their own pockets.

It is important to remember that, according to past estimates, from 2013 to 2018, between 620 and 2,700 premature deaths occurred because of the short- and long-term effects of forest fire smoke. The acute health impacts of forest fire smoke cost an estimated \$410 million to \$1.8 billion per year, while the chronic health impacts cost up to \$19 billion per year.

To reduce the human, economic and environmental costs, we need to invest heavily in reducing greenhouse gases and adapting to climate change.

• (2020)

According to a Canadian Climate Institute report, for every \$1 spent on adaptation, \$13 to \$15 will be saved on future costs. Over the last decade, the average yearly cost of weather-related disasters

and catastrophic losses has risen to the equivalent of 5% to 6% of Canada's GDP growth.

There are many adaptation measures, including more resilient infrastructure, ecosystem protection and, of course, innovation. Other measures include nature-based solutions, such as techniques using traditional and indigenous knowledge. Adaptation measures are essential, but it is critical to stress that they will not suffice on their own. To be truly effective, adaptation must be tied to new mitigation measures, meaning reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The less we reduce emissions, the greater the impacts will be. The less we adapt, the higher the costs will be and the more we will suffer. Reduction efforts and adaptation measures must be seen as complementary and essential investments.

Unfortunately, under the current policies, we are headed for very dangerous levels of warming. Only significant and immediate efforts will limit the risks. That is why it is crucial to take a two-pronged approach by reducing CO₂ emissions while investing in climate change adaptation.

We understand the need to debate these issues. Yes, we agree that the first thing we need to do is get through this emergency. Unfortunately, just as major fires have become the norm, so have emergency debates in Parliament. Every year, we reiterate the importance of prevention, environmental protection, health and adaptation. As parliamentarians, our duty is to take the rising costs of climate change seriously and to take action.

I would like to conclude by saying that we are currently witnessing solidarity on a grand scale. From other countries to local volunteers, everyone is pitching in. All kinds of help is being provided by governments, emergency services, humanitarian organizations, citizens, communities and nations. The scope of our own responsibility, however, is even greater. In addition to managing the immediate crisis, we have a responsibility to make the necessary investments in adaptation and emissions reduction so that, one day, these disasters are no longer the norm, but, hopefully, the exception.

• (2025)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as much as we hear a lot about the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, it is important to recognize that the wildland fires are also taking place in Alberta, northern British Columbia and northwest Ontario. There are thousands of people being displaced, and it is important that not only the federal government but also other jurisdictions and other provincial governments have been stepping up. I understand there has even been some international assistance in taking on the forest fires.

Could my friend provide his thoughts in regard to just how important it is that we come together and provide whatever resources we can in order to combat these wildfires that are taking place?

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Madam Speaker, I think this year is once again proving the importance of helping one another, whether that means amongst various communities in Canada or on an international scale. However, helping one another in the immediate crisis and acting quickly must also be done on another scale. It is hard to manage one crisis after another without being able to join forces internationally and ensure that the international community rises to the challenge of fighting climate change. Otherwise, all we can do is keep putting out fires.

Emergencies cannot be managed on a week-to-week or month-to-month basis. We need a comprehensive game plan. This will require contributions from both Canada and other countries, and they must be much more ambitious in terms of emissions reductions. Otherwise, we will not be able to adapt to a world that is 2°C or 3°C warmer, which, unfortunately, is where we are currently headed.

[English]

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talked about the increasing frequency of emergency debates and of emergencies and disasters in our country. I am wondering if the member possibly has a solution to that. Maybe he has thought it through a little bit. Is there a way that we can address both the frequency of the instances of emergencies and how we approach them here in the House?

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin: Madam Speaker, despite some worthy efforts made in recent years, we find ourselves in a situation where the need for climate change prevention and adaptation is greater than ever, far exceeding current contributions, including the contributions of a federal government that should be investing much more, especially to help the provinces and indigenous nations better adapt to climate change. The responsibility and the needs involved are huge. Despite efforts made in recent years through its initial adaptation strategy, the federal government has missed the mark when it comes to providing the essential financial contributions required for short-term crisis management.

If we are serious about tackling these extreme climate events, we need to address the source of the problem, which means reducing emissions by a lot more and drafting a credible nationwide emis-

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sions reduction plan. Unfortunately, this has not been done. Unless they do these things, Canada and every other country in the world will unfortunately be unable to adapt to the growing number of extreme climate events, like forest fires, which are hitting Quebec and other places across the planet harder and harder.

• (2030)

Madeleine Chenette (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to add my voice to those offering moral support and calling on the government to support efforts to address this very unfortunate crisis in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

In response to my hon. colleague's comments, it is clear that the climate situation is very worrisome. I would point out that Canada and our Canadian government are very involved in discussing all these elements within the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation, the International Energy Agency and the International Transport Forum. There are also other issues to consider, such as health. As my colleague said, we need to work together, not just by province.

Are you prepared to truly co-operate with all the provinces, to address climate change and also invest with other countries to have a single, strong voice in Canada?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the member that questions are to be asked through the Chair.

The hon. member for Repentigny for a brief answer.

Patrick Bonin: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is prepared to co-operate. We proved that during the election campaign. However, we want to remind this House that health is a provincial jurisdiction, so the first thing the federal government should do is increase health transfers by a lot so that Quebec can finally receive its fair share and provide better health and prevention services.

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to rise and address a very important national issue.

I provided a comment in my last question about how large an issue it really is. The provinces impacted by these wildland fires, as I pointed out, are British Columbia, particularly in the northeast; Alberta; Saskatchewan; Manitoba; and northwestern Ontario. There are now estimated to be over 200 fires in total, of which virtually half, 104, are out of control. It is indeed worthwhile for us to talk about and highlight, so I am glad we have the opportunity to do so and that the Speaker made the decision to allow the debate to proceed.

I should mention that I will be splitting my time with my friend and colleague from Winnipeg South.

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I want to start by putting a human face to a tragedy that took place in the Lac du Bonnet area, where Richard and Sue Nowell died as a direct result of the wildfires. They were surrounded and ultimately succumbed. All members of the House of Commons, including the Prime Minister, extend condolences to the family, as I mentioned earlier, and to their friends and the community of Lac du Bonnet, which has been severely impacted, as all Manitobans have been.

I can recall first learning about it on the radio. It really painted a picture of just how harmful these fires are. We often talk about property damages, but here we have the loss of two lives, a very tragic situation. That is why when evacuation orders and so forth are issued in certain areas throughout the land, it is really important that we respect them and evacuate the communities when we are asked to by our provincial jurisdictions.

In the last few days, I recall that my colleague, the member for St. Boniface—St. Vital, had the opportunity to ask a question regarding it last week. My colleague, the member for Winnipeg South, gave a member's statement on it today. The Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski also addressed the issue in the House, as I have on several occasions now. It is very much a discussion that is taking place within the Manitoba caucus, as we are genuinely concerned and want to ensure that the federal government does whatever it can to support the communities being impacted, particularly the individuals being evacuated. I say that with respect to Manitoba, but obviously the same concern exists for all communities being impacted by the fires.

I had the opportunity on Sunday to visit Billy Mosienko Arena, which happens to be in Winnipeg North. It is receiving evacuees from northern Manitoba. Whether they were volunteers or others, I really appreciated what they were doing as I entered the arena. On that note, it is important that the House of Commons recognize those first responders, particularly the firefighters. As people flee the scene, as they should, firefighters go in the opposite direction, trying to get things under control. We should acknowledge what they are having to persevere in doing to try to save our communities in different ways.

• (2035)

When I made reference to Richard and Sue Nowell, the arena in Lac du Bonnet, from what I understand, was providing soup and sandwiches for some of the other volunteers, the RCMP officers who are watching the roads and some of the firefighters and other community members, which is what I was thinking of when I visited the Billy Mosienko Arena. When I walked in, I saw the Red Cross on one side and I believe it was the Department of Families from the Province of Manitoba on the other side. As I looked through the arena, I saw other organizations, and I thought of Khalsa Aid, which is a wonderful organization that collects money from community members and helps out in whatever way it can.

It was because of what I saw with Khalsa Aid that caused me to ask one of my Conservative friends in regard to the organizations that are out there, and there are organizations out there. Maybe there is something we can do or should be doing in working with provinces on identifying the many non-profit organizations that are

out there that consistently help when a crisis surfaces. I used the example of Khalsa Aid, and I see it stepping up. Maybe there is something we can do in terms of that coordination.

In the debate we are having here this evening, a part of it is that we hope to learn something when things of this nature take place, as the minister responsible for responding to natural disasters and supporting our provinces has indicated. I believe that we will learn something from it, as we have done in the past.

In terms of humanitarian work, I can talk about the Canadian Red Cross, and we are supporting the Red Cross. There are others, such as the St. John Ambulance organization and the Salvation Army. Again, there are well-recognized Canadian institutions that are there to support the evacuees and others. Recognizing that, we can think of how we can continue to support some that we know are going to be there and look for other organizations that we know quite often do step up when natural disasters take place.

I think in terms of the Public Health Agency of Canada and how it provides support. When we talk about the needs of evacuees who come in, hopefully for shorter terms, the health agency will provide cots, blankets and pillows, among other things. I can talk about Indigenous Services Canada and how it reaches out in particular to first nations and looks at ways in which it can assist and help organize. These are the types of things in which the federal government gets directly involved.

We also have procurement that deals with watching water management. At a time of a crisis of this nature, water management is important for the dams that are out there and so forth. The Canadian Coast Guard was even participating within the province of Manitoba by contributing, I believe, one or two helicopters.

I say all of this because I really do believe that when disasters take place, there is a very strong uniting factor that brings together individuals from all across the country who will contribute, whether it is through a prayer or a financial contribution or by actually taking the time and effort to contribute in a more substantial way in terms of a physical presence. Whether it is the individuals I just listed or the many different organizations, I believe I can speak on behalf of all members in recognizing what they are doing and expressing our appreciation for the work they are doing to support evacuees, to support our local communities and to beat these wildfires.

• (2040)

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things that I noted the member did not mention was forest management practices. The forestry industry has a 100-year plan to harvest trees, and we have seen, over the years, its ability to harvest trees reduced by government action. I am wondering what the member has to say about any of that.

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, when I think of land management types of issues, we also have to take into consideration that it is not just Ottawa working in a silo. Whenever we talk about water management or land management, there has to be a process that enables indigenous leaders, provincial governments and local municipalities to take part. I believe we are getting better at doing that. No doubt the federal government has a strong role, and we play an important role in ensuring that trees get planted and that other groups are in fact supported.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I stand in solidarity with my colleague with everything that is happening in his province. These are tough times.

I have to wonder. We saw similar events in Fort McMurray a few years ago. We saw record wildfires in 2023 in Canada. There have been emergency debates here on the issue of wildfires. We are having one again this evening, which is important. Does my hon. colleague agree that we need to have a broader debate, a real debate, on the issue of climate change and on the role of oil and gas in fuelling this climate crisis?

The reality is that this country is unfortunately not on the right path when it comes to reducing emissions. We must find ways for Canada to step up, not just with respect to adaptation, but when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We have to get away from oil and gas quickly.

• (2045)

[English]

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I value the many contributions that are potentially there from within the House of Commons. The reason I say that is that we have numerous standing committees. I would love to see the environment and many other aspects of government public policy debated and discussed in standing committees, and at some point, they will be. I would welcome that, and I would encourage the member and other members to look at ways in which we can continue a more detailed discussion on a wide spectrum of issues that have an impact on the things we are talking about this evening.

Hopefully, that is what will occur, and maybe we will not see as much politicization as we have seen in recent years. I think there is a great deal of merit to having that ongoing discussion and debate, but that is not to preclude specific debates from taking place here.

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North for his very thoughtful and compassionate comments this evening. I always feel that I learn a lot whenever I hear him speak.

My comment and my question is around community resilience. I would love to hear from him what he believes we are doing, from a community resilience perspective, in those communities that have been impacted by the wildfire situation, perhaps in the past and perhaps right now and ongoing. What is the work that he feels we need to do in this particular area?

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, when disasters of this nature occur, I think the most important thing we can do as a government is demonstrate that we care about what is happening

within the community. One of the ways we can do that was shown when Wab Kinew, the Premier of Manitoba, made the call asking for some assistance from the forces. Within 24 hours, we had the Canadian Forces on the ground. That was something that was real and in the public eye. It demonstrates to the community members who are striving to improve conditions that governments are working together and trying their very best to get the job done.

Hon. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the wildfire crisis taking place in the heart of our country. The raging fires in my home province of Manitoba and across the Prairies are displacing thousands of residents, destroying homes and infrastructure, and threatening the very safety of our communities, but as we face this crisis, we are also seeing something extraordinary: the strength and resilience of our communities and citizens coming together in support of one another.

First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the first responders, firefighters, paramedics and Canadian Armed Forces personnel who have been working tirelessly to protect lives and property. These brave men and women are on the front lines, selflessly putting their safety at risk. The work they are doing is nothing short of heroic, and we owe them an enormous debt of gratitude. Equally inspiring is the response from our communities. Local organizations, neighbours and volunteers have come together in a way that speaks to the very best of who we are as Canadians. From organizing shelter and food for evacuees to providing emotional support for those affected, Manitobans are showing incredible compassion and solidarity.

I want to take a moment to also give thanks to the groups, associations and individuals who have stepped up in my hometown of Winnipeg and across Manitoba as we face this crisis. There are many powerful examples that showcase who we are as Winnipeggers and Manitobans. The Winnipeg Humane Society, for instance, has set up a temporary shelter for evacuees with pets. This facility, located at the St. Norbert Community Centre in my home riding of Winnipeg South, opened today and will be a vital support for families with pets.

The Manitoba Métis Federation has opened a command centre to support evacuees with donations and supplies while also coordinating volunteers to transport those who have been displaced, provide temporary housing and prepare hot meals. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has also mobilised quickly, establishing a donation centre at the RBC Convention Centre in Winnipeg to collect supplies for evacuees.

There are community centres, along with university and college campuses. My riding is the home of the University of Winnipeg and a number of technical colleges. These facilities across Canada have also contributed by providing shelter and safe spaces for those who have been displaced.

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It is through the amazing efforts of these groups, and countless others across Manitoba, that we are reminded of the power of community, the importance of unity and the unwavering commitment to helping one another in times of crisis. As of today, more than 17,000 people have been evacuated from their homes. In some cases, entire communities have been evacuated. In northern Manitoba, Flin Flon, Lynn Lake, Pukatawagan, Pimicikamak Cree Nation and Poplar River have been some of the hardest hit.

On Wednesday, Premier Wab Kinew from Manitoba asked for federal assistance to deal with the wildfire crisis, and Prime Minister Carney immediately agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows better.

Hon. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, I am sorry. That was a rookie mistake, made by a 10-year veteran.

The Canadian Armed Forces have now been deployed in the province to help with evacuations, and thousands of firefighters and other personnel are on the ground and in the air doing their best to protect people and property.

We have seen other communities across Canada face similar crises. The town of Jasper, Alberta, suffered a devastating wildfire in July 2024. Tragically, one-third of the town burned to the ground. Families were forced to flee, some now without homes or businesses to go back to. Jasper's experience reminds us that no region is immune to the growing threat of wildfires, and it underscores the urgent need for long-term solutions related to fire prevention and building community resiliency.

In the aftermath of the Jasper fire, the Government of Canada provided vital assistance to allow the town to recover and rebuild, and that is a work in progress. A significant portion of that support has been dedicated to strengthening wildfire response and recovery efforts within Jasper National Park, enhancing the region's ability to respond to future emergencies. Furthermore, the funding has supported new initiatives to help local businesses reconnect with their customers, retain their workforce and revitalize Jasper's vital tourism economy.

● (2050)

Jasper's experience serves as a powerful reminder of what is possible when all governments work together, and perhaps provides a model we can look to as we confront the growing wildfire emergencies across Manitoba and the Prairies.

Today, our government, alongside our provincial counterparts in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, announced that we will match all individual donations to the Canadian Red Cross to provide emergency shelter, food and essential supplies to those impacted by wildfires. We are deeply grateful to the Red Cross and to all its volunteers, who are there for us in difficult times like today.

This disaster is a stark reminder of the growing threat posed by climate change. Wildfires, like those we are seeing in Manitoba, are becoming more frequent, more intense and harder to predict. We must adapt to this new reality. This means strengthening our fire prevention efforts and investing in emergency preparedness, and doing more to help communities prepare, adapt and recover from

these disasters. This is why our Prime Minister has created a new ministry in government and named a very able Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience from the province of Alberta.

I know all of us in the House are thinking of those torn from their communities, some who have lost their homes and businesses. By virtue of this debate tonight, we are letting them know that we are thinking of them. We are thinking not only of their needs today, but also of what we need to do tomorrow to build resilient communities that provide for their safety and quality of life in the future.

I want to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for requesting this emergency debate tonight so we could prove that point.

Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know the member is very sincere. All of our hearts are with the evacuees, but some of the words from the Liberal government ring hollow when it comes to talking about lessons learned from these wildfires. An iPolitics article from the 2021 election, stated:

Trudeau said a re-elected Liberal government would spend \$500 million to train and equip 1,000 new firefighters across the country, who would be ready to spring into action before the next wildfire season. The money would also buy equipment such as water bombers and helicopters.

We know that did not happen by the next wildfire season, and it has now been four years since then. Can the member, who is part of the Liberal government, tell us how many helicopters and water bombers the government has bought since that promise was made in 2021?

● (2055)

Hon. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, I would put a question back to the hon. member. Climate change is real. We have to adapt and learn from the various experiences that are taking place across the country, whether that be in Fort McMurray, Jasper or Manitoba.

We do need to beef up our forces. We need to train more firefighters. We need more water bombers. We need to work together to make those things happen.

[Translation]

Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry—Soulanges—Huntingdon, BQ): Madam Speaker, like my colleague, we stand in solidarity with the evacuees and everyone affected by the disaster. We have offered our condolences to the families who have lost loved ones in these tragic circumstances.

My question is this. What more could my colleague's government be doing to fight climate change? What measures can it put in place to limit climate change? Could it be doing more?

[English]

Hon. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, I had the honour, very briefly, to be the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and I was also the parliamentary secretary for four years. We had one of the most aggressive climate change plans in the world, an emission reduction plan. We were on track to make our 2030 targets, and we will continue to fight climate change while growing a robust economy.

[Translation]

Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge my colleague from Winnipeg South for his involvement in the environment, climate change and water quality. He is very involved in all these issues.

I want to come back to what my other colleague was saying. What is the government doing to ensure Canada's long-term resilience with respect to climate change, which is having a growing impact not just in Manitoba, but across Canada, in all sorts of ways, including fires and floods?

What action is the government taking on this?

[English]

Hon. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, I welcome the new member to the House.

We do have a national adaptation plan in light of this new normal we are experiencing from coast to coast to coast. We know we are going to see more wildfires. We are going to see more droughts. We are going to see more extremes in weather. It is certainly my view and, I believe, the view of the government that we have to beef up those adaptation plans and prepare our communities for the future.

Chak Au (Richmond Centre—Marpole, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada is burning again. Over 200 wildfires are active right now. Many are out of control. In Manitoba, more than 17,000 people have been forced to flee. The entire city of Flin Flon has been evacuated. Thick smoke is choking towns and cities across the Prairies and drifting into the United States.

Every year, the government says it has a plan, that there are lessons we will learn, that next time will be better, but here we are again. The fires are getting worse. The seasons are starting earlier and lasting longer. I ask the government this: What lessons has it really learned and what has it done differently to protect Canadians this time? It is time to stop reacting and stop—

• (2100)

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

Hon. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, as I said in my remarks, it really is a sight to behold, that four orders of government are working together. We are working together seamlessly to battle these once-in-a-century wildfires. We are doing our best under very extenuating circumstances, but obviously we need to improve those efforts in the future.

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Dane Lloyd (Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Provencher.

Conservatives stand in solidarity with those who have been devastated by the wildfires. We know this is happening across the country, but it is particularly bad in the Prairies right now. We have almost 200 active wildfires, and over half of them are out of control. I want to thank the first responders, all those who are aiding the evacuees, and those who have opened their doors in Brandon, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and communities all across our country. They are stepping up to support our fellow Canadians, who are undergoing probably the worst time in their lives.

Yesterday, in my riding, we did receive some positive news regarding the community of Yellowhead County, part of which I represent. There was an evacuation in the hamlet of Peers, and as of noon today, those families are able to return to their community, so that is some positive news here.

I want to thank the first responders who worked in my riding, including the contractors and the Cat crews who work day and night to protect these small communities from the wildfire threat. I want to particularly thank Albert Bahri from Yellowhead County Protective Services and Wendell Pozniak from Alberta Wildfire Coordination Centre for their professionalism during this crisis.

I also want to give a special shout-out to the team at Canadian National Railway. I am told that if it were not for the work of the Neptune firefighting trains stopping the fire at the train tracks just south of the hamlet of Peers, we would have lost the community, so I thank CN.

I also want to share a message from Yellowhead County mayor, Wade Williams. Wade was telling me that, time and time again, during emergencies, there are those who take advantage of the situation. We have seen across Canada a bad side in this country. We have seen those who will go into communities while the residents are evacuated, and loot. We have seen people steal emergency equipment. We have seen people tamper with hoses and water pumps, and this most recent fire was no exception. This is unacceptable activity, and we need serious penalties for those who would commit these crimes.

It is timely that Mayor Williams would bring this up to me today because, back in 2017, my colleague from Kamloops—Shuswap—Central Rockies brought forward a private member's bill to strengthen criminal penalties for those who would steal or tamper with emergency equipment during emergencies. Shamefully, this private member's bill was voted down by the majority Liberal government at the time.

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The government needs to start taking this issue seriously. The one message that the mayor asked me to bring to the House of Commons is that we need stronger penalties for those who would take advantage and risk our communities. He told me that when firefighters discovered that the hoses and pumps on the sprinkler systems were dismantled, they had to go into an active fire situation and risk their lives to get them put back together, so this is putting lives at risk.

I want to talk about something that our federal government needs to start doing. We are not powerless in the face of these wildfires, as much as it may seem so. As I said earlier, in a question back in 2021, former prime minister Trudeau, during the election, went to British Columbia and promised that his government would spend \$500 million by the next wildfire season, which would have been 2022, to train 1,000 new firefighters and to buy water bombers and helicopters. The Liberals did not achieve that by the next wildfire-fighting season. It was not even close.

It has been four years now, and I asked a member of the government today how many water bombers and how many helicopters the Liberals have bought since they made that promise in 2021. The member could not answer, because the number is zero. When we talk about lessons learned, we know that the government needs to make investments in preparing our communities and supporting our community with the trained firefighters and equipment that they need to fight these fires.

Last year, in the wake of the devastating Jasper forest fire, we saw the consequences of failure to manage our national forests. Nearly a decade ago, forestry experts like Ken Hodges and Emile Begin wrote to senior public servants and the minister of environment, urging them to fundamentally change their approach to forest management. Their knowledge and expertise were ignored. A century of fire suppression allowed dry deadwood to build up in the park, and the pine beetle epidemic added to this risk.

• (2105)

Now, in this role as emergency management critic, I am grateful to have met with a range of stakeholders, including somebody who shares my name. Dane de Souza is a Métis fire expert from Alberta who has told us about the importance of indigenous land stewardship. One only needs to look at photographs of what Jasper looked like over 100 years ago. It was not this endless swath of lodgepole pine; it was a mixture of forest and grasslands. The indigenous people, Dane was telling me, used to engage in prescribed burns. They found it was a very effective technique to open up new areas of the forest and protect from massive forest fires.

We need to look seriously at implementing some of this indigenous knowledge again in our Parks Canada plan, to ensure we are actively managing our forests in a way that recognizes this knowledge that goes back to time immemorial. Parks Canada needs to reform its forest management practices, because we know mountain communities like Jasper and Banff are still at risk, along with all communities that border our national parks.

As the Conservative shadow minister for emergency management, I get to meet industry and community stakeholders every day who are committed to advancing our nation's mitigation and management capabilities. The federal government, in partnership with

all levels of government, needs to do everything it can do to promote Canada's ability to respond to natural disasters, both here at home and abroad.

I talk about some of our champions in the private sector, namely the forestry sector. The forestry sector is at the front lines of battling wildfires. They have a 100-year plan, as one of my colleagues said. They know how to manage forests properly to prevent these forest fires from taking place, but unfortunately they have told me there is some legislation in place under the federal government, the Species at Risk Act, which is a good act and has an important purpose but in some ways can lead to indirect consequences.

When those indirect consequences lead to the prevention of forestry management that can prevent wildfires, it leads to cases where we see these huge wildfires. We can all agree in the House that having no forests is very destructive to wildlife, and not only to wildlife but also to our communities. Canada is a global leader in disaster management practices and technology. We need a federal government that will partner with the private sector to enhance our ability to respond.

I name De Havilland, a well-known aircraft company that is now based outside of Calgary, Alberta. They are a world leader in aerial firefighting, the best in the business, and their water bombers are recognized around the world. Unfortunately, Canada is not buying any of these water bombers, and their orders are now backlogged. They are sending their orders to Europe and other countries instead. We need some of that production to come here, to Canada.

There is Coulson Aviation, out of Port Alberni, British Columbia. They equip both rotary and fixed-wing aircraft with firefighting capabilities, and they are the first company in the world to convert a commercial airliner, a Boeing 737, into a firefighting tanker. This is truly impressive. We have innovative companies at all levels, small and medium-sized enterprises, that hold tremendous promise for putting out fires.

There are folks like Rick Solomon, with Firefox in my area, with his canola oil-based polymer. It is mixed 99% with water and can put out fires more effectively than traditional retardants. I have actually put this product on my bare hands and taken a blowtorch to my hand. It was quite a sight, but I did not feel a thing. It is truly fascinating technology. I spoke to Rick, and unfortunately he has had to move to Montana because of the red tape that has been created in this country. They are selling 15 million home firefighting kits to people in California, where they are actually spraying their homes with this product to protect their houses from wildfire. Sadly, we are not getting these products here in Canada, even though they are being made by Canadians.

We also have companies out of Acheson, Alberta, in my riding, like Wall Genics, which has products that wrap power poles and expand when put in contact with fire, protecting critical infrastructure and saving communities millions in damage. I have seen first-hand the effectiveness of this technology in Jasper. They also have innovative technology like mythrill mesh, which is being adopted for construction and can be retrofitted to residences to protect them from wildfire.

Sadly, companies like Wall Genics have once again been victims of the federal government's excessive red tape. Their company treats lumber with copper borate solution, which repels termites. We can buy this treated lumber from the United States, but Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, PMRA, will not let us manufacture it here in Canada. The reason I am bringing this up in the context of this debate is that copper borate-treated lumber is also a very good fire-retardant material. We cannot manufacture it here in Canada, yet we can import it from the United States.

I also want to give a shout-out to organizations like Civil Protection Youth Canada, the Ontario Corps and the Nova Scotia Guard. These are the kinds of innovative public-private partnerships and non-profit groups we need to be supporting as a federal government and as Canadians, because we need more civilians to get involved in taking control of their destiny in terms of firefighter management.

We need a whole-of-government approach with the private sector, government and non-profits in order to defeat these wildfires and protect our communities. I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today.

• (2110)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member tries to give the impression that the previous government did not do anything in regard to fire suppression. Take a look at the province of Manitoba alone. It was given just under \$40 million to purchase fire equipment to suppress wildfires, yet the member tries to give the impression that the government has not done anything or given tax breaks or direct support for firefighter training.

Does the member not recognize that he might be somewhat misleading with some of the information? I suspect that if we were to do some fact checks on some of the things he has just stated, there might be some questions that would come out of that, too.

Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I think we have to hold the government up to its own standards, and those are the promises that were made in the 2021 federal election. The prime minister at the time went to British Columbia as they were undergoing a massive fire season and said, "We are going to spend \$500 million by the next firefighting season. We are going to buy water bombers and helicopters, and we are going to train 1,000 new firefighters." The Liberals did not do that by the next firefighting season. It has been four years since then, and they have not done it. Let us not hold them to the standard of what they have done; let us hold them to the standard of what they promised to do but did not do. They failed.

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[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I salute my hon. colleague, who must be going through quite a difficult time. It affects me deeply. We empathize with everyone on the ground.

That said, I would like to know whether my colleague recognizes the role that climate change plays in the growing frequency and intensity of wildfires, and that greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas are partly responsible for climate change.

[English]

Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I do recognize this reality. One of the best things that we can do as Canadians to lower global greenhouse gas emissions is displace coal in countries like China and India by shipping our clean natural gas to those countries. Actually, there have been reports that have shown that if we ship our natural gas overseas and displace more greenhouse gas-emitting fuel sources like coal or even wood in some countries, we can lower the entire greenhouse gas emission of Canada several times over. These are real solutions that can grow our economy but also lower global emissions.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North made a lot of comments about the previous Liberal government and all the money it flowed to the provincial government in Manitoba to buy firefighting equipment. I would put on the record that the first budget of Wab Kinew as the NDP premier actually reduced the emergency measures budget in Manitoba by over \$50 million. I am not sure where the money from the Liberal budget went, but it certainly did not go to expanding firefighting infrastructure in the province of Manitoba.

Does that sound like a responsible approach to fire prevention to him? What does he think about the record that the member for Winnipeg North is putting on the record here?

Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, that is one concern here. We need to make sure that all levels of government are working together to increase capacity. We cannot have one level of government step up and then have another level of government say, "Hey, this is our opportunity to pull back spending." We need to have a coordinated effort to ensure that we are increasing our capacity to respond to all emergencies and natural disasters. That does not mean just taking money from one level of government and using it to supplement spending cuts from another level of government; it means we need to have a coordinated strategy that involves increasing the overall capacity across the country.

• (2115)

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am going to ask a similar question to the one I asked another member regarding the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council. In the 2018 Parliament, they recommended that Canada work with them to increase capacity and community preparedness. In the indigenous and northern affairs committee in the 44th Parliament, we made a similar recommendation that they work with the National Council for Reconciliation to help make sure that first nations communities are better prepared to deal with emergencies—

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The Deputy Speaker: I need to give the member time to respond, in 15 seconds or less.

Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, indigenous peoples are literally at the front lines of these wildfires, and with their traditional knowledge and their experience on the land, they are very well suited to support firefighting efforts across this country. Federal, provincial and municipal governments, all levels of government, need to work together to empower them and give them the training and the tools needed to do—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the member for Provencher.

Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to stand in the House to address the important issues that affect people in my riding, but today especially as this is the first time I speak in this new Parliament, having received my fifth mandate from the good residents and constituents of Provencher.

I especially want to thank the people who helped me get here this time, including my wife, Irene, my family members, my staff, my many, many volunteers and of course the people who came out daily to help me put on a very successful campaign.

Today I rise in this House to speak to the issue of wildfire emergencies and how they have impacted my riding of Provencher. We have been hearing about wildfires, which are forest fires that have become so consuming that the surrounding residential areas are therefore no longer safe for residents.

We listen to experts monitor the wind's direction, realizing that a sudden change in course could force immediate evacuation from one's home. That is when everything one owns and has collected, gathered as keepsakes, milestones or reminders and when pictures, certificates and memories of loved ones are all mentally assessed and abruptly weighted for what is the most important before packing a vehicle to leave.

What races through someone's mind after being told they need to evacuate? The possibility of a generational home, perhaps the only home they have known as a family, evacuating and not knowing when they will return, not knowing what will be left when they return or whether this is really the last time those familiar surroundings will ever be the same again.

A woman formerly from my riding, in Steinbach, now lives in Flin Flon and had to face that exact scenario and ask, "What do you bring with you when you do not know how long you will be gone or even if you will still have a home when you return? She notes that in itself is a strange feeling.... [S]he made sure to pack clothes, her medication, and CPAP machine." She was reassured by the fact that her legal documents were already safely packed away in a safety deposit box. Realizing that she could not pack everything, she said that she needed to focus on what was not replaceable.

The woman went on to say, "I know some of my friends said they had jewelry and stuff from grandparents, etc. So, they did pack that. I feel like everything is replaceable, other than a few things that maybe aren't." As I read her story in our local paper, I thought of those times when we leave the house and think to ourselves that we can go back and get that later, yet there she was in a convoy

watching flames within a mile of her home, in a billow of smoke, facing the finality of what she would choose to bring with her.

Remaining behind her were firefighters, the Office of the Fire Commissioner, the RCMP and, until the last possible moment, health care workers, the mayor, city council and organizations such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

I want to say a big thanks to the Canadian Armed Forces members, who had been helping communities evacuate people and help people leave safely. In my immediate riding, the bravery and effective efforts of our first responders deserve special mention.

Folks listening to this debate may not know where Provencher is. We think all the forest fires are in the northern parts of Manitoba and the northern parts of Saskatchewan, and there are some there, but I represent the southeast corner of Manitoba, 19,000 square kilometres of beautiful farmland but also beautiful forest and cottage country. It is a really beautiful landscape and a variety of different terrains. There were forest fires in our area as well. We had a bit of good news today that parts of the Whiteshell provincial forest were allowed to be accessed again by individuals who have cottages or residences in that area.

The RM of Piney declared a state of emergency on a Monday in about mid-May, so that is already two weeks back, because of a fire that started between the two communities of Badger and Carrick and also threatened the communities of St. Labre and Woodridge. The fire consumed over 1,000 hectares of land by Tuesday and was moving rapidly to the community of Woodridge.

● (2120)

We have friends in Woodridge, so we called those friends to see how they were doing. My friend Scott is a firefighter there, a volunteer firefighter, and he was busy out fighting the fire. His wife and another family member had already evacuated. They came to my community of Steinbach, which is about half an hour away, where they were safe. They had checked into a hotel, but the volunteer firefighters were fighting fires there 15 hours a day.

I want to put a plug in for our volunteer firefighters. These are the folks who have jobs apart from firefighting, apart from being called out at all hours of the day to different emergencies. There they were. They had left their jobs and were trying to save their communities.

I want to commend the employers who employ these volunteer fire personnel for giving them the flexibility to leave. It is not always convenient for a place of work to allow an employee to leave. The employees are obviously there because they are performing a vital function. Those businesses should be commended for giving their employees that latitude, businesses like the one that offered that flexibility to people like Scott, so he could save and protect his community. Scott said that the fire had gotten to within a kilometre of Woodridge. They were really trying to hold the line there.

I also want to recognize the heavy construction contractors in southeast Manitoba that provided heavy equipment on just a dime's notice and got their equipment operators to work a 15-hour day in a live fire situation, rather than a normal construction day, pushing down bush, making fireguards and fire barriers, and creating the firebreaks that were so necessary to start repelling the fire.

Scott mentioned to me afterward that because the heavy equipment in the area was able to push some of the bush, it contained the fire and gave them the reprieve they needed. Then the wind changed, and they were able to successfully defend the community of Woodridge.

Just outside La Broquerie, the crews battled a 750-acre blaze for eight hours, which included farmland, bush and swamp. Fire Chief JC Normandeau of the La Broquerie fire department said the flames were 15 to 20 feet high and running away from them. He explained that it took quite a while to get it under control because it had spread out over such a wide area. Thanks to the skilled work of the volunteer firefighters, the fire was steered away from the structures on the land and no injuries were reported. Chief Normandeau said, "We just didn't want it to cross [Highway] 302 and go west. We had other barns and structures in the path of the fire on that side". They needed to keep it on the east side, and they succeeded in doing that.

However, as Chief Allan Rau with the rural municipality of Taché's fire department said, when urging all residents to adhere to the strict fire restrictions, "Wildland firefighting is extremely taxing, and it...takes a lot of energy and physical resources to make a concerted effort on a wildland fire."

I will say out loud that I am compelled to urge the federal government to do more. We know that we are not powerless against these wildfires. Having better proactive forest management, including clear-cut logging, removal of deadwood and prescribed burns can help mitigate such threats.

We are indebted to our frontline workers, who remain on the ground and battle for the rest of us. Every day they put their own lives at risk to save us and our communities. We give our unwavering appreciation and support to those who rush into danger to save others.

I also want to acknowledge others who are helping fight the fires in my area: 38 personnel from Alberta, 87 personnel from B.C., 19 personnel from Parks Canada, 23 personnel from New Brunswick and two personnel from P.E.I. There are also 500 sprinklers from B.C., as well as two AT802 aircraft and one bird dog airplane from Minnesota, so we had the international help we needed to fight these fires.

As of yesterday, the Manitoba Wildfire Service reported that Manitoba is still under extreme danger, with small pockets of high fire danger. Human activity continues to be a significant contributor. The assistant deputy minister, Kristin Hayward, said that all but four of the fires were started or suspected to have been started by human activity.

We can easily do our part by knowing and following the rules.

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• (2125)

Hon. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my friend could tell me what he thinks would be better: Would it be better for Ottawa to provide a bulk grant to provinces for fire suppression, allowing the provinces to lead in terms of fighting the fires, or would it be better for Ottawa to buy the water bombers outright?

What does he believe? Does he have more confidence in the provinces that have that equipment and allowing them that sort of discretion, or should Ottawa purchase the water bombers outright?

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, that is a loaded question. One thing I do strongly believe is that when the government makes a commitment to train firefighters and buy water bombers, as the Trudeau government did, it should keep that commitment.

[Translation]

Patrick Bonin (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the member agrees that the federal government should invest more in climate change adaptation and preparedness. If so, how much funding should it provide to the provinces so that they can implement more ambitious prevention and climate change adaptation measures?

[English]

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, the member for Repentigny asked an interesting question. If he had been listening to my speech a little more carefully, he would have realized that all but four of the fires that were started in my province were started by human activity. Out of 25 wildfires, all but four were started by human activity. Let us keep in perspective how these fires are started and address the real concern here.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to comment on this very important debate on the forest fires this country is facing.

It is interesting, listening to those in the Liberal government talk during this debate. They try to focus in on the things over which they have the least control, and they do not want to talk about the things that are actually their responsibility that have gone very badly. It is typical, really. Forest management in this country has been woefully inadequate under the Liberal government. I can think back to Conservative members who have specifically raised issues, for instance, around the pine beetle and its impact on forests. Those members have warned all of us about the action needed, yet Liberals have failed to take action. There is such a gap in discussion around forest management by the Liberals. They always want to focus on other things, and it is because they have failed.

Could my colleague comment on the lack of even a mention of forest management from the Liberal benches in tonight's debate and what needs to be done differently going forward?

Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to the speech by my colleague, the member for Parkland. He talked about the importance of doing proper forest management and how that could greatly reduce the impact of forest fires.

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I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources for the last several years. We studied forest fires during the pine beetle forest study that was conducted. We listened to many indigenous leaders who said that they had a practice of forest management that was not being practised anymore and that if we would do that, with controlled burns and proper management of the dead-fall in forests, we would not be facing these out-of-control fires in many regions.

Indigenous people have knowledge they can share with us, and the natural resource people need to listen to it and do proper forest management. Of course, the government also has to pay for that to happen.

• (2130)

Hon. Buckley Belanger (Secretary of State (Rural Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Oakville West.

I want to preface the messages that I have tonight by saying that I have always promised as a candidate, before having the courtesy of serving as the MP for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, to tell our stories, so I have come here to share with the people of Canada and the House of Commons some of the challenges, some of the opportunities and some of the aspirations of many of my constituents back home.

Unfortunately, tonight it is a story of fires, of how families have lost their lives, their belongings and their homes, and of how businesses, as we speak, are burning. There are so many brave people trying to do their very best, yet despite the fact that we always speak of Saskatchewan's resilience and of northern Saskatchewan's people's strength and resilience, it is devastating to see that some homes have been burned to the ground and that families have scurried out of our communities in a hurry so their lives do not become threatened.

As we speak, a number of homes have burned. Some say it is as high as 150 homes in Denare Beach. Some say it is 30 homes in Sucker River. There are businesses burning in La Ronge, which is one of the biggest towns in my riding, as we speak, and there are some very brave men and women trying to fight back. Despite the smoke and the impending fire that will be coming their way, many of them are still at the front line trying their darndest to save their homes. This is not a movie. It is really a tragic time for the people of Canada.

I spoke about telling the stories of the people who are bravely out there, and there are many leaders who certainly have answered the call as well. I want to share a few comments, which I think are really important.

One such leader is Chief Peter A. Beatty of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. He said:

We've already seen over 5,500 members [of our community] evacuated, and the situation is changing by the hour. With wildfires forcing full evacuations in Denare Beach and Pelican Narrows—and thousands more at risk—we are facing an escalating crisis. Many of our communities are becoming boxed in due to road closures and limited evacuation routes. We are doing everything possible on the ground, but this situation is beyond our capacity to manage alone.

The next leader is Chief Joyce Naytowhow McLeod of Montreal Lake Cree Nation. Chief Joyce said:

These wildfires are pushing our communities to the edge, and the situation is growing more serious by the hour. We're seeing the toll this is taking—on our families, on our health, and on our homelands. This joint declaration reflects our urgency and our unity. We are asking for timely and coordinated action so that our Nations can continue to protect our people with the full backing and partnership of government.

Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte of the Prince Albert Grand Council said, plainly and simply, "This is the time for real partnership and immediate action."

Bruce Fidler, the mayor of the town of Creighton, Saskatchewan, said that for eight days now, there has been a fire burning right on their doorstep. For the first two or three days, it was basically their local volunteer firefighters working on this fire. The SPSA then brought in some firefighters, but not nearly enough. With high temperatures and high, uncooperative winds, air support has been very inconsistent. They have been asking for everyone they can think of to come and help because they are in dire need of more firefighters and other resources. Their neighbouring community has lost numerous homes and infrastructure. This fire is now on three sides of them, and they are in desperate times. He said he is cognizant of proper protocol, but they need help, whether from the province or the federal government. They are working to save their community and residents and need support.

• (2135)

A young mother, Shayna Richie, from Denare Beach, said that she just got confirmation that her whole house burned down and her whole neighbourhood is gone.

These are some of the quotes of the many people who are impacted by this wildfire. As I mentioned at the outset, the devastation is complete.

There is something we have to say as MPs for that area. We are telling Canadians that it is time for us to look at the wildfires of the west and help the cause in some way, with a telephone call, a donation or even just prayers, because we are battling a huge crisis in northern Saskatchewan. It is my home territory. It is my home riding.

Some people may wonder what I am doing in Ottawa when I should be with my communities and my people. I came home several days ago, and I came back to Ottawa after visiting my home communities and seeing the devastation first-hand. I am now going back in a couple more days. Canada has to realize that these families, these areas and these regions need our assistance. As I said at the outset, when I was asked a question about how we can help and make things better, the answer is that the federal government is ready and standing by to help.

One of the reasons I am here in Ottawa is to tell the people of Canada that the west has always been a proud part of our country. They need our understanding now, and most certainly they need our help. Sadly, in this day and age, wildfire season has become a permanent fixture for too many people across our great country, but as I mentioned, the people of Saskatchewan, and in particular the people of northern Saskatchewan, are resilient.

Tonight is a tough night for them. The next several weeks are going to be tough for them, and the next several months even tougher. Through helping each other, supporting each other and, quite frankly, in many ways praying for each other, I think we will survive this storm, but boy, there are a lot of people who are hurting and who are devastated by what is happening in my own community.

I will tell the people of Canada that, yes, I wish that I was there right now, but I am not; I am here. I am telling them that the northern part of Saskatchewan is burning up, as it is in Manitoba, and we are here to share their stories and push hard to tell them that there is hope.

I want to recognize all the folks who have done tremendous work: the first responders, the Red Cross, the leaders, the men and women who are helping care for the evacuees and the evacuees themselves.

This is not something that we simply speak about. We need to have action attached to words. Once again, I will say that from our perspective as a federal government, we will be there for Manitoba, we will be there for Saskatchewan and we will be there for all of Canada.

Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the new member to the House. For his benefit and that of others who are new, I want to do a quick walk down memory lane. There have been Conservatives in the House who have been warning about the problems of bad forest management for a very long time. I will give as one example Jim Eglinski, former Conservative member for Yellowhead, who asked a question on June 16, 2017. Highlighting the pine beetle infestation, he said:

Much of the forest is dead or dying. The dead trees are a tremendous fuel load that present a significant risk to the community of Jasper.

Residents are concerned for their own safety and that of the visitors...

Will the member recognize that this question, asked eight years ago and not responded to, shows what a failure the government has been on forest management? He says the government will be there. Does he recognize that the government needs to face up to its own failures and address the issue of forest management, which was barely mentioned in his speech?

• (2140)

Hon. Buckley Belanger: Mr. Speaker, in this time of crisis, when families are being threatened and their homes are being burned, there are things that we can do to address the situation as we speak. The member speaks of the forestry industry. The forestry industry is a vibrant part of our economy and a vibrant part of our country.

I am going to say again that at the present time, homes are burning and businesses are being destroyed. When the west is on fire, we get this kind of response from the members opposite. Shame.

Jaime Battiste (Cape Breton—Canso—Antigonish, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated hearing from our member from Saskatchewan. It is really good to have a member of the Liberal Party from Saskatchewan. I grew up in Saskatoon, and I have always joked that I have been one of the only Saskatchewan Liberals

in our caucus for the last few years. I am really happy that he is here and talking tonight.

We have heard, over many years, about some of the climate-related emergencies we are dealing with, the climate crisis and the forest fires. We have known as Liberals and the government, as we were made aware by Canadians, that we need to do more on that. While on the other side members deny climate change exists and try to blame it on forest management, on this side we know there is a climate crisis that we need to address.

I know the member spent a lot of time in the provincial legislature. I wonder if he could talk about the importance of collaboration with all four levels of government, whether federal, provincial, municipal—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member to give the hon. secretary of state time to respond.

Hon. Buckley Belanger: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question to ask. It is one of the reasons why, as a federal government, we have to make sure we coordinate and work very closely with all the partners involved. That is exactly what we intend to do. We are going to work with the premier and the people of Saskatchewan to address this issue head-on. All it takes is co-operation.

At this point in time, I want to thank the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience, who has been doing an amazing job. She has provided great leadership, and I really admire some of the extra work that she has put in these last several weeks.

We will stand with Saskatchewan at this very devastating time.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have addressed the new member as secretary of state, and I think this moment requires that we all extend our deepest concerns, sympathy and prayers not only to him but to the people of his community, his riding and all throughout Saskatchewan who are threatened by wildfires. That is the point of what we are doing right now.

I am from British Columbia, where we have had wildfires at the doors. We saw Lytton burn down in 15 minutes on June 30, 2021. To this day, in that community, where over 250 people were living, only nine people have been able to return to rebuild homes. It is a long, hard road. We have to learn from where we are, but compassion comes first.

Hon. Buckley Belanger: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, compassion comes first. There is no question in my mind that resilience will come second. However, we have to have a full partnership of federal, provincial, local, municipal and indigenous people who can really build a solid response to this crisis.

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• (2145)

Sima Acan (Oakville West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I rise today to make my first statement in this House, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank the constituents of Oakville West who have honoured me by electing me to speak in the House on their behalf. I also want to thank my team and volunteers, who helped me to get elected and to stand here today.

I thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for bringing this important issue to debate this evening.

Like many Canadians, I have been watching the media reports and images of the wildfires in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and my heart goes out to everyone who is impacted. I can only imagine the devastation and the heartbreak they are feeling about having to leave their homes and the uncertainty that the next days and weeks will bring.

To the first responders who are fighting these fires, there are not enough words to thank them properly for the job they do. Every time there is a wildfire, they put life and limb on the line to keep our communities and their residents safe. I thank them for their courage, dedication and commitment.

I want to reassure Canadians and my hon. colleagues in this House that the government takes seriously its responsibility to keep our communities safe. Indeed, it has responded quickly to provide assistance and support. The Government of Canada remains committed to working with provinces, territories and whole-of-society partners to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies across the country.

The Prime Minister spoke with the Premier of Manitoba, Wab Kinew, on May 28 and is providing Canada's full support as Manitoba battles wildfires. The premier and the Prime Minister are in close contact, and the federal government is assisting Manitoba's provincial wildfire team. The government, via Indigenous Services Canada and across the board, has engaged with the impacted indigenous communities. The Minister of Emergency Management approved two requests for federal assistance from the Government of Manitoba, which were received late in the evening on May 28, to support evacuation efforts in response to the wildfires threatening these first nations communities.

Government of Canada departments have been working closely together on our response. Public Safety Canada's Government Operations Centre, which supports preparedness for and leads the coordination of the integrated federal response to all hazard events of national interest, is currently coordinating the federal response to the situation in western Canada. The Government Operations Centre is working with the Canadian Armed Forces, Canadian Coast Guard, Indigenous Services Canada and other federal and provincial partners to coordinate the response and deploy all necessary resources.

The Government Operations Centre maintains continuous communication with our federal, provincial and territorial partners, including indigenous communities, throughout the cyclical event season on a 24-7-365 basis. Every year, the Government Operations Centre works to deploy risk assessments for cyclical events such as floods, wildland fires and hurricanes, and shares with key partners

that hold emergency management responsibilities. This year again, the wildland fire forecast indicated the potential for elevated fire activity in western and central Canada due to ongoing drought conditions and above-normal temperatures.

On a broader scale, the government has a number of measures in place to mitigate the risk of natural disasters as well as to respond. For example, Canada's federal-provincial-territorial emergency management strategy outlines a coordinated approach focused on proactive measures to prevent and mitigate the impacts of disasters before they occur, and the Government of Canada is committed to building resilience to these hazards. This is why the government launched the national adaptation strategy, aimed to support a shared vision for a resilient Canada. The Government of Canada is also there to support communities after large-scale natural disasters.

• (2150)

For over 50 years, the disaster financial assistance arrangements program has played a critical role in supporting the cost of large-scale disasters caused by natural hazards in Canada. Public Safety Canada launched a modernized disaster financial assistance arrangements program on April 1, 2025. The modernized program is the culmination of over four years of extensive collaboration. Public Safety Canada continues to work closely with provinces and territories to ensure a smooth transition to the new DFAA.

Our modernized DFAA prioritizes greater resilience and reduces disaster risk to Canadians. It empowers provinces and territories to develop tailored solutions, increased flexible funding and expanded post-disaster supports. This initiative will help to reduce the long-term costs and impacts of disasters on all Canadians. While there has not yet been a request by provinces impacted by the current wildfires, assistance through the disaster financial assistance arrangements program will be there should they decide to make a request.

The modernized DFAA covers costs for wildfires that directly threaten communities, also known as wildland-urban interface fires. Response costs; repairing, restoring and rebuilding uninsurable infrastructure; improvements to damaged infrastructure; new community or region-wide mitigation projects; and recovery supports like legal, financial or mental health counselling can be cost-shared under the disaster financial assistance arrangements program, to improve the resilience of communities that have suffered a disaster. With this new program, mitigation funding is available for any eligible disaster type under the DFAA. Therefore, provinces and territories that suffer a disaster stemming from a natural hazard, such as a wildfire, and are eligible for DFAA funding can use the DFAA to increase the resilience of the affected communities.

We know natural disasters are increasing in their frequency and severity. As such, the government is continually looking at ways it can improve mitigation strategies, emergency management response and resilience. Any one of us could be impacted by a natural disaster at any time. While natural disasters are by their very nature unpredictable, improved coordination, risk mitigation, rapid response and preparedness strategies can help minimize their impact.

In conclusion, I want to reassure the impacted communities that the government stands with them, ready to help. We are doing, and will do, all we can.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the member opposite to the chamber, and I appreciate the information she shared. It is an important time to recognize some of these facts. While we are here in an emergency debate discussing fires in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, there are fires burning in other provinces, including in Alberta. Earlier this week, a crew of firefighters in Chipewyan Lake actually lost radio contact and had to shelter in place before access was eventually restored to the community, allowing those firefighters to safely evacuate.

It is important to make sure we are sharing some of this information, so I would ask if the member has any further information to share as to how people can gain access if they have been evacuated or are at threat of being evacuated.

Sima Acan: Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize and thank all the first responders and members of the Canadian Armed Forces who have been working tirelessly to ensure everyone stays safe.

For the Government of Canada, the highest priority and most important matter is to keep people safe. The government is actively monitoring the wildfire situation and responding accordingly.

• (2155)

Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the federal government has made some major investments in wildfire mitigation, whether that is investing in early observation systems, training thousands of firefighters, or, in ridings like mine, investing in firebreaks through the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund, we know that with the increasing effects of climate change, we are going to see more wildfires like this.

My question to the member here is—

Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if you can clarify for me if a member can ask a question outside of their seat.

The Deputy Speaker: The rules are that during emergency debates, the normal rule that applies from the standing order that you must speak from your seat does not apply. A member can actually ask a question and speak from any seat in the House as long as they do not move during their speaking.

I will allow the member to continue with his question.

Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, my question to my colleague is this: How do the increasing impacts of wildfires and the increasing impacts of climate change emphasize to her why the federal gov-

ernment needs to continue to take strong action to mitigate emissions?

Sima Acan: Mr. Speaker, right now, the government is focused on the immediate response and doing everything it can do to keep people safe. When the worst has passed, the disaster financial assistance arrangements program helps provinces recover from the damage and facilitate longer-term recovery.

We know the wildfire season is getting longer, and that is why preparation has never been more important. The government works closely with provinces and indigenous partners to assess and prepare. When the requests for federal assistance come in, we move quickly, and we are prepared to do so. At the end of the day, it is people's lives, livelihoods and whole communities that are on the line, and that is the reason the government will be working on helping our communities.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague on her election.

One of the things that we have mentioned we hear from the Liberals over and over again is about how climate change is affecting these natural disasters. Now, if that is the case, one would think that after 10 years of Liberals being in power, they would have managed to come up with systems that would take that into account, yet here we see, over and over again, fire season after fire season.

What we have seen is that Liberal government policy has impacted forest management. What does the member have to say about that?

Sima Acan: Mr. Speaker, this is a new government with a new mandate. The Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience is taking a fresh look at all options to improve how we respond to natural disasters and wildfires. Nothing is off the table if it means keeping Canadians safe.

Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time with the member for Peace River—Westlock.

As this is my first opportunity to speak at length in this House following the election, I would like to thank the good people of Yorkton—Melville for placing their trust in me once again, for a fourth term. Their endorsement and their faith in me mean the world to me, and I will strive every day to ensure they are represented and championed in this place.

Today, I rise to speak about a real crisis that is affecting so many individuals, businesses and first responders in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and northeastern B.C. Wildfires, including many in northern Saskatchewan, continue to spread, prompting evacuations in over two dozen communities and impacting air quality across our region.

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Yesterday, we learned that La Ronge, along with Air Ronge and Lac La Ronge Indian Band, are facing mandatory evacuations. Approximately 8,000 residents in Saskatchewan have been relocated, with the number expected to rise as the fires continue to grow. My thoughts and my prayers are with the thousands who have been forced to leave their homes and businesses behind and who have seen loved ones lost. My thoughts and prayers are with the first responders who have been working around the clock to contain the destruction. I think of their loved ones as they are putting everything on the line for the safety of other families, neighbours and friends. How thankful we need to be to charities and community groups that exist to provide shelter and aid. Many are community heroes and are facing the same danger and uncertainty as those they are serving. These emergencies and this crisis reveal the best of Canada: communities that care for each other and make sacrifices that go so far and beyond.

For those of us who are not in the line of the fire but are dealing with heavy smoke, it can be very precarious, especially for the vulnerable. Staying inside with windows and doors closed, using an air purifier, and wearing an N95 mask if they must venture out when the air quality is poor are being recommended. If the worst-case scenario is a concern, prepare an emergency kit ahead of time, if at all possible, in case of sudden evacuation orders. Saskatchewanians are resilient and resourceful, looking out for one another, and we will get through this.

Tonight, specifically, we are debating in what ways the federal government can and should be best responding to the crisis and where it needs to do better. Canadians are not entirely at the mercy of these wildfires. While the primary responsibility for wildfire suppression rests with municipalities, provinces and territories, the federal government is not a bystander. At the same time, the federal role in wildfire response remains ill-defined, underpowered and poorly understood, not just by Canadians, but by the very provinces that are supposed to rely on it in a time of crisis. In most cases, the provinces lead, and we must respect that. However, when disaster strikes on this scale, Canadians expect their federal government to show up with real coordination, real support and real action.

However, there is currently no federal agency with the teeth, mandate or resources to coordinate equipment, aircraft or manpower. Other countries have interjurisdictional bodies that mobilize resources quickly and cut red tape. Why is it that Canada does not? Conservatives continue to call for a stronger mandate for federal emergency preparedness, not to override the provinces but to assist them to streamline response and bring order to chaos when every second counts.

Furthermore, it is time to get serious about criminal arson. The current criminal penalty for arson is 14 years in prison. In some cases, perpetrators of intentional acts of arson resulting in property damage have faced less than one year of their prison sentence. Like all aspects of this government's approach to crime, this has to change. The Liberals must establish mandatory minimum sentences to deal with individuals who deliberately endanger communities and destroy livelihoods.

It remains to be seen if the current government will truly change its ways regarding fighting climate change and natural disasters. Implementing tax after tax is not an environmental plan. Canadians

are calling for targeted expenditures to reduce emissions, fight wildfires and build critical infrastructure resiliency and greater support for frontline firefighting, including labour incentives, not an inflationary carbon tax. When disaster strikes, there is no time for delay while different levels of government scramble to define their roles. Canadians deserve a plan with delineated responsibilities and a government that is focused on prevention and preparedness before disaster strikes.

We also need to recognize what the federal government should not be doing. For this, I turn to a specific example that also greatly impacted westerners not too long ago. The Jasper National Park wildfire disaster is still fresh in the minds of Canadians. The federal government holds direct responsibility for wildfire management on federal lands, including our national parks. The Liberal government ignored repeated warnings from scientists, forestry experts and local residents about the increasing wildfire risk in Jasper National Park.

● (2200)

The environment minister of the day was warned by foresters about the compounded threat that long-standing fire suppression, the mountain pine beetle epidemic and the warming climate posed to the region. In their own words, the likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire event was “a matter of when, not if”.

By suppressing fires over a long period of time, Parks Canada created unnatural forest conditions and a prime environment for the mountain pine beetle to thrive. Experts recommended an urgent program of prescribed burns and the removal of dead trees, which is just common sense. However, several years passed, and no significant policy changes to forest management were implemented. Every year from 2014 to 2020, the number of completed prescribed fires remained well below what was planned. In 2020, only eight of 33 planned fires were completed. Even after a sustained campaign of pressure on Parks Canada to change its approach, Jasper National Park remained much like “a powder keg waiting to blow up.”

As experts predicted, the worst-case scenario unfolded. The 2024 Jasper fire was one of Canada's most devastating natural disasters, resulting in the destruction of nearly one-third of the town, \$880 million in insured losses and the displacement of over 25,000 residents and visitors. Our thoughts remain today with the town of Jasper and all those who continue to rebuild their lives in the wake of the disaster. The same will apply to those who are grieving loss with these wildfires.

It is one thing to have the benefit of hindsight when holding a government to account for its failures, but to have been given hard lessons from a catastrophic event and not act on those lessons is contemptible.

Recent conversations with the same forestry experts in Jasper do not give reason to believe that the Liberals have corrected their course, as Parks Canada continues to lack the appropriate response to effectively manage forests in national parks. Even more concerning is the role that ideology has played in forest management. It has been discovered that, under direction from this government, Parks Canada prioritized political optics over proactive, prescribed burns. The following is a quote from a senior Parks Canada director: "At what point do we make the organizational decision to cancel...prescribed burns in Western Canada? As more and more media articles raise public concern over drought conditions, public and political perception may become more important than actual prescription windows."

In addition, ministers' answers to Conservative questions in the House repeatedly emphasized their commitment to preserving "ecological integrity" without defining what that means in practice. We now know that it meant ignoring experts and denying the science on effective forest management. The federal government has a responsibility to admit it failed and take immediate action to change its ideology, its behaviour and its lack of respect for those who are experts in forest management, preservation and conservation.

I question Parks Canada's implementation of ecological corridors, connecting the 30% and 50% of Canadian land and waterways to be protected areas by 2030 and 2050, respectively. How can it be trusted to be a steward of Canada's amazing wilderness, national parks and pristine waterways when it turns a blind eye to the basics of protecting the biodiversity of our national parks, allowing the forests, flora and amazing wildlife to be wiped out by a devastating, preventable fire for the sake of a need to alarm and take no blame for its decisions to do nothing?

Let us not allow the victims of wildfire to have to suffer and sacrifice in vain. The federal government has clear obligations to listen to scientists and industry experts on the dangers that long-standing forest management practices pose. For the sake of Jasper, my home province of Saskatchewan and Canadians across the country, we know public safety is at stake. Wildfires impart lessons that we cannot afford to ignore.

• (2205)

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I empathize tonight with all the members from the northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba communities that are impacted. It is unfortunate that in a time of crisis, when people are in dire need and government is working to coordinate an effective response to evacuate people, we

see in this House the Conservatives try to politicize and blame the government for wildfires, which we know are fundamentally connected to the climate crisis. The frequency of these extreme weather events, including wildfires, has been increasing.

I know the member opposite has been one of the climate deniers in this House whom I have seen, time and time again, propagate all kinds of different conspiracy theories to essentially not acknowledge the science. She said that the Liberals are turning a blind eye. I think she has turned a blind eye to climate change.

Will she finally accept that climate change is real?

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I included climate warming as one of the factors in the Jasper fire and what Parks Canada needs to do. The reality is that in the majority of these fires, as was mentioned by my colleague from Winnipeg, out of 20-some fires, only four were not started by humans. Clearly, the members across the floor are exaggerating the dynamics in this particular situation, as I know is the case for northern Saskatchewan as well.

The truth of the matter is that we need to be doing more with our resources for the sake of the world. The members across the floor refuse to recognize the fact that Canada has so much it should be doing for the entire world. Climate change does not begin or end at our borders, and Liberals are missing the best opportunity possible to make a difference in the world when it comes to climate change.

• (2210)

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Liberals always want to point out the causes of things as things that they cannot control, and yet a whole host of government policy has been put in place that has limited the forestry companies' abilities to manage the forest.

I wonder if the hon. member has more comments about forest management practices that she has heard about. She mentioned 30% by 2030. Are there other government policies she notes the Liberal government has put in place that limit this ability?

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, there is so much the government has done to inhibit and prevent Canada from becoming as prosperous as it should be. That is because it is limiting our abilities as a nation to extract those resources that we talk about over and over again in this place, resources that are so crucial to the economy of this country.

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The truth of the matter is in everything the Liberals did in the case of the Jasper fire. I know the Liberals get really sensitive about it, which I can understand, because they have chosen not to take responsibility for decisions they made that have impacted Parks Canada and all of our parks in becoming more of a tinderbox simply because they refuse to do the right things and allow the people who know how to manage our forests to do the work they know how to do.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that these wildfires are happening year over year over year, and there is a lack of coordination. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs is asking that the federal government establish a national fire administration to ensure that there is sufficient subject matter expertise and coordination in these predictable and precedented crises, but they also want it to serve as a nucleus to help organize and coordinate efforts.

Does my colleague agree that the federal government should act now to finally establish this important administration that, again, has been a call to action by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs?

Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, from what I have been reading about ecological corridors and all the things the government says it is going to do, the truth of the matter is that it chooses to get consultation from its own people, who do not have the expertise. We have firefighters across this nation who are prepared to assist the government with the things that it needs to do, and it turned a blind eye.

The Liberals made a number of promises recently, in 2019, that they have not come through on, and as a result, we continue to see the fires that we are facing in this nation. They need to listen to the experts and get out of the way.

Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to stand and acknowledge the fire situation in this country. As this is the first time I am on my feet to give a speech in the House, I want to thank the good people of Peace River—Westlock in northern Alberta, the honey capital of Canada, the promised land, as I like to call it, for re-electing me for the fourth time and giving me a mandate in this place.

In our riding, we have forestry, farming and the oil patch, and all of that happens out in the boreal forest in northern Alberta, so the topic that we are discussing tonight is near and dear to my heart. Forest management is a thing that I have had many talks with many people about over the last number of years.

Over 4,000 people are evacuated from their homes in Alberta at the moment. I recognize that our emergency debate tonight is about the wildfires in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and I hope it was merely an oversight that Alberta was not included, given the fact that Alberta feels that it is taken for granted regularly. Once again we see that perhaps Alberta was overlooked tonight. Nonetheless, there are thousands of people displaced from their homes at the moment.

Perhaps the wildfire situation in Alberta is not mentioned because Albertans are as resilient as they are. I want to thank everybody who has stepped up across Alberta to help in this time. I know that there are evacuee registration centres across northern Alberta.

When I visit these places, I am often surprised to hear that although we hear in the news that thousands of people are evacuated, the evacuation centres are only hosting hundreds of people. That is because Albertans step up in these times of need.

I have a number of stories of folks that have just reached out on Facebook. People from around Barrhead noted on Facebook that if folks needed a place to host their horses or their dogs, or to park their holiday trailer, their yard was an open place to do that and they had horse facilities available.

Eryk, Kim, Shawna and Theresah, on Facebook, offered residents of Swan Hills a place to stay and to park their trailer. Amy offered kennel spots for dogs and horses, 12 minutes outside Barrhead. People have thanked the residents and business owners in Whitecourt for helping evacuate the people in Swan Hills. Food vendors have stepped up and offered free food to folks who have been evacuated. Hotels have been hosting pets. They have supported many of the families who are struggling, particularly in the community of Whitecourt.

We noted that this was a repeated comment on Facebook about how the business community had really stepped up, and people were very proud of the community of Whitecourt. There is an organization called Mama Gray's Kitchen in Whitecourt, which was were feeding people out of the back of a pickup truck. They were basically tailgating downtown for the Swan Hills residents. They were giving out free taco bags, watermelon, ice cream cones and soft drinks.

A lady in Barrhead stopped in at Subway, and when she heard that the folks in front of her were from Swan Hills and were evacuees, she paid for their lunch. The people whose lunch was paid for recognized that on Facebook. Becki Pound was recognized on Facebook for helping Josee Bernier and her family, who had evacuated from Swan Hills. The Pembina West Co-op was donating meals to the Swan Hills evacuation centre in Whitecourt.

I would also note that church communities have been taking on dinner duties at the evacuation centres. The church communities have stepped up to volunteer to sponsor one of the meals each day at the evacuation centres. I recognize the church communities across the riding that have stepped up in this way.

Businesses have been out helping the Dene Tha' First Nation evacuees from Chatch. Loon River First Nation was providing meals, accommodations and fuel to anybody coming by who needed those things.

• (2215)

Buckles & Blues in Whitecourt was giving a 20% discount on food and clothing for people who were having to buy new clothes because they were evacuated without being able to collect their clothes from their house. Global Pet Foods in Whitecourt was donating thousands of dollars to the food bank for the evacuees, and it is offering a 15% discount for any evacuees buying pet food and kitty litter. These are a number of the stories of how Albertans have stepped forward and reached out to help those being evacuated.

Now, this is not a new story. The reason we are here tonight is to debate the emergencies that the wildfires have created. When we listen to the Liberals, we hear that they do not want to talk about solutions to the wildfires; they want to talk about their perceived cause of the wildfires, and they keep mentioning that it is climate change that is causing them. I grant the premise that climate change is a contributing factor to all of the fires, but what we repeatedly hear from forest management folks is that it is the fuel load. It is the amount of old-growth forest in Canada. We have done an incredible job for over 100 years in managing our forest fires.

I remember a story that my grandfather told me. He came to Canada when he was 21 years old. He was in northern B.C. when there was a forest fire happening, and people were conscripted. He said that several times when he was in town on Main Street running errands, he was conscripted to go fight forest fires. That was in the 1950s.

Back then, this country believed in developing our resources. People believed that the trees were there to be harvested. This had been a thing throughout all of Canada's history. When the first people came from Europe to Canada, they noted the trees and harvested them to build ships, which was one of the first reasons that people came to Canada, or to "New Found Land", as they called it. We saw that extended for a very long time. Managing the forest to promote the production of the trees and to limit forest fires to ensure that we could harvest those trees was the program of Canada for a very long time.

We have seen in recent generations that the program for Canadian forests has changed slightly. The forestry industry complains a lot about the fact that its 100-year plans are being put in jeopardy because of government programs or government policy dictated, too often, from on high, and I just want to mention a few of those things. One is the softwood lumber tariffs, which have caused instability in our ability to market our softwood lumber, and that has caused somewhat of a reduction in the allowable cut or the ability to cut. When sawmills do not make money and when they go out of business, trees no longer get harvested, which ends up resulting in a larger old-growth forest with a higher fuel load.

The Species at Risk Act came in, sterilized the landscape of human activity, and forced all industry out of particular areas, with no consideration for forest management at all. The Species at Risk Act is a noble cause to bring back species that are at risk, but forest management does not get done. We also have the 30 by 30 and our national parks program. All of these policies get laid over top of each other.

There are no solutions; there are only trade-offs, and that is the reality of life. When we layer on all of these policies and policy

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changes over time, when forestry companies are unable to enact their 100-year plans, and watch the forest grow old and the fuel load grow higher, they will say, yes, climate change is a real thing, but it is the fuel load that is there and they just know it is a matter of time before that forest burns.

If we do not harvest the trees, if we do not take the fuel load out of there, it is only a matter of time before the forest will burn, which has not been recognized by the Liberal government, and so here we are once again in a fire season.

• (2220)

Dominique O'Rourke (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have to acknowledge that it is devastating for anyone who is living through these forest fires and having to evacuate their home. My heart is with the people in all areas affected by the fires.

In an emergency, people really need local, reliable information so they know where to go to get help. Can the member opposite tell us and the folks who are listening what the most reliable sources of information are if they need information in their community tonight?

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that everybody follow their local municipality's Facebook page. In my own riding, that is generally the best place to go. Either the band office will have its own Facebook page or each community will generally have its own Facebook page. That is generally the way to be the most up to date. Also, if anyone wants to do a two-way communication, the comments section underneath is often a good place to find that.

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not enough that we all lend our voices to this cause, so allow me to just take a moment to thank the fire crews, the military, the Red Cross, the first responders and the community organizers across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta for their sacrifices.

Just tonight, my extended family from Chateh, Treaty 8, northern Alberta, was given an evacuation order and is well represented by the member who just spoke. Wildfires are not a material loss to first nations and indigenous communities; they are a cultural and spiritual wound. Ceremonies, seasonal gatherings and activities are cancelled. Cultural sites are destroyed. Traplines and hunting cabins are burned. Land-based learning camps are disrupted. Moose habitats are lost. Sustainability is disrupted.

Despite this, indigenous peoples have persevered over fires since time immemorial through controlled burns and forest management. Can the member discuss how indigenous peoples' knowledge and skills of forest management are critical to the long-term combatting of forest fires? Is this knowledge being utilized by the Liberal government?

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• (2225)

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I just want to recognize the community of Chateh, and particularly Damian from there. I was able to visit Chateh during the election.

I want to also point out the community of Tallcree. It has its own wildland firefighter crew. It is contracted to the Province of Alberta, but it actually tours all around the world fighting fires. That community in particular has an aggressive back-burn, or springtime burn, program. It has protected its community by burning off the swamp grass in every direction from its particular community every spring. It is always quite shocking when I come down the hill or around the corner into there. I am thinking, “Oh, there is a devastating fire right next to the community”, but as I have gotten to know the community, I have learned that it does this every spring to take the fuel load down and protect the community, so we have a lot to learn from the folks at Tallcree.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the forestry industry, and I appreciate that. The sustainable harvest of biomass has been proven to reduce wild-fire risk, and the Liberal government promised the biomass tax credit in the fall economic statement, as the member recalls, in 2023. However, the Liberals still have not implemented it.

The forestry sector has been calling for quick implementation of the expanded implementation of the clean economy investment tax credits to include biomass. Does my colleague agree that the government needs to urgently bring through legislation to implement those ITCs to include biomass as a tool to mitigate the wildfires that are happening in our country?

Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the type of thing I was talking about. We need to understand that the forest is an organic organism that moves, and it has been managed for over 100 years in Canada, 200 years in some places. We need to ensure that the fuel load is managed, because the fuel load is the thing that causes the fires. When the fuel load is low, we can manage the fires. When the fuel load is high, we get a never-ending cycle of wildfires.

Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs.

It is a true pleasure to contribute to this important debate on the wildfires in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. I truly want to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for proposing the debate this evening. Not only is it important, but I also very much appreciate hearing the stories and the experiences of those who have been impacted, and all of those who are trying hard to resolve the issue.

I am the very proud member of Parliament for the constituency of Davenport. It is located in downtown west Toronto. While we do not have the kind of wildfires that we are now seeing in western Canada, we are also very much impacted by the wildfires. In our local newspaper in Toronto today, it said, “Wildfire smoke from Western Canada and Northwest Ontario is spreading to Toronto, causing hazy skies and potentially health hazardous air quality.”

In saying this, I know that in no way, by any stretch of the imagination, is what we are experiencing in Toronto anywhere near what is happening right now in western Canada or the impact on the many communities currently experiencing active wildfires.

I want to begin by saying a heartfelt thank you to the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience. I want to say thanks to the Minister of Indigenous Services who spoke earlier this evening. I want to thank them for their respective leadership. I am very proud of not only their leadership, but also their quick action and their compassionate and culturally appropriate support. I am also proud of the work Canada is doing to support those impacted by the wildfires in each province.

Our thoughts are with Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are once again facing the devastating impacts of severe climate events, including the wildfires currently affecting Manitoba, Saskatchewan and surrounding regions. People have been forced to flee their homes, many from remote and northern indigenous communities. These are not abstract figures. We are talking about families and entire communities facing danger, hardship and uncertainty.

Climate events are displacing families and challenging our emergency response systems in ways Canada has not experienced until recently. I join all members of the House in expressing deep gratitude to the firefighters, first responders, volunteers and members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are working tirelessly to protect lives and communities during this incredibly challenging time. I am pleased and relieved to share that, over the weekend, the Canadian Coast Guard helicopters were deployed to support the evacuation efforts in Manitoba.

Once again, I want to thank my colleague the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience for her leadership in coordinating the federal response to this crisis. On May 28, the province of Manitoba submitted a request for federal assistance due to wildfire impacts. The next day, on May 29, the Canadian Armed Forces mobilized up to 18 aircraft to assist and immediately begin evacuating communities at risk, particularly the Mathias Colomb first nation's approximately 3,500 residents. On May 30, the Canadian Coast Guard joined the evacuation effort and mobilized an additional two helicopters, which were operational as of June 1.

Led by Public Safety Canada, various departments, including Indigenous Services Canada, Transport Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and the Public Health Agency, all contributed to both the evacuation of communities and the care of the host communities to which they were relocated.

In addition, non-governmental organizations, such as the Canadian Red Cross, the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada and St. John Ambulance, played an important and vital role, while dynamic weather and smoky conditions in the area continued to challenge evacuation efforts. From May 29 to June 2, 3,612 people were evacuated and brought to safety from Mathias Colomb, Cross Lake and Norway House.

Sadly, Canada is currently facing approximately 180 active wildfires nationally, with 72 classified as out of control. The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre has arranged for out-of-province domestic and international surge support to firefighting efforts in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Nunavut.

• (2230)

The Canadian Coast Guard is part of the integrated whole-of-government federal response system. Our marine and air assets are deployed in coordination with other departments to maximize impact and meet the needs of Canadians. As emergency management in Canada is a shared responsibility, our systems are built on partnerships, co-operation and respect for jurisdictional roles. Provinces and territories lead in response to emergencies within their jurisdictional mandate, and the federal government supports them when the situation exceeds their capacity or when specific federal assistance is requested.

As a national government, our role is clear. We are to respond swiftly and effectively to requests for federal assistance from provinces and territories when asked and stand with Canadians in times of need. Our government has responded with urgency and a coordinated whole-of-government approach. This is not just about responding to requests for assistance or respecting jurisdictional roles, but about supporting each other as people and as Canadians. Our government is working closely with provincial authorities, indigenous leadership, local governments and non-governmental partners, such as the Canadian Red Cross, to ensure that the federal response is not only timely but also integrated and responsive to the realities our communities are confronting.

Beyond delivering its own programs, the Canadian Coast Guard plays a vital role in supporting the mandates of other federal organizations during major incidents, such as wildfires, floods and other natural disasters. As a first responder agency, it contributes air and marine resources, emergency management expertise, and humanitarian support, including assistance to community evacuations.

I will give members a few examples. In response to record snowfalls in Sydney, Nova Scotia, in February 2024, the Canadian Coast Guard cadets and helicopters swiftly acted following a request for federal assistance from the Province of Nova Scotia. Another example is when, in the summer of 2023, the Canadian Coast Guard supported the Northwest Territories in responding to the devastating wildfires threatening Hay River and Yellowknife. Finally, in the aftermath of hurricane Fiona's destruction across the Atlantic provinces in 2022, the Canadian Coast Guard was there to support Canadians in need.

In the face of climate-driven emergencies, our commitment is to not only respond and support but also adapt. Our government is working to strengthen Canada's emergency systems to meet these evolving challenges and increase our country's collective resilience as it will continue to face increasingly severe climate events. The amount and frequency of climate-related disasters has placed growing demands on the Canadian Coast Guard's response capabilities, but by leveraging investments from the oceans protection plan, the Canadian Coast Guard is amplifying its capacity through community partnerships and enhanced training and exercises.

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The government also remains committed to advancing reconciliation and supporting indigenous self-determination through partnerships that enable indigenous communities to participate in marine response planning and emergency preparedness. We are building a more inclusive and resilient response system.

I would also say that interoperability is a core principle in emergency management. A cohesive response is only possible when all partners can communicate effectively, operate within compatible systems and understand each other's capabilities. That is why we continue to invest in joint training exercises, shared information platforms and harmonized response protocols.

Finally, our commitment goes beyond the current crisis. We are working to build a Canada that is not only capable of responding to today's emergency but also prepared for tomorrow's floods, storms, extreme heat and other climate-driven emergencies. This involves aligning emergency management planning with climate adaptation strategies to withstand extreme weather events and equip indigenous partners with the necessary tools to protect communities. In times of crisis, Canadians come together to show the strength of our partnerships, the depth of our compassion and the resilience that defines us as Canadians.

• (2235)

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to have another speech delivered by a member from a Toronto area riding who is not necessarily impacted by these fires. While I appreciate her sharing the department-written speech that was prepared for her, which had some good information, she talked about a lot of things the government has committed to do but has not actually done. We have heard promise after promise, since 2021, yet we have not seen the results on the ground. We see communities that are being left to falter.

My question for the member opposite is this: When are we going to see action and not just empty promises?

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, while I am a member from downtown Toronto, I care just as much about what is happening in our country as others do. Not only do I proudly represent Davenport, but I represent all Canadians. I do everything in my power to make the best decisions I can for this country, so I absolutely care about the wildfires that are under way. I am very proud to be a part of the important debate and discussion this evening.

I disagree completely with the member opposite. As I mentioned earlier, I am very proud of the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and very proud of the Minister of Indigenous Services, both of whom spoke earlier. They talked about how they have been on top of dealing with all the wildfire responses and requests.

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We have addressed these issues urgently. We have worked in co-ordination with all levels of government, with indigenous people and with the non-profit organizations that are so important.

• (2240)

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Davenport, who is one of my favourite colleagues. It is great to be in the House tonight with such a thoughtful and empathetic member of Parliament, as she always shows herself to be. She gave a very thoughtful speech that I know she worked very hard on.

It is unfortunate that someone is not present, the leader of the official opposition. He was the member for Carleton, but unfortunately he is not currently in the House to participate in this debate. I wonder whether it is because he and his party voted over 400 times against the climate policies of this government. They sought to address the core underlying causes contributing to wildfires and other extreme weather events, which we know are increasing in frequency.

I know the member in her speech focused on the need for coordination and co-operation among a whole bunch of different stakeholders, including first responders. I wonder if she could tell us how Canadians can contribute to this response.

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I understand that today, our government, alongside the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, announced that we will match all individual donations to the Canadian Red Cross in support of those impacted by wildfires in each province. That means every dollar Canadians give will go further, to provide emergency shelter, food and essential supplies.

We are deeply grateful to the Red Cross and all the local volunteers who are stepping up to this difficult moment. I know that Canadians, as they always do, will rise to the occasion and support these efforts.

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have faced an increase in extreme climate events in Vancouver, British Columbia, where we experienced a heat dome and where over 500 people died. We had Lytton, where a whole city burned down, and Jasper. We now have, of course, extreme weather occurrences in Winnipeg, Saskatchewan and even Quebec. This is a reality that Canadians face.

In the face of that, my question for the member is this: Does the member think it makes sense that the government continues to want to advance oil and gas industries with its latest development of a one-office, fast-track approach?

Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience said earlier this evening that every single time we tackle wildfires in this country, we continue to learn from each and every single event.

We are going to continue to work closely with all of our partners, our provincial partners, indigenous communities and non-profit partners, to make sure that we continue to keep—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member.

Resuming debate, the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs.

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *tansi, aniin, bonjour, ullukkut*. I rise today from a place of urgency and responsibility, and I begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the unceded and unsundered territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. I honour their stewardship and offer my respect to their ancestors and knowledge-keepers, past and present.

I speak today not only as a minister in the House, but as the member of Parliament for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, a riding that has been deeply affected by the wildfires raging across our north. Thousands have already been evacuated, and more are on alert.

I invite those questioning our government's response to actually speak to the people on the ground. Ask the elders who have been airlifted to safety. Ask the local leadership who have received daily updates through direct lines of communication and who have sent "thank you" messages for the support they are receiving from our government. Our response was rooted in safety first and respect for life. Our response was rooted in the belief that indigenous and northern communities deserve the same level of urgency and care as anyone else in this country. That is the bar we have set, and that is the bar we will continue to meet.

Since May 28, I have been in constant communication with provincial counterparts, including Premier Wab Kinew and Minister Naylor, as well as local leadership, such as Mayor George Fontaine of Flin Flon and councillors from Mathias Colomb Cree Nation. I have also worked closely with my federal colleagues, including the Minister of National Defence, David McGuinty, and the Minister of Emergency Management, Eleanor Olszewski. Every single day, I have made calls, checking in directly with communities and their leadership. I have provided regular updates, reassurance and coordination support. Together, we focused on ensuring that evacuation logistics are clear, timely and culturally responsive.

Above all, our priority has been to make sure that every person is safe, accounted for and not left behind. Flin Flon, Bakers Narrows, Bissett, Pimicikamak Cree Nation, Sherridon, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, Mathias Colomb and now York Landing, we are thinking about all of these communities, their leadership and the people there.

Pukatawagan was a point of tension because we knew they had no road in or out and their rail line had burned. Their evacuation route was long, complex and stressful, but I am relieved and proud to report that we got everybody out. We worked together with the community, the province and the federal government to ensure safety and dignity throughout the entire process.

This crisis is not just a challenge. It is also a mirror. It reflects the reality that climate change is not a future threat. It is happening right now. It is a present emergency. The north is warming at three times the global average. The land is burning, and the ice is melting. Our ways of life, our food, our systems, our cultural practices and our health are all being tested. Make no mistake, the burden is not shared equally. Indigenous and northern communities, which have done the least to cause this crisis, are bearing the brunt of its consequences.

As an indigenous person with relationships throughout the north, with the communities that I serve, these are not statistics to me. These are the families that I adore, my friends and my story. I have heard the fear in people's voices, and I see many of the images being sent from communities that are being affected. I have felt the pressure of this moment and the strength of northerners. Manitobans, Canadians and this new government have been working together.

Throughout this crisis, I have been heartened by the leadership I have witnessed: mayors, chiefs and councillors working together around the clock. These are my heroes, and these are the voices that are guiding our work. I want to express my gratitude to the firefighters, emergency responders, nurses, doctors, volunteers, and the countless community members who are supporting one another with strength and solidarity. My colleagues, including Minister Olaszewski and Minister Mandy Gull-Masty, have been working closely to mobilize federal resources, ensuring that supports are trauma-informed, culturally relevant and community-directed.

• (2245)

We know we must not only respond; we must rebuild with intention. We know the people of Flin Flon, Mathias Colomb and Pimicikamak deserve more, and we are here for them. We deserve lasting infrastructure, fire-resistant housing, community-driven climate strategies, and economic opportunities that flow back to the communities, not away from them.

The truth is that these fires are revealing our fault lines, but also our shared responsibility and our strength. They are teaching us that climate justice is indigenous and northern justice and that reconciliation must include environmental responsibility. This is about more than a response; it is about restoring balance between people, policy and the land itself.

I reject the idea that anyone in the House is not doing enough. When people are losing homes, when the land is on fire and when families are displaced is not a moment for partisanship. It is a moment for personal responsibility and collective action, so let us walk this path together with urgency, with humility and with deep respect for those who came before us and those who are watching us right now.

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To the people of Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, I want to say that I see them, I hear them and I will continue to stand with them every step of the way.

Meegwetch.

• (2250)

The Deputy Speaker: Before I proceed to questions and comments, I will remind members that, in spite of the late hour, we cannot refer to ministers by their first or last names. For example, it would be the “Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience”.

Billy Morin (Edmonton Northwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the minister's words and share her concerns. Like the rest of our hon. colleagues, my heart goes out to her riding and the specific people in northern Manitoba whom she represents. Lately we have been hearing concerns about the current emergency situation, and I share her concerns about the long-term value of engaging indigenous nations for long-term solutions.

Given this emergency debate on the crisis, we are hearing some concerns on housing, particularly in terms of hotels in Manitoba and specific indigenous people from the north not having a place to stay. Can the minister address some of the services and supports for housing in Winnipeg that indigenous Canadians from Manitoba are looking for?

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand: Mr. Speaker, it is important to know that our indigenous caucus has been working around the clock with the rest of our colleagues here at the federal level, and we are doing that in partnership with the provincial government and local leadership.

We know supports have already been provided to people on the ground, and those supports will continue. I will continue to work with Minister Gull-Masty on this to ensure that people on the ground receive the supports they are asking for.

Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the minister is not allowed to label people by their names in here. She needs to use the minister's title or their riding name.

The Deputy Speaker: On the point of order, that is correct. We cannot refer to ministers by their first or last names, only by their titles. The minister made a reference to another minister in the cabinet.

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs for a very insightful set of remarks that I think outlined exactly how climate justice is so important in this country and how indigenous and northern communities are disproportionately impacted. I know she represents many of those communities and many that are impacted by these wildfires, and I am sure it is not the first time the communities she is representing have been impacted by climate change and wildfires.

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I really have heard from many members on this side of the House about how the government is working to coordinate efforts across many different stakeholders. I wondered if the minister could share some stories about that coordination and how important it is to her community.

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand: Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a bit about the Churchill—Keewatinook Aski riding and the work we have to do to support people throughout it. This riding is three-quarters of Manitoba. It has 68 communities, 40 of which are first nations communities. There are also 20 remote isolated communities, meaning we can only get into these communities by winter road or by fly-in.

The efforts being made have to take these considerations into account. When we think about the coordination that is happening across the province, across the country or even just for my riding, we have to work with all levels of government to do that. That is what we did.

As soon as a state of emergency was called, one thing I did was reach out to Premier Kinew from Manitoba just to make sure our efforts were in sync and that we were listening to what was happening on the ground. I also reached out to a number of community people to make sure they were receiving supports in their communities, and I will continue to do that work until everybody is safe.

Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I congratulate the minister on her appointment and her election.

I am going to ask about Chief Monias from the Pimicikamak first nation, who, when the state of emergency was declared there, made remarks regarding the importance of treaty relationships, as well as making sure that, because of that treaty relationship, they have ready access to all ministers.

The chief has since stated they have only had one meeting with the minister and that their needs are not being heard and their voices are not being heard. They are saying they are not asking for charity, but are asking for their treaty relationship to be respected. I wonder if she can share with us how she is reconciling what we are hearing from chiefs in first nations with what she shared with us in her statement today.

• (2255)

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand: Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ with what was just stated. I have actually spoken to Chief Larson from Pimicikamak myself, checking in to ensure his community members are receiving the support they rightfully deserve. We will continue to keep providing that same support to all community members and their leadership.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish that I were rising, for the second time in this chamber since my election, with respect to a better topic than the one at hand, but I appreciate that we are having this emergency debate about the ongoing wildfire situation affecting my home province as well as our neighbouring province of Saskatchewan and elsewhere. I know other parts of the country are affected as well. Although the debate is labelled as being about Manitoba and Saskatchewan specifically, we know our fellow Canadians in other provinces are impacted as well, and I think it is important to mention that.

Just as a bit of an update, my portion of the province is not currently under threat of fire, but we are receiving refugees and evacuees from regions of the province that are, and we are certainly doing our part to welcome those folks into our constituency, into our homes in many cases, to make sure that they have a safe place to go. It is important to note that many of the fires are still significantly out of control. They are extreme conditions, and we remain in a province-wide state of emergency. There are also small pockets of high fire danger in other areas of the province. While I am told that after I left Winnipeg yesterday morning they did get a bit of rain, it is certainly not enough and not in the right regions to stem the fires that are currently burning, both under and out of control, nor to stem the focus previously.

I should have noted at the beginning of my speech that I plan to split my time with the member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River.

As Manitoba continues to battle the flames, our firefighters, both professional and volunteer, are deployed from across regions of the province, including from the city of Brandon and Westman. We are responding. Many people have volunteered to go up north to address the challenging circumstances in the constituency of the minister who just spoke, as well as elsewhere. We thank them for their significant commitment to protecting the lives and livelihoods of our northern Manitoba friends.

We also know that we Manitobans are not doing it alone. Deployed in Manitoba alone to address the challenging circumstances that we simply do not have the capacity as one province to manage, there have been 38 personnel from Alberta, 87 personnel from British Columbia, 19 personnel from Parks Canada, 23 personnel from New Brunswick, two personnel from Prince Edward Island, 500 sprinklers from our friends in British Columbia and two skimmers and one bird dog plane from our friends in Minnesota. On behalf of Brandon—Souris constituents and all Manitobans, I say a hearty and heartfelt “thank you” to our friends from other provinces and our friends in Minnesota for their support at this incredibly challenging time.

Manitobans continue to urge people to follow carefully all fire and travel restrictions. This is at level 3, as of the latest fire bulletin published by the Province of Manitoba's emergency measures team, and it is important for Manitobans to understand that those measures are in effect.

We have heard a lot of talk already tonight and through the evening about the impact of climate change. We are not here to debate that necessarily, but it is important to note that the Province of Manitoba is reporting that over half, approaching three-quarters, of the fires so far are known to have been caused by human activity. It remains a challenge for our fire and emergency measures personnel that human activity is causing these fires, not intentionally I am sure, but accidentally in the vast majority of cases. It is still a significant challenge, so Manitobans are urged at this time to be very cautious with their actions and their activities. We certainly do not need more strain on our emergency services personnel at this time. We thank Manitobans for their commitment.

In addition, a number of chiefs have spoken publicly to the media about their frustration with folks who right now are not following the request to evacuate communities. I just cannot stress enough, in this important, hallowed chamber, how impactful and how necessary it is for folks in those communities that are under an evacuation order to please follow the commentary from the provincial government and the professionals. Folks should please respect those notices as they receive them. This is for their health and safety. These are not safe places to be right now. It is very important that they follow the requests of provincial officials and remove themselves from those areas if they are under an evacuation order.

• (2300)

From the bottom of my heart, with all common sense in mind, I know this must be difficult. I myself was evacuated from my family home during the 2011 flood season in southwestern Manitoba. It was a significant water event, a once-in-300-years flood in our community. The military was called in by former NDP premier Greg Selinger and former prime Minister Stephen Harper, working together across party lines to save our community. They certainly did. We were evacuated from our home for over a month. I know they are not easy decisions to make, to leave everything that someone owns and everything that they know behind. They may not find it there when they return, but it is so important that people do so to protect themselves and protect their families. They should please respect those evacuation orders when they come.

We know that there is a lot of ground to cover. There are thousands of hectares currently burning. Again, I will reiterate my thanks to the professionals who are working diligently to get the out-of-control fires under control and maintain the ones that are out of control. It is so important that we respect and support them in everything they do. I know Brandon—Souris residents are certainly doing that.

Over the weekend, a number of C-130 Royal Canadian Air Force planes landed at the Brandon Municipal Airport. They came from the RCAF headquarters in Winnipeg. We know they are leading the emergency response now that the request for support has been received. To those fine folks who put uniforms on and put their lives on the line to protect this country, both at home and abroad, I say that I sincerely appreciate their support and their work at this incredibly challenging time.

Brandon received those planes. It is currently housing several hundred, if not over a thousand, evacuees within hotels and across the city. We know that things are getting challenging. My team reached out to the City of Brandon's team earlier today in advance of my giving this debate and wanted to make sure the main message from the City of Brandon is to those folks who have been evacuated, who are landing in the city of Brandon: It is so important that they register with the Red Cross so that we know where they are, they can be tracked and services can be delivered to them.

That is the message, folks. If someone is landing in Brandon and accommodations are being provided, they should please remember to register with the Red Cross. We know people have a lot on the go right now, but it is so important to make sure that they get the services they need and deserve at this time when they are evacuated from their homes.

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I know other regions of Brandon—Souris are stepping up as well. In fact, even my hometown of Souris just developed a new campground and has made campsites available, obviously at no cost to evacuees. Evacuees will be housed in hotels first, but depending on how long this situation drags on for, and we hope it is not long, Souris has made accommodations available in alternative formats if folks want to get out of the hotel after a short stay there. These are important initiatives.

Brandon—Souris and Westman are welcoming the evacuees with open arms while we send our first responders north to address the situation there. I am very proud to represent these hard-working and very caring Westman and Brandon—Souris residents. I thank them for their commitment to dealing with this situation.

I look forward to hearing more from the government members about the steps they are taking to address this initiative and support the evacuees and the province of Manitoba in getting these fires under control.

• (2305)

Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that members opposite have talked a lot about controlled burns and ways to manage forests and ensure that forest fires do not become wild or uncontrolled.

I wonder if the member opposite knows that forest management plans are a jurisdiction of the province. I wonder whether he will acknowledge in this House that private forestry companies must operate under licence and timber supply agreements that provincial governments have clear jurisdiction over. I know that we have said many times in this House how important it is to coordinate efforts among all tiers of government and many other partners. We have heard ministers repeat this, and many of us have repeated it.

Could the member speak about the provincial responsibilities when it comes to these matters?

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what speech the member for Whitby was listening to. It was not mine, because I did not mention forestry management plans a single time in my speech, despite his claiming that I did.

However, here is what I would say about that. None of northern Manitoba, which is currently burning, is in a national park, which is what my colleagues across the Conservative bench have made comments on previously. Certainly, it is a provincial responsibility to manage forests that are outside national parks. It is important for the province to have the tools to do so. I understand there are acts that the previous Liberal federal government enacted, such as the Species at Risk Act, which prevent certain controlled burns from being undertaken. That is limiting the ability to manage forestry.

It is important to note also that our forestry partners in Manitoba are very responsible, and they do great work on behalf of the forestry industry and all Manitobans.

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Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would note that when it comes to fire and emergency services, we have seen a significant deterioration across Canada in recent years. The Liberal Party pledged in 2021 to allocate half a billion dollars to train and recruit 1,000 new firefighters and acquire new equipment, including helicopters and water bombers. Thus far, that money has not gone out the door. The government has failed to meet the commitment that it made, nearly three and a half years later.

Would the hon. member agree that when it comes to this matter, the government has a lot of work to do?

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank my colleague for that excellent question. There is no doubt I agree that when a federal government makes commitments to people, particularly people in vulnerable areas of the country, it should keep those commitments. The Liberal Party failed to do that when it made that commitment in 2021.

In addition to that, the member for Winnipeg North earlier claimed that the Liberal government flowed money to the Manitoba government, which subsequently allowed Wab Kinew, as premier, in his first budget, to cut the emergency measures budget in the province last year by \$50 million.

The federal government, when it is making funding decisions, needs to ensure that actual infrastructure and equipment are being purchased with federal dollars to protect vulnerable communities in northern Manitoba and everywhere else across the country.

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the last decade, we have never seen raging wildfires like we are seeing right now. Unlike the Liberals, who want to blame provinces and territories for maybe not having the equipment to tackle these incredible fires that are taking place, I think about my home province, which is loaning resources and supporting three neighbouring provinces with helicopters, water bombers and equipment. At the same time, B.C. has operators like Coulson Group, on Vancouver Island, that are supporting countries around the world, yet Canada still does not have water bombers or night firefighting equipment to take on surges happening throughout Canada.

Does my colleague agree that it is time for the federal government to step up, fill the void and show some leadership?

• (2310)

Grant Jackson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank the government of B.C. and the people of B.C. for punching above their weight in supporting other provinces that are under serious threat right now. There is no doubt in my mind that when a federal government makes a commitment to invest in a particular outcome for a particular group of communities or group of people, it should absolutely fulfill that commitment. The Liberal government should have done it. The government failed and should be held to account for that.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this very important emergency debate, but before I address the urgent matter at hand, as this is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak in this new Parliament, I want to thank the residents of St. Albert—Sturgeon River for placing their trust and confidence in me. I would also like to thank all the many dedicated volunteers who worked so hard on my

campaign and indeed all the volunteers who worked on all the campaigns in my riding. Volunteers play such an integral role in the service of our democracy.

In this Parliament, I look forward to continuing to represent the city of St. Albert and the many communities I now have the privilege of representing in this newly drawn riding. I pledge to the residents of St. Albert—Sturgeon River that I will do everything I can to be a strong and effective voice on their behalf in the House of Commons.

The wildfire situation across Canada, particularly in western Canada, is dangerous. It is very serious. We have seen more than a million and a half hectares burn. We have seen tens of thousands of people evacuated. Homes and property have been damaged and destroyed. Entire communities are at risk. The intensity of the fires is so strong that the smoke can be felt and has impacted places as far away as the United Kingdom and Florida.

I want to join colleagues in expressing my sympathy and concern for the thousands upon thousands of Canadians who are impacted by these wildfires. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all the firefighters, first responders, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, members of law enforcement, volunteers, and members of communities who are stepping up and working tirelessly in often very difficult and dangerous environments to save lives, to save property and infrastructure and to assist impacted communities.

Let me say that this has been a devastating wildfire season, and it has been felt in my riding of St. Albert—Sturgeon River. On May 3, a fire was ignited in the Redwater Provincial Recreation Area in Sturgeon County due to an apparent mechanical or electric failure of an all-terrain vehicle. Due to dry and windy conditions, the fire quickly spread, engulfing more than 3,200 hectares. More than 70 homes were evacuated, and the situation on the ground was very dangerous and very volatile.

Indeed, there was the real risk of catastrophe, with the fire being proximate to Alberta's industrial heartland, which is the largest hydrocarbon processing area in the country. There was a real risk that the fire would spread to the town of Redwater, a community of 2,100 residents. In the face of this very serious situation, what we saw in the way of the response to the wildfire were acts of courage from residents, leadership from local officials from the province, and neighbours and communities coming together to lend a helping hand.

• (2315)

In that regard, I wish to join the mayor of Sturgeon County, Alanna Hnatiw, in thanking the Sturgeon County Emergency Services team; the provincial wildfire resource branch; the provincial ministries of forestry, transportation and parks; the RCMP; many community members; and the neighbouring counties of Parkland, Lamont, Strathcona and Fort Hills, for their efforts in combatting the fire, as well as lending resources, personnel and equipment. I would also like to acknowledge the Sturgeon Regional Emergency Management Partnership, which includes Sturgeon County, as well as the towns of Morinville, Redwater, Gibbons, Bon Accord and Legal, for its vital emergency response coordination efforts. As a result of all of those efforts, the fire, after nearly a month, was finally contained as of May 30, and lives, livestock, residents and businesses have been saved.

Although catastrophe was averted, make no mistake about it, the impact of this wildfire on residents in eastern Sturgeon County has been devastating. In these days, there are residents who are literally sifting through the ashes. People lost their homes. They have lost livestock and pets. Valuable property was damaged and destroyed, and treasured recreation areas were lost. While the wildfire has been contained, for those who have been impacted, the road to rebuilding has just begun. I pledge to those impacted residents that I will do everything I can, working with my provincial and municipal colleagues, to ensure that they receive the support and resources they need and deserve as they begin the process of rebuilding.

With respect to the wildfires that are raging, out of control, across Canada, and in the face of recent disasters, including the Jasper wildfire, all of these things ought to constitute a five-alarm wake-up call for the government. The fact is that we have seen a deterioration in fire and emergency services across Canada. There are real issues with respect to personnel and resources. There are issues with respect to equipment and coordination, and we have seen from the government a misguided and ideological approach in its opposition to preventative measures, such as prescribed burns, which resulted in the tinderbox that was Jasper National Park, and that led to a fire that was likely preventable. Certainly, a fire of that scale was preventable. It would not have happened but for the mismanagement and incompetence of the government. When it comes to fire prevention and preparedness, the government has a lot of work to do.

• (2320)

Hon. Rebecca Chartrand (Minister of Northern and Arctic Affairs and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's party continues to shift the blame of the wildfires onto individuals, ignoring the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is intensifying these disasters. By refusing to implement meaningful climate policies, are you not actively undermining efforts to prevent and manage wildfires? This is making it harder for the government to protect Canadians from worsening crises. Can you please respond?

The Deputy Speaker: Before I allow the member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River to respond, I will say that I will not be responding. I know the hour is late, but I will remind members that questions and comments are to be made through the Chair.

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The hon. member for St. Albert—Sturgeon River.

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, it is very disappointing that the minister has decided to play politics with wildfires, but it is part of the pattern with the government to cite climate change as the basis for every wildfire. Yes, climate change is a factor, but there are many other factors, including the bad forest management policies of the government, as well as human activity, among other factors.

Grant Jackson (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will follow up on that line of commentary of my colleague from St. Albert—Sturgeon River. The Liberal government certainly has a record on ensuring that Canada faces these challenges. I wonder whether the member could respond to what exactly he thinks the Liberal Party's record is in ensuring that Canada is well prepared to respond to emergency events like natural disasters and wildfires.

Does the member believe that the Liberals have, over their 10 years in government, prepared this country well to respond to these types of events?

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is no. Resources are lacking. Equipment is lacking. What we have seen with the government is that there are a lot of empty words. The Liberal Party across the way committed to a half-billion-dollar investment to recruit and train new firefighters and to acquire much-needed equipment, including helicopters and fire bombers, but three and a half years later, the government has failed to deliver, as wildfires have been raging out of control not just this year but also in other recent years.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record, of course, that forest management is exclusively a provincial jurisdiction, but there are many important climate factors, and some that are not exclusively climate. Somebody will point out that, yes, a fire gets started by lightning, but what if there is a fuel load that is absolutely tinder dry from years of hot, dry climate events that make it so likely that fires have changed their behaviour because of the climate crisis?

I wonder whether my hon. colleague has any comments on the provincial role.

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I would note, since the member was to some degree alluding to climate change, that a recent IPCC climate report assigned only medium confidence to the idea that climate change has increased fire weather in some parts of the earth.

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Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned. It is June 3, and we have never seen raging wildfires this early in June, especially in the Prairies. I think about my Uncle Keith, who has respiratory illness and lives in Manitoba. The fires are a challenge to people's health, not just the evacuees but people right across the Prairies.

I am more concerned about the urgency and about getting organized. We know there are over 100,000 volunteer firefighters in local departments across the country, some of whom could be deployed to help in wildfire season, especially now, but there is still no national fire administration to help coordinate this, something the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs has requested for a long time. We are the only G7 country without one.

Does my colleague agree that it is time the federal government established a national fire administration to coordinate things, especially this fire season?

• (2325)

Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, there is more work for the federal government to do with respect to coordination and firefighter recruitment and retention. There are measures the government could take by adopting the proposed bill put forward by the hon. member and recommended by the finance committee, and that is to expand the volunteer firefighter tax credit from \$3,000 to \$10,000. The Parliamentary Budget Officer—

The Deputy Speaker: I have to interrupt the member as his time has expired.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Confederation.

Corey Hogan (Calgary Confederation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

My heart goes out to people in the west dealing with wildfires and displacement. While this is a debate rightly focused on wildfires in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, like other members, I did want to acknowledge that wildfires are also impacting the people of Alberta, with thousands of evacuees from Swan Hills, Dene Tha' and other communities across the province.

We have seen many wildfires of late in my home province of Alberta alone: in Slave Lake and Richardson in 2011, Fort McMurray in May 2016, High Level in 2019 and millions of hectares in 2023 that forced thousands of evacuations. Of course, last year in Jasper, 25,000 people were evacuated and hundreds of homes were destroyed. Sadly, that is a pretty incomplete list of all of the fires.

We know wildfire seasons are getting longer, more intense and harder to predict across the nation, and more extreme weather, like wildfires and floods, are now our reality. It is tragic. We need to live the mantra of prepare, adapt and recover. We need to do what we can, as a government, as a Parliament and as a nation, to assist the affected people across the west through this troubling time.

These events are concentrated moments in a chain of events. Looking backwards, leading to this are decisions we have made as societies across the globe that have increased extreme weather events. We cannot wave away climate change. It is not a future threat; it is a present one. It takes a somewhat wilful blindness to

ignore the increasing frequency of so-called 100-year floods and once-in-a-generation forest fires. It takes a denial that borders on malice to ignore the increase in hurricanes, droughts and heat waves that climate change has brought, which have cost the lives of thousands across the globe.

If members are not familiar with what a wet-bulb temperature is, I am sorry to say they likely will be in the future. It is a temperature and humidity at which sweating no longer cools people down. When that temperature is over 35 degrees for long enough, death without air conditioning is a given. Climate change is driving wet-bulb temperatures to be more frequent and of longer duration. It is, one might say, a five-alarm wake-up call.

We need to prepare, adapt and recover. The changes to our climate brought on by climate change are already here. We need to prepare for more extreme weather events, adapt to our changing climate and recover when the events happen. We do need to be fire smart, which includes ignition-resistant homes, firebreaks and land use planning, keeping yards clean and forest management. Prescribed burns are done by the provinces, and Parks Canada does some, but we have to acknowledge it is a smaller window for prescribed burns, and there is resource competition with all of the wildfires that are occurring because of climate change.

Yes, I agree with members opposite that a national firefighting force has promise, and I am glad it is something being explored. I am glad that, as the Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience has said, nothing is off the table. We also need to incentivize residents and businesses to prepare for and adapt to this changing climate. We need to minimize the damage. We need to take steps now, working with global partners, to reduce the damage that climate change is bringing us.

My friends, this is not as bad as it gets. I said fires are part of a chain. We have looked backwards, but now it is time to look forward from this event. These crises are often less time-bound and geography-bound than we imagine.

In a past life, I worked for the Government of Alberta, in a province that has seen too many major wildfires. I joined just after Fort McMurray was evacuated and burned, as it was being rebuilt. I was there in 2019 when wildfires forced the evacuation of High Level. Unfortunately, one of the things we learned is that the effects of wildfires last far longer than the moment of crisis. There is an event, a fire; people are evacuated and the community is with them. The country is with them. Volunteers and donations come in from everywhere, from across the globe.

A year later, life is supposed to be normal again. The fire is gone; people are back. Maybe their homes are rebuilt. That is often when mental health problems begin. By then, that national and international focus and that national and international support are gone. As the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said, it is a long, hard road to recovery.

The events are also less geography-bound, and the hazy skies over Ottawa today remind us of that. Calgarians know this very well. From 1981 to 2015, there were an average of 18 smoke hours per year in the city of Calgary. No year had over 100. Now we see hundreds of smoke hours routinely: 315 in 2017, 450 in 2018, 439 in 2021, 512 in 2023, and 2024 was only 200. Again, I will say that is compared to a 1981-to-2015 average that was far lower.

• (2330)

Such smoke presents serious risks. The concentrated air pollution that forest fires create can, on the mild end, cause headaches and coughs and inconvenience for the healthy. On the more serious end, it moves from asthma attacks and irregular heartbeats to heart attacks, strokes and birth defects.

Again, as we look to the effects across geography and time, we must prepare, adapt and recover. We need air filtration, both home and personal, for communities far from hot spots; mental health supports for the affected; and insurance, longer-term funding and support to rebuild when we lose communities and homes, as we tragically have and tragically will.

I want to close by saying that none of this can be done at the expense of responding to the moment of crisis we find ourselves in. For those affected, their governments, communities and first responders are with them. We will move heaven and earth to respond to this moment. Not all will be perfect, as nothing is in these moments, but these are the moments when we set aside all partisan thought and have no thought but for their safety. However, I ask that as this moment of crisis recedes, the House not lose sight of the chain, forward and backward, that it is part of: the imperative to address climate change, the imperative to think broadly about this challenge and the imperative to be there for people when the news cycle moves on.

My children have had too many smoke-filled days. Our country has seen too many evacuees flee their homes, unsure if they will ever return. Communities have seen too many lives unravelled by the long-term consequences. We have in our hands, as a Parliament, the power and responsibility to help our country prepare, adapt and recover. I hope we take that responsibility very seriously.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his speech. As a fellow Al-

bertain, it is sometimes wonderful to hear some of those thoughts, processes and pieces. He highlighted the Fort McMurray fire, how he came into the office of the NDP premier of Alberta shortly thereafter and that many failings happened, in large part because there was not as much communication happening among the different levels of government. Coordination was missed. There were 80,000 people being evacuated. I think sometimes it is really easy to look at things in isolation and play on those pieces.

Since that time, we have learned a lot of things. One thing that is really frustrating to me as someone who has experienced wildfires since she was a kid, as I have lived in Fort McMurray my entire life, is that these are not new, but we are not building resiliency. What is his government going to do to build resiliency into communities so they do not have to evacuate and have fire protections in place?

Corey Hogan: Mr. Speaker, I want to clear up an inaccuracy. I did not work for the NDP government. I was a public servant in Alberta. I worked for Premier Notley and Premier Kenney for an equal number of budgets, as I like to put it. I was there for two budgets for each of them.

As for what the government can do to make us more fire smart and make sure that people do not need to evacuate their homes, that gets down to good fire management. That means keeping yards clean in fire risk areas. That means making sure there are appropriate firebreaks. That will make sure that people know exactly what they need to do and the risks they might be introducing into their lives if they do not follow some of that.

There is much that can be done. There are much better experts to talk about the finer points than me on that. What is most important is that we, as a Parliament, work together on this to give a consistent message about safety and how we can increase safety from coast to coast to coast.

• (2335)

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found it very interesting that my colleague pointed out the significant impact climate change has on mental health in the aftermath of these forest fires.

I would like to ask my colleague if he could elaborate on his thoughts and tell us what options Canadians have when considering climate change-related issues. These certainly cause anxiety, but it seems to me that some people may also feel paralyzed. I would like to hear his thoughts on that.

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[English]

Corey Hogan: Mr. Speaker, I agree. We have a choice between acting and being paralyzed, and, unfortunately, being paralyzed is moving backward as the climate moves on, whether or not we care to admit it. The good news is that as Canadians, we have the power in our hands to start making positive change in this world on this very topic.

We have the ingenuity, we have the expertise, and we have the commitment to create a better world that is so fundamental to Canadian-ness. I would encourage all Canadians to not think about this in a way that is either dispassionate or feeling as though they are overwhelmed by it, but to think that the tools exist, and we have it within our hands to solve this and be legends.

Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things we know is that these kinds of wildfires and climate emergencies are happening more and more. One of the things we do rely on is the military to come and assist. They have done a tremendous job in the past, and they continue to do so. However, what happens is that they often lack the resources necessary, the equipment, to face up to and assist in these types of natural disasters and climate emergencies.

Would the member actually support allocating dollars to the military, so they can beef up their ability to respond to natural disasters, especially in light of the fact that the Prime Minister has made a commitment to expand military spending to 2%?

Corey Hogan: Mr. Speaker, I personally support greatly increased military spending. I think it is part of an overall plan to strengthen Canada that includes a stronger economy, a stronger military and stronger cultural institutions.

Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to thank my new colleague from Calgary Confederation for a quite excellent speech.

This debate has been going on now since 6:30 this evening. It is now, as we can see by the clock, 11:40 p.m. I am disappointed that we have not been able to make more progress on finding common ground. There is no question but that every single member of the House is thinking of and concerned for the communities most at risk, where people are scrambling for their life, leaving their home behind and maybe leaving pets behind. Everyone is wondering, with their heart in their throat, whether they will see their home again.

The focus of this night's emergency debate, inspired by the motion and the letter to the Speaker from the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, is about the people and the communities right now that are running for their life. The focus was on Manitoba because it was the Premier of Manitoba who first called for a state of emergency in his province on May 28. The next day, May 29, the Premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe, called a state of emergency there. There was no intentionality to leave out the fact that Alberta has major wildfires right now across the province or that British Columbia has wildfires.

I am a British Columbia MP. My husband's family has a farm, but the farmhouse is now not used for people who want to do farming. Ever since the summer of 2021, that house has been providing

refuge for people who have had to leave their home because of forest fires and because of floods. My husband's daughter nearly died in the heat dome because it hit 50°C in Ashcroft, British Columbia. My step-daughter, Julia, who is in her mid-thirties and healthy, nearly died.

With climate events that have hit us over and over again, one might think we would learn things from those emergencies. Despite the fact that I know that people have the goodwill to say we are learning, I think because of the nature of our being so segmented, so siloed between provinces, between territories, between municipalities and between first nations, governments tend to be way ahead of everyone else in realizing what needs to be done, but how do we marshal the resources? What do we actually do to confront the threat?

Earlier tonight, someone mentioned that this state of long seasons of wildfires that do not seem to end, that are more intense every year, is a new normal. It is not. We have entered a state of what John Vaillant, author of *Fire Weather*, calls "the Petrocene". We have entered a time where everything is unknown; we do not know. What we can say is that this may be the hottest weather we have ever seen, and 2024 was the hottest year on record for the whole planet since records were kept. We might say this is the hottest summer we have seen in the last, my gosh, couple of hundred years. We can also equally say that this is the coolest summer we are going to get for the next couple of hundred years.

When we are focusing on forest fires and we are talking about what is happening right now, I want to split my time between saying what it is that we know about climate science and what we should be doing right now, because there has not been a whole lot of science talked about tonight, although some people have made a very good-faith effort.

Some members say with good intention that the forests had all the dead trees from the pine beetle outbreak. Right, that is called a positive feedback loop, because the pine beetle outbreak was caused by global warming. Ask our former right-wing British Columbia premier, Gordon Campbell, who figured out that usually the pine beetle is killed in a winter cold snap if the temperature gets to -35°C. That does it; that stops the pest that is endemic to our lodgepole pine forests.

Cutting to the chase here, we lost an area of interior British Columbia forest two times the size of Sweden because of global warming. It was the first major multi-billion-dollar impact from the climate crisis. That is why Gordon Campbell was the first premier in the province to bring in a carbon price. Those dead forests stood there, and with hotter and drier weather, the fuel load got hotter, drier and tinder-dry every year, it seems. Sometimes it is described as a very persistent drought. It is the beginning of what could be described as the pointy edge of desertification, because it is not likely to go away. We have fundamentally changed the climate. Atmospheric chemistry has changed.

• (2340)

We never had more than 280 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere over the last million years. Again, that is based on Antarctic ice core data. It is actual science. It is a number. It is empirical. Now it is 427 parts per million, and when it goes up, it does not go down. Our emissions have grown. We pledged to stop increasing our emissions back in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, and still they have grown globally. Burning fossil fuels are the main reason that what was once a beneficial natural phenomenon called “the greenhouse effect” has been overheated and overcharged. The greenhouse effect made this planet alone, in this solar system, warm enough to sustain any life at all. However, we have saturated the atmosphere with greenhouse gases, and we have overwhelmed the natural carbon sinks that pulled them out of the atmosphere.

That is what has happened to our forests. They were once carbon sinks; they held more carbon, and they sequestered carbon, but they ceased to be sinks. They are sources of forest disease and carbon from forest fires, which we do not count in our ledgers of where we are in fighting greenhouse gases and reducing emissions.

In terms of the science, the best book on this and one I recommend highly, is *Fire Weather* by John Vaillant, one of Canada's best writers, just in the way he can craft words with the language. He became fascinated with forest fires, and he was studying the Fort McMurray fire, the beast of 2016, and he got deeper and deeper into it. His conclusions are important. People say the boreal forest is a fire-driven ecosystem. Yes, there have always been fires in our boreal, but not these fires. These are what John Vaillant calls the “21st-century fire”. These are fires whose very behaviour has been changed by the climate crisis itself. They burn hotter, they move faster and they create their own weather conditions, high winds, unpredictable, the beast. They are different.

John Vaillant concludes, “We're changing the climate...in a way that favours fire way more than it favours us.” We have driven the climate to an overheated state that continues to cause more forest fires, and the fires behave differently. We do need solutions. Yes, we need to fire-smart areas and do a lot of proactive things way in advance, such as building firebreaks around remote rural communities and making sure they are planted with deciduous trees, which are moister and cooler and help service fire breaks. Yes, we need more preparedness, and we need to buy water bombers. The De Havilland Canadair 515 was mentioned earlier by one of my colleagues. It is built partly in Calgary and partly in Sidney, British Columbia. Right now, these water bombers are back-ordered, and all the orders are for the European Union because they ordered a lot of them. The European Union coordinates which countries need them the most and where to send these water bombers.

The thing about these forest fires, these 21st-century fires, is that they are different. Have members heard about the zombie fires? They stay below the surface of the soil through the winter. They can have snow cover on top, but the zombie fires are still there, ready to break out in the spring. That is one of the reasons we had fires spread so fast this spring.

In the time I have left, I want to focus on the things we can do. One of them is to acknowledge what John Vaillant succinctly testified to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources: “the oil in-

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dust is...a fire industry”. This is tough. It is that kind of inconvenient truth we do not want to hear. We want to be able to protect our resources. Bitumen is a very valuable product, probably too valuable to burn if we start thinking about it and start planning ahead.

We need to ensure that we give to our children a planet on which they can survive and not allow the climate crisis into an unstoppable, irreversible, self-accelerating spiral with positive feedbacks that leave us with the floods and the heat domes, but beyond that, with the collapse of human civilization. We do not have to accept that. We may be on the very edge of too late, but it is not too late to put in place the mitigation and adaptation measures that will help us preserve the Canada we love on the planet we love.

• (2345)

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really hard to sit here, as the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, as the member from the Green Party decides to disparage my community and put out inconvenient untruths. It is the reality that during the Fort McMurray fire, when people were giving outpourings of support, she blamed it on climate change rather than having compassion. Many of her speeches tonight have been very pointed and not trauma-informed. Many of these people who are fleeing fires are literally escaping, sometimes, with the clothes on their back. This is not something to be politicized. We can have those conversations later. Right now, we are in an emergency debate to talk about what we can do right now to help these people.

This is not about trying to get political wins, but there she is yet again, having a political win rather than getting to the bottom of this.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry my friend from Fort McMurray feels that way.

I have not had any speeches tonight until now, and in asking questions, what I have said tonight is that our thoughts are with the people running for their lives. The hon. member may have missed it, but I have been through this with my family in B.C. We have been through floods where friends disappeared down the river in their home, and their bodies were never found. We have been through forest fires and on fire alert for evacuation, when we did not know where we were going to go when the word came through that we would have to go.

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There are things we need to do for emergency preparedness, and we are not prepared in this place right now to talk about what we need to do as a country, to work together to save lives, when it is right in front of us that people are running for their lives. Yes, it is traumatic. People do not get over it overnight. Their kids do not get over it. They get nightmares for a long time, and maybe people do not get to go back to work for a very long time after having heat stroke in a heat dome.

• (2350)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really quite unfortunate that my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands could not give her speech at the beginning of this emergency debate, since it was full of wisdom and facts. I have also read Mr. Vaillant's book and found the points she raised very interesting.

Unlike my Conservative colleague who asked the previous question, I wanted to ask my hon. colleague about any common positions that might be shared among the political parties, because that is important. It is time to take action—

The Deputy Speaker: I will have to stop the hon. member there to give the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands a chance to respond.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, we need to work together. We have to deal with this crisis. It is urgent.

In the Speech from the Throne, not a single word was said about the Paris Agreement. I think the government may act soon. I hope so, but there was not a word about it in the throne speech.

Now, we have to face this crisis, be honest with the people of this country and work together to reduce greenhouse gases, protect our economy and at the same time prepare to adapt to severe climate events.

[*English*]

Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty rich that the Conservatives try to make the claim that my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands is playing politics. I will take people back two years ago, when the former MP for Kelowna—Lake Country, Tracy Gray, tweeted about the carbon tax instead of calling for help while her community was being evacuated because of forest fires.

All night, my colleagues have heard Conservatives make the claim that the reasons for these wildfires are human-caused. Maybe the member can talk about what has happened to our ecosystem and the damage that this has caused right now.

Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Courtenay—Alberni, because he has reminded me that one of the solutions I wanted to mention is the First Nations' Emergency Services Society, which is based in B.C. and is a great model that should be rolled out across the country.

I have mentioned the heat dome a few times, because it was traumatic to have 619 British Columbians die within four days, but on the ecosystem, what a lot of people do not know is that the heat dome also affected life in the oceans. Three billion sea creatures died, so some of my constituents in the heat—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

I am telling the member now that I will interrupt her at midnight.

Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and add my voice to this important emergency debate.

I want to start by thanking all of the firefighters, the first responders and the agencies, organizations and people who have opened up their hearts and homes to people fleeing the fires, as well as all those who are helping preserve communities right across western Canada. It is remarkable work that these people are doing. Earlier today, I had the opportunity to talk about some of the Alberta wild-land firefighters who ended up trapped in the community of Chipewyan Lake, which is one of the northwestern chunks of my riding, in a very isolated area. They had lost radio communication, but luckily they were able to re-establish access into the community and those firefighters were able to get safely out of the community.

This is the challenge. We are dealing with multiple fires happening in multiple communities, so to all of those people who are fighting the fires, I say a sincere “thank you”.

That goes especially to a lot of the local politicians. When politicians are elected, they put their name on a ballot, but they do not necessarily anticipate that they are going to be dealing with a large evacuation. This is something that many of our local councillors have had to do. They have had to make choices in places that they did not think they would be making those choices. I sincerely thank those politicians; the grace and leadership they have been able to demonstrate is remarkable for their communities.

When we have fires like these, there is a lot of outpouring of support from right across the country. When we experienced the fire in Fort McMurray, there were people from coast to coast to coast coming together to support Fort McMurray. That was spectacular and wonderful, but what happens after the fire? We are now here in an emergency debate. This is the time to be having these conversations about a hotel or lack thereof in Winnipeg. These conversations pinpoint crisis challenges to make sure that we are addressing those issues, that everything that could be done by the federal government is being done, and that perhaps best practices are being shared.

One of the things that I want to get on the record here is the concept of having conversations about what long-term mitigation looks like. Fire-smarting is a lot more than just getting rid of dead leaves. My colleague highlighted that fire-smarting is incredibly important, but it goes a lot further than just fire-smarting the yard and choosing the right trees, because it can go down to asking, are people fire-smarting their home? Are they putting non-combustible materials on the outside of their house? What does that look like in terms of the non-combustible materials on their roof? Have they moved debris and combustible materials away from their home? What have they done to perhaps install sprinkler systems that can be deployed remotely? These are all conversation spaces, and I really appreciate the member for Calgary Confederation for talking about fire-smarting, because it has such an important role here.

However, there is so much more than just cosmetic fire-smarting. We heard a bit earlier that the Species at Risk Act prevents firebreaks from being built in certain places and communities, so it puts northern and isolated communities at risk, because we cannot do those firebreaks. Furthermore, the Migratory Birds Convention Act is another federal act that comes up regularly that is an impediment to doing adequate firebreaks and fire-smarting around communities, because people have to wait until after all the birds have nested and all the eggs are gone. Those are challenges.

In Fort McMurray, it was unseasonably warm. We could see that there were risks. We could see that there were going to be problems. The challenge was that we could not do anything until there was a local state of emergency. Until that point in time, we could not do that preparation that we knew was important. That is the challenge. That is when communities really struggle with this.

I am going to take this opportunity, because this is one of the first opportunities I have had to give a speech in this chamber in this 45th Parliament. I want to give a shout-out to possibly one of the only people who is listening at home here tonight, at nearly midnight. He is a good friend of mine, a local councillor in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, otherwise known as Fort McMurray.

S. O. 52

ray. He is my good friend, Allan Grandison. Allan is always there in my corner. He has always been there, supporting me and cheering me on, and he is a very brave individual.

• (2355)

Allan has had to navigate, in his time on council, many evacuations, which included us welcoming evacuees from the Northwest Territories last summer. He did it with grace and dignity, looking out for seniors and elders in a way that was truly remarkable.

Lessons that Allan and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo deployed last summer are things I would like to see the federal government doing. There is so much we can do to make sure people understand that we are here for them. We can go beyond the blame game, which is not important right now. What is important right now is that people have a safe place to stay, have food and know that someone loves and cares for them.

If someone is not in their home right now, if someone is struggling because they do not know if they are going to have a home to go back to, understand that there are politicians in this place who understand what they are going through. I remember back to my time with the Fort McMurray fire, or even just last summer, when I could not make a flight to get out of Fort McMurray because the highway had to be shut down to allow people to evacuate. We get these people. We are here for them and we are going to work diligently to make sure they have what they need.

I am thankful for this opportunity to speak. I wish a great night to everyone, and I thank Allan.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It being midnight, I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(Motion agreed to)

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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